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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, thank You for the spirit of contentment we can receive from You, bringing quietness and faith to our hearts.

Today, use our Senators for Your purposes, enabling them to live worthy of Your Name. May the words they speak bring edification and unity as our lawmakers build bridges of cooperation. Lord, give them the wisdom to depart from strife, remembering that soft answers turn away anger. Inspire them to avoid contention in their search for common ground. Give them cheerful hearts and optimistic spirits.

We pray in Your great 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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6297

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. 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. 6297) to reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.

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 is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 6297

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 6297, which was received from the House; further that the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate; finally, if passed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, has had some trouble with this. I spoke to her last night. She said to go ahead and let this go. She is totally in agreement now that there would be time for debate on this issue and a vote. We understand that. So I am not objecting to this matter.

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

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. This week, Senators will have a chance to pass the Iran Sanctions Extension Act that recently passed the House on an overwhelming vote. Preserving these sanctions is critical, given Iran's disturbing pattern of aggression and its persistent efforts to expand its sphere of influence across the Middle East.

This is all the more important, given how the administration has ignored Iran's overall efforts to upset the balance of power in the greater Middle East and how it has been held hostage by Iran's threats to withdraw from the nuclear agreement. The authorities extended by this bill give us some of the tools needed to impose sanctions if necessary to hold Iran accountable and help keep Americans safer from this threat.

I expect that next year the new Congress and the new administration will undertake a review of our overall policy toward Iran, and these authorities should remain in place as we address how best to deal with Iranian missile tests, support to Hezbollah, and support of the Syrian regime.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we come to the end of this year and of this Congress, we will continue in our efforts to complete the business before us. Members have been working diligently on their respective conference committees to conclude the outstanding conference reports on the Defense authorization bill, the waterways infrastructure and resources bill, and the energy policy modernization bill. I look forward to the full Senate taking up these measures as they are available so that we can pass final legislation to be signed into law.

In the coming days, the Senate will also consider a critical and bipartisan medical innovation bill known as the 21st Century Cures bill, as well as a

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



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continuing resolution to keep the government funded and carry us into the spring.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

UNLV STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday an amazing thing happened at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and it deserves some attention here this morning. I will take just a brief time to talk about that.

The students who operate that newspaper made the bold decision to change the name of the newspaper. It has been going on and has been somewhat controversial now for quite some time. The newspaper will no longer be called the Rebel Yell. There were many who felt that was a disparaging name for the paper. The Civil War ended a long time ago. We should not harken back to the Civil War and the Confederacy for that newspaper.

Now UNLV's newspaper will be called the Scarlet & Gray Free Press. I am happy to have with me today Brian Ahern, who is an able member of my press staff. He was the managing editor of that newspaper. He helped run the newspaper when he was at UNLV.

I am proud of these students who did this. Seven months ago, when the students announced their intention to change the name of the paper, I publicly supported them. Now that they have followed through, I am all the more amazed by their leadership and courage in doing the right thing. The name change was not easy. There was a lot of debate swirling around this issue on campus and throughout the State. These students were more interested in unifying the student body and rejecting hateful symbols of a racist and divisive past than in hiding behind tradition.

Now it is time for the university's administration to do the right thing and get rid of the "Rebel" mascot. What these young men and women have done is a lesson for all of us. Some politicians, State legislators, and the National Football League can learn a thing or two from these students. I applaud the Scarlet & Gray Free Press for doing the right thing. They have long been an independent voice for the students at UNLV. I congratulate my able staff member, Brian, for urging me to move forward on this matter for many months now.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE CONGRESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Republican leader mentioned a minute or two ago, the Senate has some important work to do before this Congress can come to a close. One of the pieces of legislation that has to be addressed is the Cures Act, a scaled-back version of the 21st Century Cures legislation the House is scheduled to consider tomorrow.

The staffs of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee have worked countless hours on this bill. For more than a year, they have missed time with their families and given up vacations in the hope of reaching bipartisan agreement. There are many priorities in this bill to address funding for opioids, which has been an ongoing problem with all of the deaths occurring on a daily basis. We have done nothing to help with that—nothing.

Of course, we are concerned about cancer and the advocacy of Vice President BIDEN and the so-called moonshot, as well as important provisions for the National Institutes of Health. There are other issues outstanding that will need to be resolved in this matter.

It is my understanding that the committee work continues in the House, and we can expect a managers' amendment in the House Rules Committee sometime tonight. We are all eager to see what that is going to be. We know it is different from the Senate bill, which we felt very good about.

By the end of next week, we are going to have to pass new legislation to ensure that the government does not shut down for lack of funding. But we also have to be concerned about what happens with that Cures Act. Is this going to be put over again, as we have put over opioid funding time and again over the past several years, or are we going to move forward with something that is constructive in nature? Right now, there is some angst in my caucus about what we should do.

Now, on funding, I am very disappointed that the Republican leadership appears unwilling to pass a comprehensive bill that reflects the careful and considered judgment of the Appropriations Committee. With only days left in this Congress, we should be working on a bipartisan bill, in a manner that is bipartisan, to set out our priorities. But that is not happening. We should be funding initiatives that serve important needs and eliminate others that are wasteful and have a lower priority. Instead, it appears that we are going to pass another continuing resolution that just sets the government on autopilot, potentially for many months. The exact months we don't know. I guess there is some dispute among the Republican leadership as to how long the CR is going to be.

But this isn't governing. That is punting, for lack of a better description. They are trapped, and the only thing they can do is punt and see what

happens later. It is irresponsible, it is wasteful, and it is not the way we should be doing the business of this Congress.

Mr. President, will 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.

The assistant Democratic leader.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 15 years ago, a woman contacted my office in Chicago because she had a problem. It turned out that her daughter, who was about 17 years old or 18 years old at the time, had an extraordinary musical talent and had been accepted as a student at the Manhattan School of Music, as well as at the Juilliard School in New York.

The problem was that her daughter was undocumented. She brought her little girl to the United States at the age of 2. This Korean girl, Tereza Lee, was raised in the United States by a family of very modest means, but she showed extraordinary talent at music, so much so that she was accepted at these great schools.

When she went to fill out the application form and they asked for her nationality or citizenship status, she turned to her mother and said: What should I put here?

Her mother said: Well, I never filed any papers after we brought you to this country, so I don't know.

They called our office. The law was very clear. This young girl, who for 15 or 16 years had grown up in Chicago in modest circumstances, gone to school, done well, and excelled in her music, was in fact undocumented. Under the law of the United States of America, the only recourse for her—and it is still the case—was to leave this country for 10 years and apply to come back.

I thought to myself: This little girl had nothing to say when the family decided to move to the United States when she was 2 years of age. She wasn't consulted. She didn't make a conscious decision. She, in fact, did everything she was expected to do in her life. She grew up believing that she would be in America, that she would be part of this country's future, but she has this undocumented status, an uncertain status.

That is why, 15 years ago, I introduced the DREAM Act. It said to young women and men such as Tereza Lee: We will give you a chance. If you were