

a ship." The most important question for a party in power is simply this: Can you govern? I say this to my Republican friends. In other words, can you steer the ship? Can you pilot this great Nation of ours in the right direction?

We are just over 100 days in this Republican-controlled Congress, and it is already clear that the Republican leader and his side have not been up to the task. One need look no further than the Republicans' botched handling of the human trafficking bill before the Senate.

I would just say in partial response to my friend the Republican leader that I have never been a big fan of polling—political polling or any kind of polling—because you can get any answer you want by asking the right question. Of course, the Republican leader, in the questions submitted to the Congressional Research Service, asked the wrong questions.

The majority leader and the assistant majority leader took a piece of legislation and steered it right into the rocks. The ship has sprung many leaks. All Democrats and Republicans support the provisions of this bill to help the victims of sexual trafficking and hold the offenders accountable, but instead of legislating on common ground, the Republicans are legislating to obstruct. When they were in the minority, all they did was obstruct. So they know how to do that. I vouch for that. One of the things I said was that we are not going to treat them the way they treated us. And we haven't done that.

The Republicans, now in the majority, can't filibuster themselves so they are resorting to tanking good legislation—bills they themselves wrote and support—in order to score some type of political point. Does that seem like reasonable governance to anyone? I don't think so.

Yesterday, I sat listening to the majority leader—and I did today—claiming that they are seeking a compromise, even saying that Republicans have offered three compromises. Well, if we are just going on the number of offers made, we have done 10. We have made 10 good-faith offers to get this human trafficking bill on the right path. We have tried and tried and tried to reach an agreement. We have done 10. I will mention just a few.

We proposed that they strip the Hyde language from the bill. Then we proposed the Leahy substitute, which would strip the Hyde language and also include LEAHY's Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Senator KLOBUCHAR's Stop Exploitation through Trafficking Act, which would strengthen the legislation. Then we proposed to use the entire trafficking bill passed by the House instead of the Cornyn bill. That is the bill the House passed. Let's bring it to the floor here and pass it. We even proposed to keep the Cornyn fund but use it only for law enforcement efforts to help catch sex traffickers and use the House bill's authorization for victims services, including health care.

But Republicans would not agree to any of those changes. They simply are not interested in getting to "yes." This morning, I heard some talk that maybe we can work something out. I hope that, in fact, is true. I hope they are not using this urgently needed trafficking bill to continue to push through the party's backward agenda relating to women's health.

The Hyde language—I served in the House of Representatives more than 30 years ago. I served with Congressman Hyde, a fine man. If there ever were anyone who looked like a public servant, it was Henry Hyde—big man, beautiful white hair, great speaking voice. He, this good Congressman, is responsible for the Hyde language. It has been in bills since then, but it applied and has always applied to government money, taxpayer money—taxpayer money.

What we have said over the last couple of weeks time and time again is that Hyde should not be expanded to cover nontaxpayer dollars. That is what this is all about. We are not going to bend on that issue. It is not right. We do not need to expand Hyde. We think the Republicans believe this is a way to pacify the right-to-life community, some of these—not all but some of these ideologues out there who want to expand Hyde. We are not going to allow that to happen. Hyde should apply to taxpayer-funded money and nothing else.

What has taken place on the direction of human trafficking is an effort to obfuscate—to hide the real purpose of the legislation. We all agree that human trafficking should stop. This legislation we have before us is a step in the right direction. We want to support that legislation.

My friend the Republican leader said: Well, all they are complaining about is a sentence or so. Well, that is why people spend all these years going to law school, taking contracts courses. That is why my friend the assistant Republican leader, who served as a trial court judge, a supreme court justice—during his entire career, he dealt with lawyers coming to him talking about sentences in a contract or sentences in a piece of legislation. That is what this is all about.

We should eliminate those sentences that allow Hyde to be expanded to nontaxpayer money. We cannot allow that to happen.

So, over 100 days into this Congress, we should move forward and get this bill done. It is time that, on this legislation, Republicans right the ship. If human trafficking legislation is any indication, Republicans have not had a desire to govern dependably. I think that is unfair.

I hope this cloture vote will be defeated. I hope at that time people will finally come to the realization that we are willing to do whatever needs to be done to change this language so that the Hyde language is not applied to taxpayer dollars. If that is the case, we can move forward expeditiously.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

McConnell (for Cornyn) amendment No. 1120, to strengthen the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act by incorporating additional bipartisan amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Texas

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture vote at 11 a.m. this morning.

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

100TH DAY OF THE NEW CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am an optimistic person. As a matter of fact, I think everybody from Texas is an optimist. Can you imagine the challenges the people who founded our State had—Indians, wide-open hostile territory, tough weather. But they persevered because they were optimists. They thought the fight was worth the struggle. They thought the goal and the accomplishment—the hope for accomplishment—was worth the struggle.

I still remain optimistic—despite the last few weeks that have challenged that optimism—that we will actually break through here and get to consider and vote on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and get help to the people whom the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, described, the children who cannot help themselves. I mean, for heaven's sake, if we cannot help the most vulnerable people in our country—children who cannot help themselves, who are the victims of modern-day slavery—what in the world can we do?

So we have marked 100 days here in the Senate with the new Republican majority. As I look back, I do not think anybody can deny that under the majority leader's stewardship we have had some significant accomplishments in a relatively short period of time. Sure, it has been bumpy along the way. The Keystone XL Pipeline was a significant bump in the road. But we had a strong bipartisan vote. Unfortunately, the President decided to veto that legislation.

After years of this Chamber being used solely for the purpose of messaging and conducting political show votes, we are actually starting to get