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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.

Savior of humanity, Your unfailing love sustains us. Stagger freedom's enemies and bring them to their knees. Use our lawmakers so effectively that our citizens may rejoice because of Your mercy.

Lord, be for our Nation a towering rock of safety, a shelter in the time of storm. We wait quietly before You. So use Your strong arms to bring us Your peace.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute.

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. The latest political ploy by the Democrats is to paint the Senate majority leader as an obstructionist because he hasn't moved to consider certain bills passed by the other body.

Well, let's think about that for just a minute. They can hardly use that talking point anymore.

Yesterday, the Senate majority leader moved to take up the House-passed appropriations package, and the Senate Democrats blocked that motion.

The Senate isn't obliged to consider every partisan bill from the House, and the House doesn't have to consider every bill that is passed by the Senate. But if there is any House bill that the Senate has the responsibility to take up, to debate, and to amend, it is the annual spending bills to keep government operating. We have to fund the government, and that is what we are doing.

So I hope we don't hear any of this bellyaching anymore when we have a House bill that the Senate doesn't somehow take up.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I want to thank the senior Senator from Iowa for his observations this morning. That is exactly where we find ourselves with what happened on the Senate floor yesterday afternoon.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, Senate Democrats blocked this year's funding for our national defense. They voted it down. We can't move the legislation forward.

Democrats blocked the funding our commanders need to keep pace with Russia and China. Democrats blocked money for the tools and training that our men and women in uniform badly need while our adversaries continually pour money into new weapons and technology. The Democrats even voted against a pay raise—a pay raise—for our servicemembers. All but two Democrats voted to filibuster all of this and kept the Senate from even considering the legislation.

Never mind that before we adjourned in August the Democrats in the House and Senate all agreed to a carefully ne-

gotiated framework to keep our appropriations process on track. In fact, the Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader in the Senate publicly agreed to the exact dollar figure for the Defense bill they just voted down yesterday. They publicly agreed to the number in the Defense bill they just voted down yesterday.

We all agreed in the caps agreement that poison pills, new policy riders, or any changes to Presidential transfer authorities were off the table—off the table—unless both sides were on board.

So the appropriations process, including at the committee level with Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member LEAHY, appeared to be going pretty smoothly, but, as we have seen a number of other times in the recent past, the Democratic leadership seemed to have a change of heart.

Perhaps it sunk in that actually meeting President Trump and Republicans halfway, as divided government obviously requires, might have earned some criticism from the far left. But whatever the reason, our Democratic friends turned on a dime, reneged on the bipartisan agreement, and began demanding exactly the kinds of poison pills and partisan policy changes that we all promised not to do.

That is how we get to a spectacle like what happened yesterday. That is how we get to a place where 42 Senate Democrats vote to filibuster defense funding and obstruct a pay raise for our servicemembers, for all the world to see, because Democratic leadership decided they saw more of a political upside in picking new fights with the President than in keeping their word and investing in our men and women in uniform.

In fact, I understand that just yesterday, our Democratic leaders were offered even more money for the Labor-HHS bill, but they declined it. So it is not about the money. It is not about compromising and getting to yes. It is about not wanting to take yes for an answer.

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



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