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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11, 2020, at 9 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, may Your name be praised. Lord, use our Senators today to permit justice to rule in our land. Remind them that righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is an equal opportunity destroyer. As our lawmakers strive to do Your will, reward their faithfulness. Illuminate their hearts with Your wisdom and love. Help them to remember that the entire ethical requirement is fulfilled by loving your neighbor as you love yourself. May this love for those in need hasten the day when justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Continue to be our strength and fortress, sustaining us with Your amazing grace.

We pray in Your merciful 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 (Mrs. LOEFFLER).

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business, please.

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

THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING REDUCTION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, the virus pandemic underscores the very vital contribution pharmaceutical sciences make for our Nation's public health, our Nation's economic prosperity, and our way of life. It also confirms that we need a policy solution to treat soaring healthcare prices.

The American people want the best medical cures at prices they can afford. The Prescription Drug Pricing Act is a winning solution. Let's get it to the President's desk without delay. It will help secure our American way of life in a post-pandemic world for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday, I explained that we cannot

let the First Amendment become another casualty of this troubled moment. No matter how charged the issue, peaceful protests must be protected, from suppression by governments or hijackings by violent mobs. In the United States of America, people get to protest.

In our country, people also get to worship. As I explained yesterday, local officials cannot selectively enforce health restrictions to privilege some First Amendment gatherings over others. If mayors are posing for photographs in massive demonstrations, there is no reason why small, careful church services should stay banned.

These are formal constitutional questions, but our American culture of free expression and open debate is not only threatened from the top down by the government, it can also dry up from beneath.

If we are to maintain the civic discourse that has made us great, American citizens and American institutions need to want it. In the last several years, the New York Times has published op-eds from Vladimir Putin, the foreign minister of Iran, and a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. They have published an essay arguing for greater normalization of pedophilia. As far as I know, none of those decisions occasioned public revolts from the paper's staff, hand-wringing apologies from the editors, or an overhaul of the masthead. Presumably, it was understood that pushing the envelope and airing disagreements are necessary in a free market of ideas.

• 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 1 week ago, the Gray Lady finally met her match. Vladimir Putin? No problem. Iranian propaganda? Sure. But nothing could have prepared them for 800 words from the junior Senator from Arkansas.

Senator COTTON wrote an op-ed explaining a position which one survey found 58 percent of Americans agreed with. He argued that leadership in several cities had proven they either couldn't or wouldn't stop the riots, so President Trump should use Federal troops to secure the peace, as several Presidents have in our history. His view was controversial, no question, but there is also no question it was a legitimate view for a Senator to express.

Looting and arson were crippling cities nightly. Some local authorities seemed to be functionally sacrificing their cities' small businesses to appease the mob. In Chicago, we have since learned, even Democratic aldermen were literally crying and pleading with their Democratic mayor to do something, they said. So a U.S. Senator wrote about it.

Immediately, his idea was met with strong criticism. Now, that ought to be par for the course. In a free and open society, speech begets speech. Arguments beget counterarguments. We discuss and debate as fellow citizens. But that is not quite what happened. Instead of trying to win the argument, the far left tried to end the discussion.

By now, we all know the routine. We have seen this movie before. Rather than actually rebut speech, the far left tried to silence the speaker with a mixture of misrepresentations, sanctimonious moralizing, and bizarre, emotional word salads that nobody else could have standing to question. This silencing tactic has escaped from the ivory tower and is spreading throughout American life. This sounds like Mad Libs mixture between a therapy session and a university's H.R. department.

So, sure enough, instead of attempting to defeat Senator COTTON's ideas, the left set out to ban him from polite society. Some New York Times employees flooded social media to claim their bosses have risked reporters' physical safety with the Senator's scary words. Outside leftists blasted the paper for airing the argument. The Times itself began lying about what Senator COTTON had said. The paper's own Twitter account has claimed he had called for a crackdown on peaceful protests, when he specifically distinguished them from violent rioters.

One of the Times' own opinion writers devoted her own column the next day to calling his view "fascist" and proclaiming him outside "the bounds of legitimate debate."

Remember, this is a sitting Senator discussing a proposition that had the majority of support from the American people, discussing a power that Congress gave to Presidents 213 years ago and which Presidents in the past have exercised.

