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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, Your grace continues to sustain us in times of misfortune or prosperity. We are grateful for Your loving purposes that continually crown our years with goodness. Today, enable our lawmakers to see with faith's eyes each blessing that comes disguised as adversity and each temptation that hides beneath the mask of prosperity. Make them grateful for disasters averted and advancements made. Lord, let Your love touch our world because of their labors as You make them ambassadors of Your purposes. Protect our Senators and teach them Your paths. Prosper the work of their hands as You keep them from stumbling or slipping.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 21, 2015.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, President Obama recently proclaimed this to be National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a stark reminder of the countless victims of modern slavery who continue to suffer horrifying exploitation at the hands of human traffickers, a stark reminder of the need to pass the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

It is a bill that victims groups and advocates call "the most comprehensive and thoughtful piece of anti-trafficking legislation currently pending." It provides unprecedented support to domestic victims of trafficking who are all too often invisible and underserved. This group further said: "As leaders in the anti-trafficking, anti-violence, child welfare, civil rights, runaway and homeless youth, and human rights movements, we urge Congress to pass this critical piece of legislation."

There have been good-faith negotiations to resolve the impasse that has prevented the Senate from moving forward on this bill. I am glad that we can now say there is a bipartisan proposal that would allow us to complete action on this important legislation so we can provide help to the victims who desperately need it.

As soon as we finish the trafficking bill, as I have indicated for some time

now, we will move to the President's nominee for Attorney General—hopefully, in the next day or so.

I particularly want to thank the senior Senator from Texas for leading these negotiations and for his continued diligence on this important issue. There is really no stronger advocate for victims of human trafficking than Senator CORNYN.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, after weeks of stalling a bipartisan human trafficking bill, our Republican colleagues have now agreed not to expand the scope of the Hyde language. Democrats and Republicans have come to an agreement on a path forward out of this pointless contrived fight.

It also rejects an expansion of the Hyde language to any taxpayer dollars where it did not apply before. This is really good news. I thank the senior Senator from Washington, PATTY MURRAY, for the work she put into brokering this compromise. But I have to say and throw a bouquet to AMY KLOBUCHAR, who has worked so hard on this for weeks and weeks. She has been very relentless in working toward an agreement on this.

She has worked consistently to arrive at the conclusion that we have arrived at. I express my appreciation to Senator LEAHY on the Judiciary Committee, who has been available for us at any given time to help us work through these issues.

It was not easy, but their efforts—the Senators I have mentioned—have been extremely important to fight human trafficking, which is really very, very

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



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important for us to do. But we also rejected efforts to further obstruct a woman's access to services they deserve and need and which we believe are within the law.

I also want to say something about Senator CORNYN. JOHN CORNYN—I talked to him Thursday. We thought we had something worked out. He has been very reasonable in helping us arrive at a conclusion to this. I express my appreciation to him publicly for that. This compromise is evidence that when Democrats and Republicans sit down together and work toward a solution, good things can happen. The Senate needs more of this.

But let's hope that post-agreement amendments do not ruin the agreement that we have reached. Each side is going to have to be cautious in what they offer, because any one of those amendments, as we know, can cause a minifilibuster or a maxifilibuster, according to how you look at it.

We do not need to get involved in that. We need to move forward on this legislation. We are going to have opportunities on other matters to offer amendments. I think we better be very, very careful on amendments that are offered. I say to my Republican colleagues: Be very careful that you do not destroy this human trafficking legislation that is so important. You can do it with—I have looked at some of the amendments that are being talked about being offered.

My Senators are not going to sit back like shrinking violets and let this stuff go forward without responding by action that will also cause some difficult votes for my Republican colleagues. So let's get rid of this quickly. Let's get Loretta Lynch confirmed quickly and move on to other matters.

EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on another subject, it is extremely difficult to compare one Congress to another. Each Congress is unique—changing times, shifting issues, and new administrations with which to work. But one manner of gauging the success of a Congress is simply to tally the number of Presidential nominees who have been confirmed. After all, offering its advice and consent on nominees is the Senate's constitutional duty.

If we were to use confirmations as a measuring stick, by all accounts the majority leader and Senate Republicans are failing in a spectacular fashion. So far this year, the Senate has confirmed 21 nominees—4 months, 21 nominees. It is unheard of to have such a small, small number. If that trend continues, the Republican-led Congress will confirm 63 nominees this year, 2015.

By contrast, in 2007, my first year as majority leader under the Bush administration, the Senate confirmed 276 executive and judicial nominees. It did not matter that Democrats were working with a Republican administration.

My disagreements with President George W. Bush have been well documented. That is an understatement.

But I worked with him on nominations because Democrats knew—and I knew—that it was only fair to give the President the team he needed to lead the country. Doesn't President Obama deserve the same? Of course he does. In 2007, each Democratic committee chair worked to move President Bush's nominees through committees and the Senate floor in a reasonable amount of time.

Yet we are seeing the opposite from Republican chairmen this year. They are refusing even to do hearings. Of course, if there are no hearings, there will be no nominations. In fact, Republicans have committed to holding up as many of the President's nominees as possible.

Here is what one senior Republican Senator said in the last few days: "I told them: You jam [nominees] through, it's going to be a long time before I approve of them."

What I say to that is that if this is a tantrum that the Republicans are having for changing the Senate rules, as we were forced to do, then revenge is not an effective way to govern. If it really is the case that Republicans loathe the changes to the Senate rules, why do they not do something about it? We are 4 months into this Congress, and the majority leader had ample opportunity—which he has had—to undo the changes we made. So change them if you do not like them.

It is clear the Republican plan for payback centers on allowing consideration of Presidential nominations to a trickle. Throwing a tantrum is not what the American people expect from their leaders. It is not fair to the President or the American people who elected him or the dedicated public servants who want to serve our country.

Ten years ago a young Senator from Texas said: "I would hope no one in this body would feel it necessary to bring all the leftover angst of the campaign season to bear against a bright and honorable nominee." Yet this is what the senior Senator from Texas and his party are doing today—doing exactly what he said should not be done.

America continues to look on in disbelief as Republicans delay Loretta Lynch's confirmation because they can. This is outrageous. One only needs to look at the CNN poll today to find out that the work done by the Republican Senate has been an absolute flop. So I certainly hope this is not what we are to expect during the duration of President Obama's term. I hope my Republican colleagues will demonstrate leadership and move the President's nominees.

Again, look at the CNN poll, I say to my Republican colleagues. It is a disaster for you. It is not only fair to move forward on President Obama's nominations, but it is a sworn duty Republicans have as Members of the Senate.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The Senator from Washington.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Minnesota be given 1 minute in morning business prior to the Republican time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, from the very beginning of this discussion on the trafficking bill and the underlying issue, Members on both sides of the aisle agreed that we need to get this bill back on track as the bipartisan effort it should be, because, without question, survivors of trafficking deserve our support.

Senator KLOBUCHAR has done an amazing job in getting us to this point to get this bill done. I am pleased that we were able to reach a deal that now gets this done in a way that does not expand restrictions on women's health to nontaxpayer dollars or to new programs and provides survivors with real, dedicated funds for the support and services they need.

No compromise is perfect. I am sure that Senator CORNYN would say the same thing. I believe there is more we can and must do when it comes to strengthening women's access to quality health care. But I am very pleased that Senator CORNYN and I, along with a number of other Senators on our side, including Senator KLOBUCHAR, were able to work together in a bipartisan way to get this done.

I want to thank him and all his colleagues for their work to get us to this point. I hope we can now get this legislation passed very quickly for survivors and move on to continue working together on the many challenges our country faces.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am very happy today that we have reached an agreement. I want to thank