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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, in this season of peace on Earth, we acknowledge that You govern in the affairs of humanity. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without You noticing it, may our lawmakers never think that You are indifferent to what they think, say, and do. Lord, keep them ever mindful of the scarcity of their days and the importance of their work. May they seize life's second chances to fulfill Your purposes on Earth. Transform the days of our Senators into redemptive moments so that they will rise to the challenges of these momentous times. May they strive always to live worthy of Your great Name. Give them the wisdom to use Your precepts to avoid life's pitfalls, enabling You to guide them through life's seasons of darkness to a safe harbor.

We pray in Your sacred 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. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3516

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

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3516) to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a best-practices peer review of each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to evaluate the efficacy of health care delivered at each such medical center.

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.

TRIBUTE TO HARRY REID

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it seems like any speech about the Democratic leader requires a mention of Searchlight, NV. There is a reason why that is. You cannot begin to understand the man until you understand where it all began, and here is where it began—a tiny mining town at the southern tip of Nevada. One teacher. Zero indoor plumbing. Miles of desert. That is Searchlight, at least the Searchlight HARRY REID knew when he was growing up. It is the kind of place where you might learn to drive at 13 or spend your summer roping cattle with a cowboy named "Sharky." In fact, if your name is "Harry Reid," that is exactly what you did.

HARRY grew up in a tiny wooden shack with a tin roof. He hitchhiked more than 40 miles to school and had a father who toiled in the hard rock mines. It goes without saying this was not an easy life. It taught some tough lessons, but HARRY had his escapes. He found one in the snap and crackle of his radio.

Searchlight didn't exactly have a radio station of its own, but every now and then, HARRY could pick up a faint signal from California. During the regular season, it carried his favorite

baseball team, the Indians. He can still rattle off Cleveland's 1948 roster. Just ask him.

HARRY himself played some baseball. He was the catcher in high school, and during his sophomore year, HARRY's team was crowned Nevada State champions. Later, after a close game on the California coast, his team won the Nevada-Arizona-California tristate play-offs as well. HARRY still treasures the big white jackets each member of the team received, not because, understand, he was the best player on the team—HARRY says he wasn't—but because of what that jacket represented: his hard work, his contributions, his worth.

Like many young men, HARRY once dreamed of a life in the majors, of cheering crowds and Commissioner's Trophies. So did I. I wanted to throw fastballs for the Dodgers. HARRY wanted to play center field at Fenway. We wound up as managers of two unruly franchises instead.

As the leaders of our parties, we are charged with picking the batting order, controlling the pitch selection, and trying our best to manage 100 opening-day starters. It isn't always easy. As HARRY has often pointed out, baseball represents a nice reprieve from the serious work of the Senate. So no matter how contentious the issue before us, we try to put politics aside—at least briefly—to trade our views on the Nats and Bryce Harper. HARRY is probably looking forward to having even more time to dedicate as a fan of the sport and never having to miss another game because of votes.

But if there is one thing HARRY loves more than baseball, it is his wife Landra and the family they built together. When HARRY first met Landra Gould, the two of them were in high school, and HARRY was hardly conflicted about his feelings for her. He recalled:

She looked like she belonged in the movies. She was smart [too]. And she'd been places. Out of my league, that's for sure.

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



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But if there is one thing we know about HARRY, he doesn't give up easily. It wasn't long before the two of them were heading off on their first date. As many dates do, it started with a movie and ended—as no dates do—with Landra push-starting his car. HARRY worried, as many of us might, that this could well be their first date and their last date. But then he looked over at Landra. She smiled as she pushed along beside him. He said it was the kind of smile that said: Who cares about the car? I am with you. It was a smile that has stayed with him ever since. HARRY said: "There are moments that turn a life . . . that stay with you until the last breath, [and] this was one of those moments for me."

The Reids have never been strangers to pushing through challenges. They have confronted a lot over nearly six decades in marriage. But hand in hand, sweat on the brow, they have always moved forward together. Through it all, Landra has never stopped smiling and HARRY has never stopped counting every lucky star for Landra. His idea of the perfect night out is still a quiet night in with her. Landra is his confidant, his high school sweetheart, and his best friend. She is his everything. For a guy who grew up with nothing, that is something.

HARRY REID didn't have an easy childhood. He faced tragedy from a young age. There were times when he just wanted to leave Searchlight and never look back, but these experiences helped shape him too. This is a guy who has seen it all. He has been on the wrong side of electoral nail-biters, and he has been on the other side of them too. He even won a primary against somebody named "God Almighty."

HARRY will now retire as the longest serving U.S. Senator from his State with some three decades of Senate service behind him. It is clear that HARRY and I have two very different world views, two different ways of doing things, and two different sets of legislative priorities, but through the years we have come to understand some things about one another, and we have endeavored to keep our disagreements professional rather than personal. We have also found some common ground through baseball.

