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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, shine Your light on our dark paths. Teach us to not lean solely on our understanding but to look to You to direct us on life's journey. May we not limit ourselves by our anxieties, but by releasing the power of fervent prayer discover that Your peace will guard our hearts.

Surround our lawmakers with the shield of Your Divine favor, preparing them for whatever the days may bring. Infuse them with the confidence that comes from knowing that their times are in Your hands. Lift us all above the clouds of care and fear into the bright sunshine of Your great mercy and might.

And, Lord, comfort each person who has felt anguish from the Dallas tragedy. Lord, bring healing to our land.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1270

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1270) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the amendments made by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which disqualify expenses for over-the-counter drugs under health savings accounts and health flexible spending arrangements.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

LEGISLATION BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, we have recently made progress on issues of importance to the American people. We have also seen some very regrettable decisions from our colleagues across the aisle. This week offers the opportunity for all of us and for our country to move forward. Every Senator will have a chance to advance important solutions on behalf of the American people this week, and some colleagues will have a chance to reconsider partisan mistakes that hurt our country. So let me explain.

This week, Democrats can reconsider their decision to block funding for the men and women serving and protecting

us overseas. These Americans selflessly and voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to help keep our country safe. They do not ask for much in return. What they do not deserve is for Democrats to filibuster the bill that supports them as part of some partisan political gain.

At a time when we face an array of terror threats around the globe, we cannot afford to play politics with the men and women serving and protecting us overseas. The bill Democrats are now filibustering respects the budget caps, was reported out of committee at the earliest point in more than a decade, and earned the support of every single Democrat in committee.

The top Democrat on the Defense Subcommittee said it "takes a responsible approach to protecting our country . . . [that honors] the bipartisan budget deal in place." That was the top Democrat on the Defense Subcommittee, and he warned colleagues not to "take chances when it comes to funding the men and women serving in forward positions."

Well, he was certainly right. There is no excuse for Democrats to continue blocking this bill. They will have another chance to make the right decision later this week.

This week, Democrats can reconsider their decision to block funding to fight Zika. Either Democrats believe Zika is a crisis that requires immediate action or they do not. Either Democrats think protecting pregnant women and babies from Zika today is more important or they think holding out for an earmark for their favorite partisan special interest group is more important.

Even though the administration has acknowledged they haven't spent the anti-Zika money already available to them, Republicans believe we ought to pass this bill now because this is indeed an emergency. Our friends across the aisle will have to decide if they feel the same way.

I would remind colleagues the rules don't allow for a conference report 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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be amended, even from powerful Democratic special interest groups, and re-passing the same bill that went to conference, as some have naively suggested as political cover, will not put a bill on the President's desk. So I urge colleagues to work with us to pass this compromise Zika control and veterans' funding legislation and send it to the President for his signature, not block it and spend the summer explaining why a special interest group was more important than funding Zika control and our veterans.

This week, Senators can take decisive action to combat the heroin and prescription opioid abuse epidemic that is hitting nearly every State and community across America. Support for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act conference report that passed the House last Friday seems to grow with each passing day. There are now more than 230 groups fighting this epidemic in their own communities that have come out in support, including the Detroit Recovery Project in Michigan, the Foundation for Recovery in Nevada, Central City Concern in Oregon, and Project Recovery in New Hampshire.

One of these groups is the Fraternal Order of Police. Here is what the group's president had to say about it.

The legislation provides treatment for those caught in the clutches of addiction or who also suffer from mental illness and also provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to prevent heroin and opioid deaths. . . . Too many lives have been lost to these drugs, and too many families have been torn apart. On behalf of more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge Congress to adopt the conference report.

That is from the Fraternal Order of Police.

Widespread support like this helps explain why the CARA conference report passed the House last week 407 to 5. Now it is the Senate's turn to act and send this critical comprehensive response to the President for his signature.

We know Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans already voted 94 to 1 to pass a very similar CARA bill. We know the Senate has provided more than twice as much funding for opioid-related issues as under the previous Senate majority. We also know there is a groundswell of support from so many corners for this CARA legislation that can help communities begin to heal from an epidemic sweeping the country. Quite simply, there is no excuse to block it.

I thank colleagues, like Senator PORTMAN, Senator AYOTTE, Senator GRASSLEY, and Senator ALEXANDER, who have worked ceaselessly to advance this issue. Our Democratic colleagues, like Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator KLOBUCHAR, have worked hard on this bill as well. I know they are proud of their work, and I am sure they look forward to supporting this overwhelmingly popular piece of legislation. The outspokenness and leadership of all these Members and others on this

issue helped move the bill forward with the urgency this crisis demands.

This week, Senators can take action to improve security and consumer protections for airline travelers. Recent terror attacks across the globe only emphasize the importance of securing our airports. The bipartisan, bicameral aviation agreement aims to achieve that by enhancing security in prescreening areas, increasing measures to address cyber security threats, improving vetting for airline employees, and tightening security standards for flights coming into the United States. Not only will it increase safety and security, but it also includes a number of consumer protection provisions, such as refunds for lost or delayed baggage, as well as improvements for travelers with disabilities and for parents traveling with small children. We expect the House to pass this agreement tonight, and then the Senate will have a chance to send a bill to the President's desk this week.

Also, this week, Senators can take another important step toward modernizing America's energy policies. The Senate will have an opportunity to go to conference with the House to work toward an agreement on the Energy Policy Modernization Act. This reform bill, which passed the Senate in April, represents the first broad energy legislation moved through the Senate since the Bush administration. It aims to bring our aging policies and infrastructure in line with current and future demands. Going to conference on this measure would put us one step closer to arriving at a final bill and sending it to the President's desk.

With cooperation this week, the Senate will have several opportunities to advance serious solutions that can make a difference for the American people. From doing the right thing by our veterans, to protecting pregnant women and babies from Zika, to combating the opioid and heroin epidemic; from keeping airline travelers safe, to modernizing America's energy policies, there is a lot we can get done. There are issues that should be priorities for us all. I would encourage colleagues on both sides to work together to advance each of these solutions in the coming days.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the conference report accompanying S. 524.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany S. 524, which will be stated by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the House to the bill (S. 524), having met, have agreed that the Senate re-

cede from its disagreement to the amendment of the House to the text of the bill and agree to the same with an amendment and the House agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 6, 2016.)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

Mitch McConnell, James M. Inhofe, Pat Roberts, John Boozman, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven, Kelly Ayotte, John McCain, Rob Portman, John Barrasso, Lamar Alexander, Richard Burr, John Thune, Orrin G. Hatch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived with respect to the cloture motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2577 and the conference report be agreed to with no intervening action or debate.

That must be the wrong one. Sorry about that. Madam President, it is sure good we have staff around; isn't it?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5243

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 5243, which is at the desk; that all after the enacting clause be stricken; that the substitute amendment, which is the text of the Blunt-Murray amendment to provide \$1.1 billion in funding for Zika, be agreed to; that there be up to 1 hour of debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, Republican Senators are prepared to pass the conference report and send it to the President's desk for signature today.