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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, the might of them that put their trust in You, save us from the fatal folly of relying upon our strength alone.

Help our lawmakers to remember that You are the only sure refuge and You desire to do for us more than we can ask or imagine. Give our Senators the courage to seek Your truth and the humility to walk in the light You provide. May their labors contribute to America's strength and influence in our world as You use them to lift aloft the light of freedom. As our legislators labor for Your glory, may they know that they are part of Your ultimate plan for our Nation and world.

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. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 47

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 title of the bill for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 47) to provide for the management of the natural resources of the United States, and for other purposes.

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 having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, President Trump delivered his first address to the Nation from the Oval Office. In the midst of this partial government shutdown, the President offered a reminder of just what is at stake; that is, the security of our Nation's southern border.

By now, on day 19 of Senate Democrats' latest experiment in "absentee negotiation," my colleagues are well-versed in the facts on the ground.

We know Border Patrol agents are encountering historic levels of illicit substances like fentanyl and heroin at our border. We know that last year saw thousands of attempted border crossings by individuals with criminal records and literally hundreds more by known gang members. We understand the status quo is not enough to keep our families and communities safe.

Fortunately, we know the solutions on the table—solutions which the President has placed at the center of the national conversation since the earliest days of his administration—are actually eminently reasonable.

As one former Border Patrol Chief's under President Obama put it just recently, "If you look in the past, you don't have to go too far back into history . . . bipartisan legislation passed where they built the wall, or fence, or physical barrier, or whatever you want to call it. It's a wall. It works."

That is what the Border Patrol Chief under President Obama said.

He went on to say:

It is not based on personal political ideology. That's based on historical data and facts that could be proven. . . . I cannot think of a legitimate argument why anyone would not support the wall as part of the multi-layered border security issue.

So why are we not listening to the experts and the people who are doing this every day, like that Border Patrol Chief under President Obama?

The experts know what they are talking about. The facts back them up. According to CBP, in four border sectors where this administration has already constructed or improved physical barriers in the last 2 years—listen to this—illicit traffic has fallen by 90 percent—90 percent.

Of course, not too long ago, my colleagues across the aisle had a completely different position on this subject. Before the political winds blew a different way, before this particular President was inaugurated, Senate Democrats did heed the advice of the men and women who protect our border.

By very wide bipartisan margins, and on multiple occasions, the Senate has cleared literally billions of dollars in funding for physical barriers along the southern border.

In 2006, then-Senator Obama said the Secure Fence Act would provide "badly needed funding for better fences and better security." That is what then-Senator Obama said in 2006.

In 2009, the current Democratic leader praised as major progress "630 miles of border fence"—fence—"that create a significant barrier to illegal immigration." That is what the then-majority leader said in 2009, who is now the minority leader.

During the last Presidential election, former Senator Clinton saw fit to tout the "numerous times" she voted to "build a barrier to try and prevent illegal immigrants from coming in." That is what Hillary Clinton said. "Numerous times," "significant barrier,"

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



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