I hardly know what it is like to serve here without HARRY—he came into office just a couple short years after I did—but I do know this: Come next month, you will know where to find him. He will be right next to Landra, writing new chapters, making new memories, and continuing a love story that began with a smile more than 50 years ago.

Today the Senate recognizes the Democratic leader for his many years of service to Nevada, to the country, and to his party. We wish him and Landra the best as they set off on their next journey.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THANKING MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. REID. MITCH, thank you very much for those nice remarks.

Mr. President, I have heard for years—especially from the press and others—how do you get along with MITCH MCCONNELL? It is obvious it is not very good.

It is simple, everybody. He and I understand our relationship. We are both lawyers. I have been to court lots of times, over 100 jury trials, and when I would go to those trials, I would really fix on my opponent. How could he feel that way about an issue? He is wrong on the law, he is wrong on the facts, and we are going to take care of this in court.

Fortunately, I was fairly blessed with my trials; it turned out OK most of the time. But MITCH and I understand that is what we do here. When the trial was over—I have walked out of a courtroom with Neil Galatz or whoever it was—it was over with. It was gone. We were friends. We were there, each doing our thing to effect our cause, and that is what we do here.

MCCONNELL and REID don't need to be hugging out here every day. That is not what we do. We are advocates for our cause. I do the very best I can; he does the very best he can. And he laid that out just fine a few minutes ago.

So this is not a love session for REID and MCCONNELL, although I want everyone here to know that MITCH MCCONNELL is my friend. He and his wonderful wife have been kind and thoughtful to us. I have said that before; let me repeat it. When Landra was in that very dreadful accident, they were there—letters, flowers. They took care of us. When Landra had the devastating breast cancer, they were there. When I hurt myself, MITCH called me.

So everybody go ahead and make up all the stories you want about how we hate each other. Go ahead. But we don't. If it makes a better story, go ahead and do it, but maybe somebody should write this.

Thank you very much, MITCH.

OK, everybody, now my final speech.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the history of Searchlight starts this way, the first paragraph of that book:

Searchlight is like many Nevada towns and cities: it would never have come to be had gold not been discovered. Situated on rocky, windy, and arid terrain without artisan wells or surface water of any kind, the place we call Searchlight was not a gathering spot for Indian or animal.

Searchlight. It is a long way from Searchlight in the U.S. Senate.

I grew up during World War II in Searchlight. As Senator MCCONNELL

mentioned, my dad was a miner, a hard-rock miner, an underground miner, but work wasn't very good in Searchlight. The mines during World War II were especially gone—all over America but especially in Nevada. There were a few things that went on after the war, promotions. He would work, and sometimes they would pay him, sometimes there were bad checks that would bounce. Sometimes they wouldn't pay him, they would just leave.

My mom worked really hard. We had this old Maytag washer. There were lines outside. She worked really hard.

Searchlight had about 250 people then. It had seen its better days. Searchlight was discovered in 1898 when gold was discovered, and for 15 or 18 years, it was a booming, booming town. It was one of the most modern cities in all of Nevada. It had electricity—turn of the century, electricity. It had a telegraph. It had telephones. It had a fire station, firetrucks. It had roads with signs on them designating the name of the street. It had a railroad. When I grew up, that was all gone. Searchlight, as I said, had 250 people.

So people may ask: How did my mother work so hard in a town with 250 people? We had at that time no mines, but 13 brothels at one time in Searchlight—13, not over time but at one time. The biggest was the El Rey Club. So that tells everyone what wash my mom did, from the casinos and from the brothels. She worked really hard. She ironed. She washed.

As I look back on my growing up in Searchlight, I never felt, during the time I was a boy, that I was deprived of anything. I never went hungry. Sometimes we didn't have, I guess, what my mom wanted, but we were fine.

But as I look back, it wasn't that good, I guess. We had no inside toilet. We had a toilet outside. You had to walk about 50 yards to that because my dad didn't want it close to the house, and we had a good time, even with that. My poor mother, what a wonderful woman she was. Sometimes, my younger brother and I sometimes, just to be funny, when my mother would go to the toilet, which had tin walls—it was made out of tin—and we would throw rocks at that. "Let me out," she would say. It doesn't sound like much fun, but it was fun at the time.

When I started elementary school, there was one teacher for grades one through four and then another teacher for grades five through eight, but when I got to the fifth grade, there were not enough students for two teachers so one teacher taught all eight grades. I learned at that time in that little school that you can really learn. I have never ever forgotten a woman by the name of Mrs. Pickard. I can still see her with those glasses, just a stereotype spinster teacher—but she was a teacher. She taught me that education was good, to learn is good. When I graduated, we had a large graduating