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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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, the refuge of the distressed, thank You that in our troubles You sustain us with Your loving kindness and tender mercy. Forgive us when we neglect to find in You a shelter from life's storms.

Today, fill our Senators with a vibrant faith. Give them complete confidence in Your providential leading. May the fire of Your love consume all things in their lives that displease You. As they are led by Your Spirit, give them Your peace.

We pray in Your sacred 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. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, whether traveling for business or leisure, American passengers want to feel safe and informed when flying. They also want to feel assured that in light of recent terror attacks, more is being done in our airports and in our skies. Chairman THUNE knows this, and that is why he has worked attentively with Members from both sides to put forth

this bipartisan FAA reauthorization and security bill. I appreciate his work with the Aviation Subcommittee chair, Senator AYOTTE, and their counterparts, Senator NELSON and Senator CANTWELL, to move this important bill forward.

There are several good security measures included in the bill, such as increased efforts to prevent cyber security risks and efforts to help better prepare us when it comes to communicable diseases. But these Senators didn't stop there; they worked to include additional safety measures in an amendment that passed by a bipartisan majority.

Here is what we know the amendment will do: It will help prevent the "inside threat" of terrorism by enhancing inspections and vetting of airport employees. It will require a review of perimeter security. It will also improve various efforts to secure international flights coming into our airports.

In addition to these steps designed to ramp up security, we also adopted an amendment from Senator HEINRICH that would increase security in prescreening areas which could be vulnerable to terror attacks. And Senators TOOMEY and CASEY have worked tirelessly to get the Senate to pass an amendment addressing the security of cockpit doors.

These three amendments, put forth by Republicans and Democrats, emphasize the bipartisan nature of this issue and of this bipartisan FAA reauthorization and security bill.

Nearly 60 amendments from both sides were accepted in committee, and more than a dozen from both sides were accepted here on the floor. I encourage Members to continue working across the aisle to move this bill forward.

As the chairman reminded us yesterday, this bill contains the most comprehensive set of aviation security reforms in years. So let's take the next step in passing this legislation and getting it one step closer to becoming law.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE CATUCCI

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 40 years ago this week, Christine Catucci set out to spend her summer as a tour guide at the Capitol. She still remembers her first day in the summer of 1976. It was a much different time back then, without the screening protocols and limitations on where visitors could go as we have today. Christine parked her car and walked straight up the main Rotunda steps, ready to work.

She didn't have intentions of staying past the summer, much less for four decades. But today, some 16 Sergeants at Arms and 7 Presidential administrations later, Christine is still a smiling, friendly face to those who enter, which is important because, as director of the Senate Appointment Desk, she is often the first person a visitor sees when visiting the Capitol.

As the years have gone by, Christine's responsibilities and admiration for the Senate have grown. She still considers it an honor and a privilege to help those visiting the Capitol, and that is true, she says, "whether it is an official business visitor or a 'starry-eyed' tourist." She says that she loves seeing the awe people have when they visit the Capitol and she is proud to be a part of that experience.

The joy this institution and this career have brought to Christine obviously made a pretty big impact on the love of her life, her daughter Nichole. Nichole works just one floor up from her mom, and in Christine's words, she is "a constant reminder . . . that family comes first."

Today, Christine's Senate family would like to congratulate her on this notable milestone. We thank her for her four decades of steadfast service, and we look forward to seeing the impact she will continue to make here in the Capitol.

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



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RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY
LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AN ENJOYABLE DIVERSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, no matter what work or occupation one has, it is always good to have a diversion away from their duties of the day.

I am very careful about never speaking for the Republican leader, but I will make an exception today and talk a little bit about my friend the Republican leader.

We both find a diversion during baseball season. We can leave here—it really doesn't matter what time; usually the games are at night—and we can watch the Nationals play baseball. The Republican leader and I have talked about this often—how much we enjoy the games—and we have enjoyed the games much more since this young man from Las Vegas, Bryce Harper, is on the baseball team, the Washington Nationals. He comes from a great family, a working family. His father was an ironworker. They are a close family.

Prior to the Nationals even having a team here—I have been here a long time—I followed the Orioles, and just as a side note, I should mention how happy I am for Peter Angelos, the owner, that fine man, that his team is doing so well this year. They are 7 and 0.

So Senator MCCONNELL and I enjoy baseball season. It gives us an opportunity to focus on things other than what is going on in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE CATUCCI

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I join with the Republican leader today in honoring Christine Catucci on the occasion, which has already been mentioned, of her 40th anniversary of working for the U.S. Senate.

In any given year, about 2½ million people visit this beautiful building. Bill Dauster, who is here with me and is with me virtually every day, every place I go, was just commenting before the prayer was given how fortunate we are to work in this magnificent building. And as the Republican leader mentioned in his comments about Ms. Catucci, people become starry-eyed looking at this building. We are here all the time, and we may not appreciate it as much as we should every day. It is a beautiful building.

