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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.

Eternal God, we bask in the warmth of Your glory. You uphold the universe by the words of Your power today.

Today, walk with our Senators as they work. Help them to remember that there is no purity without vigilance, no learning without study, and no mastery without discipline. Lord, give them the wisdom to be willing to pay the price to honor You. Provide them with joy in service and devotion in discipleship. Infuse them with a spirit of power, love, and self-control.

We pray in Your mighty 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. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute in morning business.

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

BANGLADESH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, an op-ed I penned recently mentioned countries that still have blasphemy laws on the books, and it touched a nerve in Bangladesh. I certainly didn't mean to imply that it was the worst offender, and I commend Bangladesh for its support of almost 1 million Rohingya Muslim refugees who are

fleeing Burma. Bangladesh's secular government has also taken steps to prosecute perpetrators of religious-based crimes.

However, a 2016 report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom found that religious and civil society groups in Bangladesh fear increasing religious extremism. Moreover, some Bangladeshi leaders have warned that violators of the blasphemy laws would be prosecuted.

Bangladesh and the 68 other countries that still have blasphemy laws on the books should repeal these laws. That is why I am cosponsoring a resolution, S. Res. 458, calling on the global repeal of blasphemy laws.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

S. 2657

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this week, the Senate has a good opportunity to update the laws governing the way we harness and deploy America's tremendous domestic energy resources. It has been well over a decade since the last time comprehensive energy legislation was signed into Federal law.

Following our overwhelming vote yesterday to proceed to consideration of the American Energy Innovation Act, the Senate is on track to change that very soon. The American Energy Innovation Act put forward by Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member MANCHIN is thoroughly bipartisan. It contains provisions sponsored or cosponsored by more than 60 of our colleagues. It has come to include 50 individual pieces of legislation that the Energy and Natural Resources Committee considered last year.

Over the past 3 years, the Trump administration and this Congress have

worked together to secure historic advances for both the producers and consumers of affordable domestic energy. We have opened access to new energy reserves, streamlined the regulation of liquid natural gas exports, and halted or reversed the most egregious Obama-era regulatory burdens. The growing record is clear. We have helped to usher in a prosperous new era of U.S. energy independence.

The legislation we are considering this week is designed to build on those successes. It takes proactive steps to ensure the security, efficiency, and affordability of American energy for years to come.

First, it puts a strong tailwind behind programs, grants, and research efforts that are focused on energy innovation. That means significant investments in improving energy efficiency and grid storage technologies; new resources for the development of renewable geothermal, nuclear, and other energy sources to help sustain domestic energy independence; reauthorization for the Department of Energy's cutting-edge research at the Advanced Research Projects Agency; and a renewed commitment to carbon capture, utilization, and storage at coal production facilities.

In addition to energy innovation, the legislation also focuses on energy security. Since the last comprehensive update to the Federal energy laws in 2007, our Nation's critical infrastructure, including the electric grid, has changed significantly, and so have the threats it faces. Our colleagues' legislation tackles this head-on. It introduces incentives for electrical grid modernization and cyber security projects. It encourages utility providers to take proactive measures to protect ratepayers from the devastating effects of potential cyber attacks. It makes new technical cyber security assistance available to municipalities and rural utilities and authorizes grant funding for on-the-job workforce retraining.

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



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