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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2020, at 2 p.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 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.

O, God, our shield, look with favor upon our Senators today. Guide them around the obstacles that hinder their progress, uniting them for the common good of this great land.

Lord, free them from anxiety and fear as they put their trust in You. Enable them to go from strength to strength, fulfilling Your purpose for their lives in this generation. Guide them to use their abilities and talents to accomplish Your holy will. Striving to please You, help them to stand for right and leave the consequences to You.

We pray in Your Holy 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. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, we are taking a very important vote tomorrow on a bill called the JUSTICE Act. I am proud to cosponsor this police reform bill, and I also applaud Senator TIM SCOTT for his leadership in improving police accountability while at the same time preserving the essential service that law enforcement provides. These are the people who maintain the peace in the respective communities around the United States.

We are ready to work with Democrats on police reform. I hope the Democrats finally are willing to come to the table.

A successful vote to proceed to the JUSTICE Act speaks volumes. A vote against proceeding shows the American people that politics are more important than people, talking points more important than change, and gridlock more important than solutions.

Surely, Democrats want police reform. I hope Democrats will vote in favor of opening debate on the JUSTICE Act. George Floyd and countless others so murdered deserve the Senate's action and consideration of this bill.

I yield the floor.

PROTESTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 2 weeks ago, I argued that civil discourse in America faces a crossroads.

A major newspaper had buckled under pressure from the social media mob. They apologized profusely for publishing a policy argument from a U.S. Senator and made personnel changes to prove their penitence. I said that we could either recommit to our tradition of seasoned debate or let an angry mob run our culture.

Recent days have reminded us that it is not just our present-day debates that far-left radicals want to overwhelm. They also want to rewrite the past.

Back in 2017, when people wondered whether our important conversations over Confederate monuments would give the far left a broader taste for pulling down statues, major newspapers and media figures literally mocked that concern. They said there were obvious differences between rebel generals and our Nation's Founders. They said nobody would come gunning for Washington or Jefferson. Well, the far left missed the memo.

A few days ago, in Portland, OR, a mob graffitied a statue of our first President, pulled it down, and burned an American flag over his head. This is George Washington.

Another Washington statue was defaced in Baltimore. A statue of Thomas Jefferson was ripped down in Portland also. This is the general and first President who built our Nation and the author of the Declaration of Independence—genius statesmen who helped begin this grand experiment that has

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

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



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brought freedom to hundreds of millions and saved the world a few times for good measure.

Yet, a crazy fringe is treating their monuments like vanity statues of tin-horn tyrants. Our Founding Fathers are being roped to the ground like they were Saddam Hussein.

The list goes on: Saint Junipero Serra, the missionary settler whom Pope Francis celebrated here in Washington a few years ago to bipartisan applause, sided with native people over soldiers; Ulysses S. Grant, the general who crushed the Confederacy, the President who used Federal force to fight the Klan. They, too, have been placed on the historical hit list for this new Red Guard that nobody elected. There are more monuments toppled up and down the west coast.

There could be no clearer sign that these far-left radicals have severed any connection to the righteous cause of racial justice. They have literally tried to succeed where Robert E. Lee failed and bring General Grant to the ground.

Like any cultural revolution, this far-left anger is sparing some heroes of their own. I understand that in Seattle, a large statue of Vladimir Lenin stands quite untouched. Apparently, people claim with a straight face that this Communist statue has survived because it is located—wait for it—on private property. So the Founding Father of the mass-murdering Soviet Union watches over Seattle streets, but our own Founding Fathers are dragged in the dirt.

A small slice of our national elite has spent years cooking up highfalutin theories to justify the cheapest, basest forms of anti-Americanism. The absurd claim that America's deepest founding principle is bigotry has escaped the ivory tower and begun seeping into society.

The United States of America can and should have nuanced conversations about our complex past. We can and should have discussions about our future. We can and should have peaceful protests. But this lawlessness serves none of that. It is just an alliance of convenience between angry criminals who think it is fun to wreak havoc and a slice of elite society that profits off saying that our country is evil and deserves the abuse. Enough. Enough.

The vast majority of Americans know full well that imperfect heroes are still heroes, that our imperfect Union is still the greatest Nation in world history. Americans know that our imperfect Framers built our Nation on moral truths that fueled improvement beyond anything their generation could have built themselves. The American people know this. They also know that we cannot let angry mobs carrying ropes act outside the rule of law.

It was central to the 14th Amendment and the civil rights movement that law enforcement and local authorities may not do their jobs selectively. If “equal protection of the

laws” means anything, it means mayors and Governors cannot selectively stand down because they would rather not pay the political price for confronting a particular mob. But that is precisely what we are seeing in Democratic-governed cities all across our country.

In Seattle, for weeks now, a mayor has let bands of people ban police from several square blocks. People have been shot. A teenager has died. But, apparently, stopping this insanity has been deemed less politically correct than letting it continue. Night after night, Governors and mayors have stood down and watched criminals spray paint churches and topple statues. Public order is now totally optional and depends on the lawbreaker’s politics.

Here in Washington, last night, local police protected one monument from a memorial-hunting mob over near the White House. It is past time for that courage to be replicated in every city, every night, until Americans have the peace and the rule of law that all of our citizens deserve.

It is no surprise that people who want to say our country is intrinsically evil are so frantic to erase history that they will break the law to do it. Erasing history is the only way their claims could carry any water.

Americans know that an imperfect nation built by imperfect heroes is still the most perfect Union the world has ever seen. We are proud to build statues of the geniuses who fought to found this country. We are proud to build statues to the leaders who have preserved it. We are proud to build statues of prophetic civil rights leaders who made the country confront gross injustice. We thank God that all kinds of imperfect people have made us a more perfect Union.

When the dust settles, it is never—never—the mobs or bullies whom we honor. It is the brave leaders who confront them.

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on a totally different matter, last week, Senator SCOTT of South Carolina and a group of our colleagues rolled out the JUSTICE Act—a serious set of proposals to move the ball for police reform across the country.

This legislation identifies a number of smart levers that Congress can pull to advance and encourage smart reforms of law enforcement without steamrolling States’ and localities’ constitutional powers.

It would step up transparency in reporting and recordkeeping. It would expand accountability and disciplinary measures needed to establish and restore community trust. It would directly address issues, such as choke holds and no-knock warrants, which have been in the news lately for reasons that nobody believes are acceptable.

These are the subjects that the country needs us to address. Accordingly, these are the subjects Senator SCOTT’s proposal does address.

The American people expect us to do our jobs, discuss, debate, and legislate on this subject that has captured the Nation’s attention—discussion, debate, and votes on amendments.

Tomorrow, we will find out whether even these modest steps are a bridge too far for our colleagues on the Democratic side.

Earlier this month, Senate Democrats were telling everyone who would listen that we would be derelict in our duty if we did not have police reform legislation on the floor of the Senate this month. But then, as soon as the junior Senator from South Carolina actually published something concrete, their tune changed rather sharply.

Now, suddenly, our Democratic colleagues are reportedly agonizing and debating whether to let the Senate have this discussion at all or whether to kill any chance of reform legislation before it can even taxi onto the runway.

The American people deserve better than a partisan stalemate. The American people deserve for the Senate to take up this issue at this time.

Senate Republicans want to have this discussion. We are ready to make a law, not just make a point.

Tomorrow, we will find out whether our Democratic colleagues share our ambition or whether they choose to duck the issue and leave the country in the lurch.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cory T. Wilson, of Mississippi, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

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