For those of us who are fortunate enough to venture over to the place where she works—down on the first floor is where she spends most of her day, and that is where most of the people come into that floor—you will see a great smile. That smile belongs to her. I first saw that smile many years ago. We had a Senate retreat. She was there to help staff us, and she played a vital role in making sure the retreat worked well. I have always remembered her

from that one experience. She does have a disarming smile, for which we should all be grateful. I know I am.

She has been here for 40 years. The only person who has been here as a Senator longer than Christine is PAT LEAHY from Vermont. She has seniority over everybody except Senator LEAHY.

Her career began in the last year of Gerald Ford's Presidency. She worked as a tour guide, chaperoning people through the Capitol and giving people explanations as to what they were looking at at the time. In 1980 she moved to the Office of the Doorkeeper of the Senate and moved through a number of positions there for 11 years.

In 1991, she arrived at the Senate Appointment Desk, where she has worked for the last 25 years. She is the director, overseeing a staff of nine.

Over the years, she has developed a close relationship with Senators and staff, and she can recount with pleasure the times that Senator Robert Byrd—the legendary Robert Byrd from West Virginia—would invite her and some of her coworkers to have lunch with him in his Capitol office. He didn't eat much, if anything, but he talked all the time, telling stories. I was the recipient of a number of the stories of the late, great Senator Byrd.

The Senate is her family, literally. Her father was a Senate doorkeeper from 1967 to 1977. Her daughter Nichole works in the cloakroom right behind us. That is three generations of Senate staffers.

It was Nichole who summed up everything great about her mother for me when she said: "My mom raised me all by herself and did an amazing job as a single mom while working full-time."

So this is Christine Catucci. It is her work ethic and caring dedication that she has brought to the Senate every day for the last 40 years—four decades. Thank you very much for being a part of our Senate family.

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, throughout his career in the Senate, the senior Senator from Iowa has styled himself as an advocate for transparency in government. A number of years ago he said:

I believe in the principle of open government. Lack of transparency in the public policy process leads to cynicism and distrust of public officials. . . . As a matter of principle, the American people need to be made aware of any action that prevents a matter from being considered by their elected Senators.

He reiterated his beliefs just a few days ago here in this Chamber, and here is what he said last week:

The principle of government transparency is one that does not expire. . . . Open government is good government. And Americans have a right to a government that is accountable to its people.

So Senator GRASSLEY's commitment to transparency is as shallow as the shallowest puddle you could find.

All it took was one phone call, obviously, from the Republican leader for Senator GRASSLEY to abandon any pretense of transparency and shut the American people out of the Supreme Court nomination process—shut them out.

This is the same Senator who once said, "As a matter of principle, the American people need to be made aware of any action that prevents a matter from being considered by their elected Senators."

Nothing that Senator GRASSLEY has done with respect to the Supreme Court vacancy meets his own standard for transparency.

There was no transparency when the Judiciary Committee chairman and his Republican committee members shut Democrats out and met with the Republican leader behind closed doors. There was no transparency when he twisted the arms of his own committee members to sign a loyalty oath, again behind closed doors. There was no transparency when he sought to move a public committee meeting behind closed doors just to avoid talking about the Supreme Court nomination. And there was certainly no transparency on Tuesday—yesterday—when at 8 o'clock in the morning he met downstairs with Judge Merrick Garland in the private Senate Dining Room moments before slipping out the back door to avoid reporters. This is how CNN reported it: "The Iowa Senator left the high-profile but out-of-sight meeting via a backdoor that leads to his private 'hideaway.'"

One television station in Iowa put it this way: "Grassley evaded reporters."

This is the same Senator who once supported cameras in Federal courtrooms, including the Supreme Court. Why? To increase transparency, so he said. But Senator GRASSLEY only wants transparency to apply to others, I guess not to himself. When it comes to transparency, his attitude is strictly: "Do as I say, not as I do."

He won't even apply a degree of that same openness as he blocks a nominee to the highest Court in the land. There will be no transparency if Senator GRASSLEY fails to call an open hearing where Chief Justice Garland can present himself to the American people.

I have had people ask me: Why wouldn't there be a hearing? Well, it is obvious. They are all afraid. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee is afraid that this good man, if the American people see him, will understand why he is a nomination that couldn't be better. They are afraid to allow this man to be seen by the American public. Talking about transparency, there won't be any if the Republican Senators aren't going to be able to even have a vote on the nomination.

All of this that has been going on is not like the Senator GRASSLEY who I have served with for more than three decades. By carrying out the present leader's failed strategy to undermine