Oh, but the facts couldn't hold a candle to the hurt feelings. The New York Times erred grievously by making people confront a different viewpoint. They had hurt their feelings by making them confront a different viewpoint. They had to atone. So when the dust settled, a top opinion editor was gone. His deputy was reassigned. The piece was pulled out of the print edition, and a wandering multiparagraph apology now precedes it online. We are talking the New York Times. I understand the new editor has made it clear that staff should notify her immediately if any published opinion makes them uncomfortable—if any published opinion makes them uncomfortable?

One of our Nation's most storied newspapers just had its intellectual independence challenged by an angry mob, and they folded like a house of cards. A jury of people on Twitter indicted them as accessories to a thought crime, and instead of telling them to go take a hike, the paper pleaded guilty and begged for mercy. Their readers' comfortable bubble was re-inflated. Their safe space was safe again.

Now, our colleague from Arkansas has a unique job. The far left cannot write angry emails to a university president or a publisher to get him fired. He cannot be silenced by professions of outrage or the use of magic words like "problematic." His only bosses are his constituents.

This broader, leftwing obsession with banning heretics from the public square will be poison for this country if it persists. Our Republic can survive a pandemic, it can survive civil unrest, but ideas and deliberation are our very foundation. America cannot be America if civil disagreement becomes a contradiction in terms.

The liberal tradition in this country used to pride itself on being broad-minded, but we have spent years watching major universities slowly exchange debate for uniformity and rigor for psychological comfort. Now, we see the free press repeating that error.

Let's hope we look back on this as a silly anomaly and not a sad turning point for our democracy.

THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now on to an entirely different matter. Thanks to the bipartisan leadership of colleagues like Senators DAINES, GARDNER, PORTMAN, ALEXANDER, MANCHIN, and WARNER, we are attending to legislation that will shape the future of the great American outdoors for the better.

It is fitting that the legislation before us comes with support of such a broad bipartisan coalition because our national parks, forests, and other public lands are treasured in every State of our Union by the hunters and anglers who look forward to the morning stillness of the Black Hills and the Big

South Fork of the Cumberland, by the hikers who camp and plot weekend escapes in Shenandoah and Joshua Tree, by the school groups and researchers who connect with history at Gettysburg and Mesa Verde.

Every year, hundreds of millions of our people—our fellow Americans and visitors from around the world—share the gift of our Nation's public lands. Even more Americans in surrounding communities benefit from the jobs and the prosperity that are supported by tourism and recreation.

This country's public lands comprise a tremendously diverse array of landscapes, wildlife, historic sites, and natural resources. They are spread out across 419 parks, 568 refuges, and hundreds of millions of acres of managed space.

They didn't pop up overnight. It has taken more than a century of dedicated work to designate, acquire, and maintain the public lands Americans enjoy today. It is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which this legislation will give permanent support, that makes them accessible for generations to come.

Today, more than 5 million Americans rely directly on outdoor recreation for their livelihood. They contribute to \$778 billion in economic activity. In recent years, their industry's growth has outpaced an economy that was red-hot in its own right. A bright future for our public lands is a bright future for our Nation, and a predictable, consistent support provided by the LWCF will play a critical role in these efforts.

Take my home State of Kentucky, for example. For years, I have been proud to advocate for LWCF funding to conserve some of the Bluegrass's precious wilderness and historic sites. Back in 1996, Kentucky was the only State without a national wildlife refuge, and it was my legislation that helped secure the creation of one at Clarks River.

Last year, additional legislation I authored helped create another sanctuary for wildlife and recreation at the confluence of the Green and Ohio Rivers. Already, the Fish and Wildlife Service has marked the Green River Wildlife Refuge as the LWCF's top funding priority for the coming year. The dedicated resources in this legislation would be instrumental in the growth of Kentucky's newest national treasure, along with other areas like Clarks River.

As the LWCF drives the preservation of more national wetlands, forests, and battlefield space in Kentucky, I suspect every one of my colleagues is equally proud of similar efforts in their own States. This bill advances a noble cause that has added benefit of being a sound investment.

According to one recent analysis, every dollar spent through the Land and Water Conservation Fund turns out \$4 in economic benefit. Every \$1 million directed toward the LWCF in