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Senate

The Senate met at 3 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.

Almighty and eternal God, You shine in the darkness. The whole Earth is bathed in Your light. Today, be near to our lawmakers. Penetrate the springs of their being, bringing cleansing, healing, and unity. Drive them away from the shadows of disunity, enabling them to find common ground. In times of routine and humble duties, may they remember they are serving you.

Lord, as we all trust in Your mercies, surround our Nation with the shield of Your favor and protection. And, Lord, we ask your blessings upon your servant, Senator CINDY HYDE-SMITH, who will be sworn in today.

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.

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FOR UNEXPIRED TERM

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a certificate of election to fill the unexpired term created by the resignation of former Senator Thad Cochran, of Mississippi.

The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate. If there be no objection, the reading of the certificate will be waived, and it will be printed in full in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FOR UNEXPIRED TERM

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that on the 27th day of November 2018, Cindy Hyde-Smith was duly chosen by the qualified electors of the State of Mississippi a Senator for the unexpired term ending at noon on the 3rd day of January, Two Thousand Twenty-One, to fill the vacancy in the representation from Mississippi in the Senate of the United States caused by the resignation of Thad Cochran.

Given under my hand, and our seal affixed hereto, at the City of Jackson, this the 12th day of December in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Eighteen.

By the Governor:

PHIL BRYANT,
Governor of the State
of Mississippi.

C. DELBERT HOSEMANN,
JR.,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator-elect will now present herself to the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office.

Senator HYDE-SMITH, escorted by Senator McCONNELL, advanced to the desk of the President pro tempore; the oath prescribed by law was administered to Senator HYDE-SMITH by the President pro tempore, and she severally subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO LAMAR ALEXANDER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words following

today's announcement from our dear friend, the senior Senator from Tennessee.

The great State of Tennessee has been generous to the U.S. Senate over the years. A number of the State's Senators from both parties have enriched this institution through especially distinguished service and built reputations as national leaders.

Nobody embodies this legacy more fully than LAMAR ALEXANDER. While I am sure he will accomplish even more over the next 2 years, LAMAR is already one of the most consequential Senators on domestic policy in memory. LAMAR was a success long before he became a Senator. He had already been a popular and accomplished Governor and a brilliant Secretary of Education, but fortunately for this body and for our Nation, 16 years ago the Volunteer State saw fit to continue that career of excellence by sending LAMAR here.

He has chaired the Republican conference. He has chaired the HELP Committee. For his colleagues in both parties he is a go-to expert on some of the most critical subjects that directly impact Americans' lives, particularly American families, healthcare, and our children's schools.

The Every Student Succeeds Act and this year's landmark opioids legislation are two perfect examples of signature LAMAR ALEXANDER accomplishments. They tackle challenging issues in a thoughtful and substantive way. They tangibly improve Americans' lives, and they passed both Houses of Congress with big bipartisan majorities.

So the Senate will be lesser without LAMAR's wisdom, collegiality, and expertise when he retires. I am glad that day is 2 years away and grateful we will keep benefiting from his leadership through the 116th Congress.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, in recent days I have

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



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spoken about the Senate's agenda for the remainder of the 115th Congress. As was the case at this time last week, there are important items that have yet to be addressed, but thanks to the bipartisan progress made last week, we are significantly closer to the finish line.

Together, guided by Chairman BLUNT and Senator KLOBUCHAR, the Senate met the need to revise how Congress handles claims of sexual harassment, workplace discrimination, and other workplace violations.

Under the leadership of Chairman ROBERTS and Senator STABENOW, we cleared the conference report for the 2018 farm bill, sending my industrial hemp legislation and other critical provisions for America's farming communities to the President's desk to become law.

To cap off a year of historic progress on judicial nominations, the Senate voted to confirm the 30th Federal circuit judge of this Congress and this administration.

