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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:

Eternal God, rescue us. Come quickly and bring the stability and unity we need.

May our lawmakers who seek You find You, receiving from Your divine presence wisdom, mercy, and power. Cleanse the inner fountains of our hearts from anything that will hinder Your will from being done.

Lord, You are our helper and redeemer. Do not delay.

We pray in Your powerful 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 (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 266

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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 (H.R. 266) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 2019, 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.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to S. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, over the course of this partial government shutdown, we have seen our Democratic colleagues engage in increasingly acrobatic contortions in order to dodge a serious conversation about the urgent humanitarian and security crisis down at our southern border. Their refusal to come to the negotiating table has serious implications for the hundreds of thousands of Federal workers going without pay and for all Americans who deserve a nation that can secure its own border.

Along the way, we have heard that new funding of any sort—any sort—of border barrier, even the kinds that Democrats have supported so recently and so often, would now be an immorality. An immorality?

We have heard serious proposals brushed aside with joking offers of \$1 to address the critical issue. We have

even heard frank admissions that, 30 days from now, there would be no progress toward an agreement on border security, even if the government were reopened.

Under normal circumstances, we could expect lines like these from the furthest left organizers and most vocal liberal protesters. But these are not normal circumstances. These are the words, believe it or not, of the Speaker of the House, the gentlelady from California, NANCY PELOSI.

It is unclear exactly when the Speaker made the determination that the explicit requests of the men and women who secure our borders and the safety of our communities would take a backseat to the political whims of the far left, that the border efforts toward which Democrats have agreed to direct billions of dollars in the past have transformed overnight into something evil. But here we are, day 25. We know the new and unreasonable position of the Speaker of the House.

So here, in the Senate, my Democratic colleagues have an important choice to make. They could stand with common sense, with border experts, with Federal workers—and with their own past voting records, by the way—or they could continue to remain passive spectators, complaining from the sidelines as the Speaker refuses to negotiate with the White House and ensures that our Nation keeps going round and round and round this political carousel. It is up to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

BORDER SECURITY

Madam President, on another matter, the substance of the border security issue is not the only subject that is occasioning a spectacular display of inconsistency from my colleagues across the aisle.

If you recall, since last week, the apparent position of Senate Democrats has been that the Senate itself cannot engage in any of the people's business until government funding is resolved.

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



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