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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.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.

Eternal God, protector of nations in a turbulent world when we know not what a day will bring forward, we look to You, our help in ages past and our hope for the years to come.

Today, we ask that You would use our lawmakers as agents of reconciliation and justice. May their labors hasten the day when justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We thank You, O God, that even during seasons of challenge and unrest, we have the calm assurance of Your presence. Even in the valley of the shadows, we find comfort because You are with us.

Lord, forgive us for the many times we have failed to humble ourselves and pray and seek Your face and turn from evil so that You will hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and heal our land. We praise You that the best is yet to come for this great land, and we anticipate Your providence enabling us to be blessed beyond anything we can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your wonderful 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1831

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak on S. 1831, the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, also known as the PACT Act. This is a bipartisan bill.

I thank my colleague Senator BLUMENTHAL for coauthoring this and the 33 cosponsors I have.

This is a commonsense bill. This is the first Federal law that would protect all animals from torture, maiming, and abuse. The PACT Act allows Federal law enforcement to intervene when this kind of abuse occurs where the Federal Government has jurisdiction, on Federal property, in U.S. territories, and in relation to interstate commerce.

The act specifically bans the most appalling forms of animal abuse. It is often known as crushing. This is when a deranged individual actually tortures and sometimes sexually assaults household pets for some perverse enjoyment that they get. There are people who are in the business of soliciting animals over the Internet so they can conduct this appalling activity and then sell the images. It is unbelievable, but it happens.

This legislation is not controversial. Stopping this kind of obscene animal abuse is not controversial at all. There are no Republicans objecting to this legislation. The next Democratic leader on the other side is a cosponsor. Senator SCHUMER is a cosponsor of this legislation. There are 27 Democratic cosponsors. Over half of the Democratic caucus are cosponsors of this legislation, and a majority of House Members have cosponsored companion legislation. We worked with all of the relevant committees to make sure all concerns were addressed. It has been endorsed by every major animal welfare organization, including the Humane Society, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Animal Welfare Insti-

tute. We worked with agricultural and sporting groups. There is no organized opposition to this at all.

This legislation is necessary because there are many hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of cases of this kind of horrific abuse of animals occurring every year. We have seen appalling cases. I will submit for the record examples that are too appalling to discuss. Frankly, it is just that bad, and we need to bring this to an end.

It is also important for me to briefly point out that academic research has found a very strong correlation between people who abuse animals and then subsequently commit violent crimes against human beings. This has been documented by the National Institute of Mental Health. They say that a history of sexually assaulting animals is the single largest risk factor and strongest predictor of increased risk of committing child sexual abuse.

A 2013 Northeastern University study found that half of all school shooters had harmed animals before harming humans. It is very clear that if we can stop people from this appalling abuse of animals, we will also be protecting human beings, and that is why law enforcement agencies endorse my legislation as well. The PACT Act is endorsed by the National Sheriffs' Association, Fraternal Order of Police, Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, and nearly 200 local law enforcement agencies.

As I have said, this is a very simple issue. It is not confusing or complicated, and it is not controversial. Animals are not adequately protected across America. Many of our constituents feel very strongly and passionately about this issue, as well they should. Passage of this legislation will help protect people as well as animals, and Congress should act on this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 1831 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration;

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



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further, that the Toomey substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I reserve my right to object.

It is stunning that my friend from Pennsylvania would come to the floor and abandon all the principles we have heard the new Republican majority wants in the Senate. First of all, how about having a hearing? There has not been a hearing on this bill. I would put my support of animals and fighting animal abuse with anyone's. The Humane Society has supported me every time I have run for office. PETA has supported me, as have all of the animal rights groups.

Wouldn't it be a good idea to follow what the Republican leader said about how we are going to proceed in this new Senate? He said that we were going to have hearings, and they would not bring a bill to the floor unless there has been a hearing. Well, that hasn't worked out so well.

We have recently been out of session for 7 weeks. We had a lot of time to do all kinds of things, but we have done nothing. This has been the longest recess since 1956, and with the break that is anticipated by my Republican colleagues, we will break all records going back to—we don't even know when. We haven't been able to determine that. It could go as far back as the Depression or World War I.

All of this sadness about not getting something done on this legislation cries for relief—relief for the American people that we start working again. We have not only had months to deal with legislation like this, but we have had more than 6 months to deal with something that is vitally important to America. It is important everywhere in America. It is important in Nevada, Pennsylvania, Kentucky—everyplace. What is that? How about having a full Supreme Court?

