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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Rouse Your power and come. We stumble and fall without Your beacon of peace to guide us. As darkness seeks the upper hand with the Orlando massacre, shine Your light of hope upon our land. Despite the pain and horror of this tragedy, empower us to continue to trust in Your infinite mercy. Hear our prayers for those who died and for those who mourn. Bring healing to those who were injured.

Lord, give our lawmakers the wisdom to understand better the causes of violence which exists in our Nation and world. Use them to bring comfort, hope, and peace in the midst of insanity. Help us to remember the warning of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he said: "We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will die together as fools."

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2016.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. ERNST thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE ORLANDO ATTACK

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now observe a moment of silence for the victims of the Orlando attack.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senate will now observe a moment of silence for the victims of the Orlando attack.

(Moment of silence.)

The Senate majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, above this Capitol, the American flag flies at half-staff—a symbol of national sorrow for lives taken far too soon, a symbol of national solidarity for families left behind plunged into despair.

ISIL claims that the terrorist who committed this horrific act is one of the "soldiers of the caliphate." Our intelligence community will work to establish whether this terrorist was directed or inspired by ISIL. Either way, I will call him what he really is: a coward, a murderer who claimed allegiance to a brutal group that crucifies children and beheads women.

This terrorist sought to spread fear and sadness and suffering. Yet, even amidst the horror, he couldn't destroy our common bonds of humanity. Every act of compassion, every outstretched arm to a friend, every calming word to a stranger—a response to his cruel ideology and a reminder of who we are as Americans.

Let us recognize each act of heroism that night, and let us never forget the debts we owe to first responders—the men and women who rush toward danger and put their lives on the line for victims they never met.

Local law enforcement will continue working with the FBI to determine the exact nature of this crime. We will soon find out more details. We will learn, for instance, whether this attack was ISIL directed or inspired. Whether this terrorist was in communication with ISIL in Raqqa or simply following tactics set forth in Dabiq, ISIL's online magazine, it leads to a larger point. It is no longer an open, analytical question whether the followers of ISIL and other Islamic terrorist groups will attempt to strike us here in the West—they have, and they will continue to do so.

We need to do what we can to fight back so we can prevent more of these atrocities. That is exactly why, for instance, the Senate needs to be briefed on the President's counter-ISIL campaign. Understanding the President's plan with respect to ISIL is critical, especially given that the war in Iraq and Syria will outlive the life of his administration. That is why we have been asking the administration for briefings on his strategy for a very long time. I expect this will now happen very soon.

We will also be receiving a briefing on the Orlando attack this Wednesday, but today is a day for sorrow and remembrance. We saw the face of evil this weekend, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow Americans this afternoon. We grieve for the victims, and we say this to their families and to

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Orlando: You are not alone. Your Nation is here with you, and we won't back down in the face of terrorism.

REMEMBERING GEORGE VOINOVICH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, I wish to say a few words about a colleague we lost this past weekend.

George Voinovich was the oldest of six children and, until his late teens, an aspiring doctor. Then he realized he didn't get along with the scientists, so he joined the Boy Scouts. He got involved in student government, and he told his friends that one day he would become mayor and Governor.

He was right. This is the guy voters chose to turn around Cleveland after a wrenching fiscal crisis. Mayor Voinovich came to office with a simple motto: "Together We Can Do It." And together they did. Debts were paid down, jobs were added, and slowly the buckle of the Rust Belt became comeback city.

His success propelled him to the Governor's mansion, where he served two terms, and then to the U.S. Senate, where he served another two terms. Here in the Senate, he was at the forefront of a number of important policy debates. He was an advocate for more efficient and effective government. He was an advocate for an "all of the above" energy approach. And this son of Eastern European immigrants cited his work to help spearhead two rounds of NATO expansion as one of his proudest achievements. "[When NATO's Secretary General] officially announced the decision to invite Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia," he recalled, "this was truly one of the most thrilling days of my tenure as a Senator." Senator Voinovich had a storied political career that took him from Cleveland, to Columbus, to Washington, and around the world. All along, he kept himself guided by his Catholic faith and anchored by his family.

