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Senate

The Senate met at 1 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.

Gracious God, the center of our joy, we thank You for all the blessings we receive daily as gifts from You. Though we don't deserve them, Your mercies provide for all our needs.

Help our lawmakers this day to move from simply knowing about You into a vital relationship based on faith in the unfolding of Your loving providence. Inspire them to rely on Your love as they seek to live faithfully.

As You cleanse our hearts and keep us clean, birth within us all a burning desire to flee from all habitual and willful sin.

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

REMEMBERING STATE TROOPER JOSEPH PONDER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Joseph Ponder was proud to be a Kentucky State police trooper. "He was eager and just absolutely loved his job," is how a State police spokesman described him.

Ponder tragically lost his life in the line of duty this week. We are thinking of that 31-year-old Rineyville native today in the Senate. We are praying for his family and for his friends.

I know his fellow officers in the law enforcement community feel the loss and so do Kentuckians whom he worked every day to protect. So I ask the entire Senate community to join me in honoring Trooper Ponder.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a different matter, as the Senate continues debating President Obama's deal with Iran today, I think it is appropriate to consider a quote from the President himself. Here is what he said:

I believe Congress owes the American people a final up-or-down vote. We need courage. You know, in the end, this debate is about far more than politics.

When it comes to the Iran deal, you would have to say the President is right. After all, do Senators think it is right for the world's leading sponsor of terror to be able to maintain an American-recognized nuclear program? Do Senators think it is right that this deal would effectively subsidize Hezbollah, Hamas, and Bashar al-Assad by channeling literally billions of dollars to their benefactors in Tehran? Do Senators approve of a deal that would leave Iran with an enrichment capability just as the Iranian leadership is again calling for Israel's destruction and praying for ours as well? It is hard to see how Senators could agree with these things.

Many Democratic colleagues, including the top Democrats on the Foreign Affairs Committees in both Houses of Congress who are among the most familiar with the President's deal with Iran, have already come out in opposition. A strong bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives voted to reject the deal. A strong bipartisan majority of the Senate would vote to re-

ject it as well, if only Democratic Senators would stop blocking the American people from even having a final vote on one of the most consequential foreign policy issues of our time.

Democratic Senators will have a chance to vote on behalf of their constituents later today. Perhaps they will consider the President's words I quoted earlier. It is from a 2010 speech about ObamaCare. If the President was so insistent on "courage" and a "final up-or-down vote" back then on ObamaCare, how can he justify blocking a vote now on an issue of such immense magnitude as the Iran deal? It is part of a larger retreat to campaigning instead of engaging on this important issue, ad hominem attacks instead of serious debate, campaign one-liners instead of intellectual arguments, and simply ignoring reality when it becomes inconvenient. That is why you see the President claiming "strong support of lawmakers and citizens" for his Iran deal.

Well, here is what the Washington Post's Fact Checker had to say about that:

Any way you slice it, it is difficult to support the claim that there is "strong support" for the Iran deal among lawmakers and citizens. This is clearly a case of winning ugly, in the face of minority support among lawmakers and increasing opposition among American citizens.

The White House certainly did better than many analysts expected, since enough Democrats supported the agreement to prevent a final Senate vote on the merits. And Obama avoided a veto fight. But that's different than having "strong support" for the deal.

That is the Washington Post Fact Checker.

So if Democrats share the President's determination to "win ugly" on this important issue, then they have sufficient numbers to do that, apparently, but I would remind my colleagues of something. This debate should not be about a President who will leave office in 16 months. It should be about where our country will be in 16 years.

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



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