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Senate

The Senate met at 2:30 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.

Eternal Lord God, who alone spreads out the heavens and rules the raging of the seas, make haste and touch our Nation with Your healing hands. Use our lawmakers to provide the checks and balances that will unite this land.

Lord, give them the wisdom to inquire of You, seeking to be Your instruments in the unfolding of Your loving providence. Confound the enemies of freedom until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Lord, do for this land we love immeasurably, abundantly, above all that we can ask or imagine, as Your will is done on Earth, even as it is done in Heaven.

O God, You are our helper and deliverer. Continue to be our shelter in the time of storm.

We pray in Your strong 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 (Mr. SCOTT). The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE LEADERSHIP FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning our conference came together

to select a Republican leadership team for the 115th Congress. It is an honor to be chosen once again by my colleagues to continue serving as leader. I know I speak for every Republican Senator in expressing gratitude to the American people for entrusting us with this new majority. It is a great responsibility and one that we do not take lightly.

I want to recognize Senator SCHUMER and the new Members of his team as well. Leading a party—any party—in the Senate is no easy task. Our colleague from New York has a tough job ahead of him, but he is pretty tough as well, and I send him my congratulations. Regardless of party, though, one thing is clear. We have work to do. I know each of us is eager to get started.

That includes Senator-Elect TODD YOUNG from Indiana. I have had the opportunity to spend time with him this week and to congratulate him on his truly impressive victory. It was a hard-fought race, and he should be proud of the outstanding campaign he ran. Of course, our friend Senator DAN COATS leaves behind some pretty big shoes to fill. I will have more to say about that later, but I am confident that Senator-Elect YOUNG is up to the task. So we are all looking forward to his joining us on this side of the Capitol come next January.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, election day was tough for a lot of Americans. To say things didn't go the way we wanted on this side of the aisle would be a gross understatement. America is still reeling from this, and there will be even more concern in a few days when the final vote tally comes because Hillary Clinton will have gotten more

than 2 million votes more than Donald Trump.

So I think it speaks volumes that a Democratic Senator entered legislation yesterday that will take a look at the electoral college system. This should not be a partisan issue. It should be an issue that committees of jurisdiction in this body take a look at. Let's listen to some experts talk about it and find out if the system is working very well. It was set up a long time ago, and maybe it should be changed. So, I think it is something we need to take a look at.

It is interesting that just in the last few years—in this century—we have had two winners of elections that got less votes than the losers. I am sorry. We have two elections this century where the losers got more votes than the winners. So we need to take a look at that, and so I hope something is done on a bipartisan basis because no one knows what is going to happen 4 years from now, 8 years from now, 12 years from now. It is something that should be looked at. It is very important for us as a country to take another look at the electoral college system.

NEVADA ELECTION RESULTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there were a number of bright spots on election day, but I have to say, without any question, that the one for us was in Nevada. We scored victories everywhere.

The Koch brothers came to the State and publicly said: REID has been hard on us, and we are going to teach him a lesson. I wasn't born yesterday. I knew. They really didn't frighten me.

In spite of all their untold wealth, they could not affect what we had built up over the years in Nevada. We carried the State by about 30,000 votes for Hillary Clinton, which maybe in California it doesn't sound like a lot, but in South Carolina and Nevada it is a lot of votes—30,000 votes.

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



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In the Senate seat to replace me, we won by a large margin. We picked up two Democratic House seats. Out of the six Democratic House seats that were picked up in this past election, a third of them came from Nevada. We turned the assembly to a big, big majority. The State senate now has 21 members. It was 11-to-10 Republican. It is now 11-10 Democratic. To make it even better, the day after the election a Republican State senator switched to become an Independent, like BERNIE SANDERS and ANGUS KING. So there is a two-vote majority there. It was really a good day for Nevada.

We rejected the divisive vision of America that some had, but we also enacted some important reforms. In Nevada—the Wild West, NRA members galore—we voted to have background checks. When I went to the State legislature a long time ago, in 1969, as a young assemblyman, I introduced legislation to have a 3-day waiting period before you can buy a gun. That has been longstanding in most of rural Nevada. They eliminated that. But I started being concerned about this a long time ago, and now in Nevada we are going to have background checks for people purchasing guns. That is good. The National Rifle Association spent millions of dollars trying to stop that, but we cared more about keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous people than catering to people with special interests.

I mention the NRA. Listen, the National Rifle Association used to be a different organization. After the Columbine horror in Colorado, they came out saying that we should do something for background checks. They have changed. Members of the NRA in Nevada understand that. They are like NRA members all over the country. The majority of NRA members believe there should be background checks and you shouldn't as a criminal be able to buy a gun or you shouldn't be able to buy a gun if you are unstable mentally.