He ultimately retired to spend more time with the people who really mattered. At the top of that list was the woman who made him whole. If you don't think storybook romances can start at a Cleveland Young Republicans Club, then you didn't know George and Janet Voinovich. George and Janet were best friends, they were political confidantes, and they were deeply in love. Here in Washington, you could find them strolling to the Capitol for work or to St. Joe's for mass. When Janet came to visit the office, George would greet her with a kiss and a hug. When the Voinoviches flew back to Cleveland, which was most weekends, they would hold hands and say a prayer across the aisle to prepare for takeoff. And when it was wheels down, Janet would put Ohio's senior Senator to work on their modest home in Cleveland. They purchased that house in the 1970s in the same working-class neigh-

borhood where George was raised. They spent the rest of their lives together in the same house, but they never got around to installing an air-conditioner. "Too expensive," George said.

George Voinovich was known for many things in his decades of public service. He was honest, he was plainspoken, he was loyal to those who worked for him, and, yes, he was frugal. Janet may not have appreciated it when the heat waves hit, but these are qualities that served him well in office.

When asked about his legacy, Senator Voinovich said he just wanted to know he had touched people's lives and made things better. The mark of his impact across his city and across his State is clear enough to see. There is the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University, the Voinovich Trade Center in Columbus, the Voinovich atrium at Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the George V. Voinovich Bridge. The bridge named for a man known for building bridges of his own went dark in his honor last night.

The city of Cleveland, the State of Ohio, and the citizens of our country have lost an outstanding public servant. Many of us have lost a good friend. The Senate marks his passing with sorrow. We will keep Janet and the rest of the Voinovich family in our thoughts.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING GEORGE VOINOVICH

Mr. REID. Madam President, before I start my remarks on the subject of the day, I wish to speak about another subject of the day, as Senator MCCONNELL has indicated, George Voinovich. He was a fine man. He died yesterday morning. He was a colleague and a friend. He passed away at his home in Cleveland, which Senator MCCONNELL talked about. He was one of the most experienced public servants with whom I have served. His career in public service began 53 years ago as Ohio's assistant attorney general. From there, he served as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, county auditor, county commissioner, Lieutenant Governor, mayor of Cleveland, Governor of Ohio, and then in 1999 he brought his wealth of experience to the U.S. Senate.

Senator Voinovich was well regarded for his preparation and hard work. He was courageous. George was one of the few Senate Republicans to speak out against the unpaid-for Bush tax cuts because he thought they were wrong. He questioned the strategy of the war in Iraq, which he also thought was wrong. George Voinovich was right on both of those issues, and the other Republicans were wrong.

Senator Voinovich voted to repeal don't ask, don't tell and bucked the rest of his party by voting for background checks on all firearm purchases at gun shows. Again, he was right, and his colleagues were wrong.

Today the Senate mourns the Voinovich family.

I send my personal condolences to George's wife of 54 years, Janet; their children, George, Betsy, and Peter; and their seven grandchildren. He was a great Senator. He will be missed by his loved ones, the people of Ohio, and the United States.

MASS SHOOTING IN ORLANDO

Mr. REID. Madam President, everyone is in a state of shock and sadness today, following the worst mass shooting in modern American history.

The facts continue to develop—I had a long conversation with the FBI this morning—but we do know this much. A shooter pledging allegiance to ISIS opened fire at an LGBT locality in Orlando, FL, killing 49 people and leaving dozens seriously injured. This was an act of terror in every sense of the word. This was an attack on the LGBT community and all of America.

My heart goes out to the victims, their families, especially those who were killed and wounded, and to the many first responders who were on the scene where one police officer was wounded.

I hope every Member of the House and Senate had time for quiet reflection yesterday to ask what we could have done to prevent this tragedy. I had time to think about it. I am heart-sick. I am basically sick by our inaction. It is shameful that the U.S. Senate has done nothing—nothing—to stop these mass shootings. Is this what we want for America? I don't think so.

Do we want to live in a country where someone who has sworn allegiance to ISIS can walk into a store, buy assault weapons and explosives, and murder dozens of Americans in a club or at a school? I don't think we do. Is that a country where we want to live? Because that is the country where we live now, thanks to the National Rifle Association and their cowardly supporters in Congress.

Last December, the senior Senator from California proposed legislation that would prevent FBI terror suspects from purchasing firearms and explosives. All but one Republican voted against the Feinstein amendment. That means that as of today, FBI terror suspects can walk into a gun store and legally purchase assault weapons and explosives. It is beyond me how these same Republicans go home knowing they voted to let FBI terror suspects continue to buy assault weapons.

Senate Republicans have voted against expanding background checks, limits on the size of ammunition clips, and the assault weapons ban. How can these same Republicans campaign for reelection in good conscience, knowing