The man who opened the Senate today, ORRIN HATCH, the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate, said publicly so everyone could hear that Merrick Garland would be a consensus nomination for the President. We satisfied his consensus appetite, and we brought forward, through the President of the United States, Merrick Garland on March 16. We waited and waited. Initially no one would even meet with him—no Republican would meet with him. Finally, a few Republicans trickled into a few meetings, but there was no hearing, and, of course, no vote.

We are happy to consider all kinds of legislation, but to pick and choose what they are going to do, leaving volumes of work undone here in the Senate, is something that leaves me incredulous.

Before we rush ahead on legislation that has had no hearing, I think it would be a good idea that we have a hearing and a vote on Merrick Garland. If Republican Senators want to vote against Merrick Garland, let them do it, but let's go through the process.

I ask through the Chair whether the Senator from Pennsylvania would be willing to modify his unanimous consent request so that following a vote on confirmation of the nomination of a consensus nominee, Merrick Garland, to be a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court so we would have nine members on the Court—nothing too unusual—the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of this legislation, S. 1831.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator modify his request?

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, that was a consent request, was it not? Mr. REID. Yes, it was.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I object to the initial request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the original request.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, let me briefly observe what is going on here. I don't think it is any mystery to anyone who has been following what is happening here.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could direct a question to my friend through the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Pennsylvania yield?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I came to the floor at his convenience. I am busy, and I am sure he is busy. I came to the floor to be a gentleman, and I allowed him to go first. I have a speech to give. I came here, and I agreed to the Republican leader's request. I didn't need to agree. I said I would be willing to do this right now so the Republican leader could give his speech later. I think it is rude, to say the least, for him to give a speech here and prevent me from giving a speech to the Senate. I think that is not being very collegial, and I am disappointed that he would do this. He can go ahead and talk as long as he wants. I will wait.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I believe I have the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I would observe for the record that we have been waiting for about 2 weeks, looking for the opportunity to do this and work with every Member on the other side, and we accommodated the leader's schedule when he said this was the only time he could do this—this and one other time.

I will close by saying this: Look, we all know what is going on here. The Democratic leader stands up and complains that we have not been produc-

tive and not gotten things done, and then when I propose a unanimous consent request on a bipartisan bill that has a majority of Democratic Senators as cosponsors, has been thoroughly vetted, and is supported by every outside group, he raises a completely unrelated issue and uses that as the basis to block this noncontroversial legislation.

This is exactly what the American people are so frustrated about with this body and some of the leadership in this body when this kind of completely partisan-driven agenda blocks progress even on modest and noncontroversial legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, just so the record is very clear, I have been asked to come to the floor on two or three different occasions to meet his schedule, and I was here; he wasn't. Make sure the record reflects that.

Mr. President, for almost 2 years the Senate has been run by the Republicans. The schedule is set by the Republicans. I don't set the schedule anymore.

To have my friend, the Senator from Pennsylvania, come here and say: Well, this is really important—I have indicated how I feel about animal cruelty. I have spoken out about all kinds of animal cruelty for more than three decades. But I also have some concern, as do the American people, that Senators like my friend from Pennsylvania have helped block a simple hearing and a vote on a man who is a consensus nominee to be a Supreme Court Justice. That is wrong.

I am not a big fan of polling, but you could take a poll in your front room, in a mall, or have one of these professionals come in and claim they know what they are doing. Overwhelmingly, it would show that the American people want a vote on this.

The Supreme Court being short one member has stopped work from being done for the good of this country. Important cases that should have been determined haven't been determined. Now they have to go along with whatever the lower courts say. That is not our system of justice.

So I hope everyone understands that it would be extremely fair and important to have a hearing and a vote on Merrick Garland.

I can't understand the lack of courage of my Republican friends such as the Senator from Pennsylvania. If they don't like Merrick Garland, vote against him, but don't block him. For the longest time in the history of America, a Supreme Court Justice has been stopped—stopped—from even having a hearing. It has never happened before—never in the history of this country.

I will speak on my subject a little later.

I yield the floor.

I ask that the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO LYNN
WESTMORELAND

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, we are reaching that time of year when some of our colleagues will retire, some may be retired without wanting to be retired, and we will have new colleagues coming to the Senate and the House next year. I wish to pause for a moment and pay tribute to a great Georgian who will be retiring at the end of December and who has served our State for six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives—Mr. LYNN WESTMORELAND.

LYNN WESTMORELAND is a true entrepreneur, a native Georgian, a dedicated father, an outstanding businessman, and an unquestioned leader in the House of Representatives. As the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee in the House, he has been instrumental since 9/11, seeing to it that we remain safe in this country and that we have the information we need to make decisions we need to make to keep America safe.

