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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 of light, as we approach Independence Day, we thank You for giving us the gift of true freedom.

You have blessed us with freedom from sin, guilt, and shame. You have redeemed us. You have also given us freedom from fear, providing us with peace in the midst of the storms.

Today, please guide our lawmakers so that they will fulfill Your purposes as they face the challenges of these times. Lord, awaken them to Your inescapable presence. Keep them from thinking that You are absent from our world or disinterested in it. Enable them to feel You in their midst as they grapple with the problems of our time.

We pray in Your strong 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 (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Department of Defense is the only agency that can't get a clean audit. Sometime around 1990, there was an audit law passed directing Depart-

ments to get to a point where they could get a clean audit. DOD is still the only one that hasn't.

Sometime around 2010, I believe, we laid down a requirement that the clean audit date ought to be met by 2017. Well, that wasn't met. So, for decades, DOD has been saying that they are almost there. Now they say it will be at least another 5 years before a clean opinion can be reached.

One reason they haven't been able to do that is the outdated mess of hundreds of financial management systems. Yet the Department of Defense still wants to spend almost \$200 million on an annual audit.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment to pause the audit effort that is doomed to fail anyway and, instead, invest that \$200 million in updating the Department of Defense financial management system because, until they get the financial management systems right, DOD will never be capable of having a clean audit.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, before I discuss the legislation before the Senate, I need to spend a moment on something broader. Our country needs to confront the Democratic Party's willingness to threaten our governing institutions themselves.

Earlier this year, as the Senate disposed of the least fair, least thorough, and most rushed impeachment in modern history, I offered a broader warning. I said: "Leaders in the opposite party increasingly argue that if our institutions don't produce the outcomes they like, our institutions themselves must be broken."

No longer do disappointments for Democrats mean that Democrats need better arguments. Now disappointments for Democrats are claimed as proof—proof—that our country is fundamentally broken or that James Madison messed something up.

So while we have far-left mobs attacking statues of our Founding Fathers from coast to coast, we have far-left politicians attacking the institutions those Founders left us.

Now, step back and look at the landscape of fundamental changes that leading Democrats or their close allies are demanding: amending the First Amendment to restrict its protections, ending the electoral college, packing the Supreme Court with new Justices, packing the Senate with new States, and, to accomplish all this, destroying the Senate's distinguishing feature that makes radical change hard by design.

We have an entire political movement that is telling us—literally out loud—that they have lost patience with playing by the rules and may well declare war on the rule book itself. A coalition of leftwing special interests are explicitly campaigning for "51 for 51." They want Senators to vandalize the rules to pass legislation with a simple majority and then use that ill-gotten power to cement a presumed advantage by awarding the District of Columbia two Senate seats.

They want to nuke the Senate to pack the Senate. This is naked politics. No neutral principle could explain why all these special interests prioritize this cause which most Americans oppose. No neutral principle explains why Democrats want the 20th most populous city to get two Senators all to itself when retrocession to Maryland would satisfy their own slogans more cleanly.

No neutral principle explains why House Democrats wasted floor time on a potentially unconstitutional show vote.

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



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