We elected the first Latina Senator in the history of the country, CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO. We are a diverse State. I am happy that our elected leaders that we brought back here certainly represent that.

I have talked about CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO. She is going to be a wonderful Senator. I am so proud of her. I have known her family for years. I have admiration for her accomplishments as a prosecutor and attorney general for the State. The Nevada seat was a Koch brothers prize, but they came in second.

We also elected RUBEN KIHUEN. He is a fine man. He is a Mexican immigrant elected to the House of Representatives. He will do a good job, this young man. I have so much admiration for him. The picture on the front page of our papers in Las Vegas was really wonderful. His mom and dad, immigrants themselves, with their boy who is now going to be a Member of Congress. That is pretty dramatic. They

came to the United States wanting to live the American dream, and that is what they have done.

Serving with RUBEN and serving with CATHERINE in the Congress is a woman by the name of JACKY ROSEN. JACKY has been an inspiring community leader for years, working as president of her synagogue. JACKY has no experience in politics—zero. She ran for a seat that is just a tiny bit Democratic, but a very competitive seat. It is a seat that Congressman HECK lost for the Senate and held for three terms. She didn't have a really long resume, other than being a wonderful person who had a great family and was involved in community activities. She was president of her synagogue. She proved to be a tremendously talented candidate, and she will be good here in Washington as a Member of Congress.

DINA TITUS, a longtime Member of Congress, is returning to the House for a fourth term. She knows Nevada inside and out. She is a longtime member of the State legislature and a professor at UNLV.

So I am grateful for these good people who are now going to be Members of the Congress of the United States. CATHERINE, RUBEN, JACKY, and DINA will be great for Nevada and the country.

Our Democratic legislature in Nevada will be led by an African American, Aaron Ford. We have an African American leading the State senate. He is the majority leader. He is a wonderful young man who is so talented, well educated. He has a Ph.D. and a law degree. He has it all.

Jason Frierson is going to be leading the assembly as speaker. He is just a good person, a good guy with an accomplished record in the State assembly.

There has been some talk about “the Reid machine,” but, of course, the machine is leaving Washington in a few weeks. But it is not about me. It is about our State and about the progress we have made over the years. The victories we saw last week speak volumes about the talent of the candidates and the people working to make sure these victories happen. Most of the work done in the State was by volunteers. There were thousands of people—thousands of people—out in the streets 2 weeks before the election.

On one Saturday, 70,000 doors were knocked on in the small State of Nevada—70,000. Having done door-to-door stuff ourselves, we all know that there were not 70,000 people home, but thousands and thousands of people were reached through that process.

As I have mentioned, our State has a crop of incredibly talented leaders to stand up to the Trump administration and hold Republicans accountable. Our new leaders are going to fight for the issues that are important to the people of the State of Nevada, all issues dealing with immigrants. My father-in-law was an immigrant to the United States from Russia. My grandfather was from

England. We are going to do everything we can to make sure that people understand the importance of immigration.

On Yucca Mountain, they asked me a couple of days ago about the Republicans wanting to revive Yucca Mountain. Well, I know the Presiding Officer and the Republicans are concerned about money. So if the Republicans want to revive Yucca Mountain, bring a great big checkbook because what it is going to cost to revive that is not millions of dollars but billions of dollars—billions. There is nothing there. All the equipment has been junked, ground up. It is where they sell junk and metal. It is gone.

What I say is, if the Republicans want to waste money on that, let them do it. Let them do it because it doesn't meet the environmental standards of anyplace, let alone our country. So let them try to revive it. But I say to my Republican friends, make sure you have a lot of money.

We are going to do everything together in the next few weeks, and certainly when I am gone, the new Congressional delegation will do everything they can to protect clean energy. We have really done a lot with wind, solar, and geothermal. We need to continue that.

In Nevada, 87 percent of the land is owned by the Federal Government. I know that is hard to comprehend. The Presiding Officer is from South Carolina. If you come to one of the beautiful wilderness areas, that land is not mine. That land is not Nevada land. It is your land. It is public land. You have as much right as anyone to enjoy those beautiful mountains that we have. We have 314 mountain ranges. We have a mountain that is 14,000 feet high. We have 32 mountains over 11,000 feet high. These are your mountains, just as they are mine.

I say to the Presiding Officer, don't be part of a deal to sell those public lands to the private sector. The States and local governments—they cannot protect those lands. So for our children and our grandchildren, don't let them mess with public lands.

I appreciate the Presiding Officer listening to me. I will close by saying that I am very proud of what happened in the State of Nevada a week ago yesterday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, what is the business before the Senate?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

AMERICAN ENERGY AND CONSERVATION ACT OF 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to