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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Almighty God, our Lord, how excellent is Your Name in all the Earth. Today, open the hearts of our lawmakers to what You have done, are doing, and will do for those who love You. As they remember how You led our Nation in the past, increase their optimism regarding what the future can bring. Help them to remember that even when wrong seems very strong, You continue to rule and that Your sovereignty will prevail.

Give us this day our daily bread, not only of physical renewal but of spiritual sustenance, lest our souls starve in the far country of neglect or indulgence.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The majority leader is recognized.

SERIOUS DEBATE IN THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate will engage in a debate of immense importance to our country. I again ask every Senator to reflect upon its gravity.

At its heart, this is about more than just the short term prospects of one

agreement or the long-term legacy of one President or the narrow interests of one political party. Wrapped within are larger questions about the prospects for stability in a region, the potential for safety in a nation, and the continued role for our country in a dangerous and uncertain world.

We can't escape these questions. Their answers carry the potential to touch every American and future generations.

The American people deserve our deliberate and considered responses. They deserve a Senate that can rise to the moment. Tired talking points won't get us there. A filibuster won't do it, either. But here is what will: Respecting each other will get us there. Serious discussion will get us there. A debate worthy of the moment will get us there. So that is what I am calling for again today.

I ask every Senator to join me at their desks this afternoon so that we might listen to colleagues as well as debate colleagues. A serious debate and an open vote on this issue is the very least our country should expect. That is the least we should be able to give them.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEADLINES IN THE SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday my friend, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER of Tennessee, said: "I recognize, and have all along, that it takes 60 Senators to advance legislation and get to a final vote on a bill or resolution." No equivocation, no dancing around the issue—the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee established what we have known all along: It takes 60 votes.

His counterpart, Senator CARDIN of Maryland, also agrees that 60 votes was

always the intention. One Senator at the hearings voted no on the resolution because he didn't want it to be 60 votes. Everybody else voted for that. Forty-seven Republican Senators sent a letter to the Ayatollah, explaining to them how the Senate works. In that letter, all 47 Republican Senators acknowledged that it takes three-fifths votes to get things done here in the Senate.

So that is over and done with. The resolution before us will take 60 votes to pass. The direct quote from Senator CORKER that I read is in black and white. There aren't any words of mine; those are his words. That is a direct quote from the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

So that is what we have. Republicans have clearly conceded that it takes 60 votes to advance a resolution of disapproval.

Filibusters stop debate. We are willing to have all the debate the Republicans want—2 hours, 2 days, whatever they want. It has to be completed by next Thursday. That is the only deadline that I can see.

The good news is that Senate Democrats, of course, on this side of the aisle, continue to propose that following ample debate, the Senate then proceed directly to a vote on final passage. Of course, it would have a 60-vote threshold, as the chairman of the committee said yesterday. There would be no need for any other procedural votes. We would just do that. There is no need for the Republican leader to continue wasting the Senate's time—and it is precious.

Look at what we have this week. There is basically one more legislative day this week. Next week, we have two days, Monday and Tuesday, which are long-time celebrations by the entire Congress of a Jewish holiday. We have the deadline of September 17 for this matter dealing with Iran to be completed, as far as Senate floor action. Staring us in the face at the end of the

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



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