Now we will turn our attention to the remaining priorities in completing the American people's business. Last week, I announced that at the request of the President and following improvements that were secured by several Members, the Senate will take up criminal justice legislation here on the floor. Later this afternoon, we will vote on advancing that legislation.

I know the proponents of this bill spent a great deal of time and energy drafting their proposal. At the same time, there are a number of Members with outstanding concerns they feel are still unresolved. So if cloture is invoked later today, the Senate will be considering amendments before we vote on final passage later this week.

Of course, the most high-profile items still before us are border security and government funding. We need to make a substantial investment in the integrity of our border and in the safety of American families. We need to close out the year's appropriations process and reach a bipartisan agreement to supply the 25 percent of the Federal Government for which we haven't already passed funding legislation. I hope the same bipartisan, collaborative spirit that has carried us this far will enable the Senate and the House to complete this business without undue delay.

ABOLISH HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 1311.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 1311) entitled "An Act to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States.", do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment and ask unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 1312.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 1312) entitled "An Act to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States.", do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to concur in the House amendment and ask unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 623, S. 1862.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1862) to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to modify the criteria for determining whether countries are meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (15) as paragraphs (7) through (17), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

"(5) CONCRETE ACTIONS.—The term 'concrete actions' means actions that demonstrate increased efforts by the government of a country to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, including any of the following:

"(A) Enforcement actions taken.

"(B) Investigations actively underway.

"(C) Prosecutions conducted.

"(D) Convictions attained.

"(E) Training provided.

"(F) Programs and partnerships actively underway.

"(G) Efforts to prevent severe forms of trafficking, including programs to reduce the vulnerability of particularly vulnerable populations, involving survivors of trafficking in community engagement and policy making, engagement with foreign migrants, ending unreasonable recruitment fees, and other such measures.

"(H) Victim services offered, including immigration services and restitution.

"(I) The amount of money the government has committed to the actions described in subparagraphs (A) through (H).

"(6) CREDIBLE EVIDENCE.—The term 'credible evidence' includes all of the following:

"(A) Reports by the Department of State.

"(B) Reports of other Federal agencies, including the Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor and List of Products Produced by Forced Labor or Indentured Child Labor.

"(C) Documentation provided by a foreign country, including—

"(i) copies of relevant laws, regulations, and policies adopted or modified; and

"(ii) an official record of enforcement actions taken, judicial proceedings, training conducted, consultations conducted, programs and partnerships launched, and services provided.

"(D) Materials developed by civil society organizations.

"(E) Information from survivors of human trafficking, vulnerable persons, and whistleblowers.

"(F) All relevant media and academic reports that, in light of reason and common sense, are worthy of belief.

"(G) Information developed by multilateral institutions.

"(H) An assessment of the impact of the actions described in subparagraphs (A) through (I) of paragraph (5) on the prevalence of human trafficking in the country."

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND THE ROLE OF PRIVATE BUSINESSES IN PREVENTING AND COMBATING CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the President should work with the private sector to explore, develop, and use technology that strengthens Federal law enforcement capabilities to combat traffickers and criminal networks; and

(2) private businesses, both domestic and international, should take every reasonable step to prevent and combat child sex trafficking.

(b) EFFORTS TO END MODERN SLAVERY.—It is the sense of Congress that any future authorization of appropriations to carry out the grant program authorized under section 1298 of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (22 U.S.C. 7114) should simultaneously extend the accountability provisions under subsections (c), (d), and (e) of such section.

SEC. 4. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TRAFFICKING.

Section 108(b)(7) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7106(b)(7)) is amended by inserting "or enable" after "con-

SEC. 5. ACTIONS AGAINST GOVERNMENTS FAILING TO MEET MINIMUM STANDARDS.

Section 110(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking "The report should" and inserting "The report shall, to the extent concurrent reporting data is available, cover efforts and activities taking place during the period between April 1 of the year preceding the report and March 31 of the year in which the report is made, and should";

(B) in subparagraph (A), by inserting "based only on concrete actions taken by the country that are recorded during the reporting period" after "such standards";