I go back with LYNN WESTMORELAND a long time. I was a realtor in Georgia. I was in the brokerage business for 33 years. I dealt with homebuilders all the time, and one of them was LYNN WESTMORELAND.

Early in his career, he founded his own construction company, called L.A.W. Construction. He was an outstanding homebuilder in Fayette County, GA, and in our State. He built that business to be one of the best building and construction businesses in our State, and I am proud of what he accomplished.

He is also a guy who gives back. So LYNN decided to run for public office. He ran for the Georgia House of Representatives in Fayette County and won. He served 12 years in the Georgia House, rising to Republican leader in the Georgia House of Representatives. He was the leader at the time when, for the first time in history, the Georgia Republican Party went from the minority party to the majority party.

Wherever LYNN has been, he has been a leader and a fighter for what is right for our country and a dynamic leader for our State.

LYNN is married to a beautiful lady named Joan. They have three children and six grandchildren. She has been a great supporter of LYNN. They have been side by side since they first met at the age of 15 and began their 47-year marriage a few years later.

LYNN will be retiring, and we will miss him. We want to say thank you to LYNN for all he has done for Georgia when he was in our legislature and for what he has done for America now in the Congress of the United States. He will be sorely missed, but he will be appreciated always as a man of courage, a man of conviction, a man of commitment, and a true son of Georgia who excelled in the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESCRIPTION OPIOID AND HEROIN
EPIDEMIC AWARENESS
WEEK

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, President Obama has issued a proclamation that this week is Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week.

As the President explained, we pause to remember all those we have lost to opioid use disorder. We stand with the courageous individuals in recovery, and we recognize the importance of raising awareness of this epidemic. In recognition of Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week, I am here with my colleagues to convey the urgency of responding to this crisis.

I want to start my remarks with a story I heard yesterday from a wonderful man named Patrick Byrne. I met yesterday with Patrick, as he was awarded the 2016 Education Award and Hero of the Year Award by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Patrick is from Lynn, MA. He lost his son James Byrne to heroin addiction. Here is his story.

James Byrne lived a fairly normal life in many ways. The son of Lynn, MA, Branch 7 president and Army vet Patrick Byrne, James had a good upbringing and strong family ties. He had a master's degree in computer science and made a good living in IT, but throughout his adult life, James had been hooked on heroin, a drug easily found on Lynn's post-industrial streets. James had periods of sobriety, but circumstances always seemed to steal them from him eventually.

James had enjoyed 7 months clean of drugs when an old friend and fellow ad-

dict called him one day in January of 2014 to beg James to find heroin for him. After first refusing, James gave in and bought some for his friend and apparently couldn't resist using it himself instead. The friend called James on the cell phone over and over as James lay dying of an overdose on the floor of his sister's house just down the street from his father's home. That is where Patrick found him.

After making his story public, Patrick heard from many other letter carriers about their own struggles with addiction, depression, or mental illness in their families. Patrick said: "I was shocked at how many people are dealing with similar problems." Inspired by Patrick's experiences and his efforts to educate fellow letter carriers and the broader public about the need to remove the stigma of addiction, the Postal Service Employee Assistance Program launched the Silent No More Initiative. The program is designed to help postal employees or their families break through the stigma and shame to share personal stories.

I thank Patrick for his leadership and service, and I pray for his family and for all the parents who are relying on hope and strength as they look for the support to achieve long-term recovery. None of us can be silent anymore in the face of this epidemic.

In order to get Patrick and all the families who are suffering the help they need when they need it, the Federal Government needs to invest in funding treatment and recovery programs. So far Congress has failed in this task.

In Massachusetts, I am hearing enormous frustration from people who don't feel adequate resources are being brought to bear on this epidemic of prescription drugs and heroin addiction. Countless individuals and families suffering with addiction cannot find a bed for detox. Then, when they are at their most vulnerable moment in recovery, they cannot find a place or provider for long-term treatment.

In May, Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire introduced legislation for \$600 million in emergency funding to combat this crisis. Then again in July, I and others argued on the floor for the need to invest \$1.1 billion into opioid treatment and recovery programs, but both times when Senator SHAHEEN made the case and others joined on the floor asking for additional funding, all of that was blocked so we could not in fact provide real funding that cities and States need to fight this epidemic.

We will not save lives and stop the scourge of addiction with just words and promises. We will not save lives with legislation that pays only lip service to providing treatment. So I stand here during Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week to pledge that I will not stop fighting for funding.

In Boston, there is an area of our city called the Methadone Mile. It is approximately 1 square mile. It is the location of methadone clinics, safety net