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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.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, thank You for the spirit of contentment we can receive from You, bringing quietness and faith to our hearts.

Today, use our Senators for Your purposes, enabling them to live worthy of Your Name. May the words they speak bring edification and unity as our lawmakers build bridges of cooperation. Lord, give them the wisdom to depart from strife, remembering that soft answers turn away anger. Inspire them to avoid contention in their search for common ground. Give them cheerful hearts and optimistic spirits.

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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6297

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6297) to reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 6297

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 6297, which was received from the House; further that the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate; finally, if passed, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, has had some trouble with this. I spoke to her last night. She said to go ahead and let this go. She is totally in agreement now that there would be time for debate on this issue and a vote. We understand that. So I am not objecting to this matter.

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

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. This week, Senators will have a chance to pass the Iran Sanctions Extension Act that recently passed the House on an overwhelming vote. Preserving these sanctions is critical, given Iran's disturbing pattern of aggression and its persistent efforts to expand its sphere of influence across the Middle East.

This is all the more important, given how the administration has ignored Iran's overall efforts to upset the balance of power in the greater Middle East and how it has been held hostage by Iran's threats to withdraw from the nuclear agreement. The authorities extended by this bill give us some of the tools needed to impose sanctions if necessary to hold Iran accountable and help keep Americans safer from this threat.

I expect that next year the new Congress and the new administration will undertake a review of our overall policy toward Iran, and these authorities should remain in place as we address how best to deal with Iranian missile tests, support to Hezbollah, and support of the Syrian regime.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we come to the end of this year and of this Congress, we will continue in our efforts to complete the business before us. Members have been working diligently on their respective conference committees to conclude the outstanding conference reports on the Defense authorization bill, the waterways infrastructure and resources bill, and the energy policy modernization bill. I look forward to the full Senate taking up these measures as they are available so that we can pass final legislation to be signed into law.

In the coming days, the Senate will also consider a critical and bipartisan medical innovation bill known as the 21st Century Cures bill, as well as a

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



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