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Senate

The Senate met at 10:02 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God of mountains, stars, and boundless spaces, to You we lift our hearts with gratitude for Your mercy and grace. You are the source of our hope and strength, for we receive guidance from Your faithfulness.

Protect our Senators with shields of honor and integrity as they put their hope in You. May they patiently wait for the unfolding of Your loving providence, remembering that our times are in Your hands. Lord, give them the wisdom to bless every good deed by whomsoever it may be done, rising above strife and division to a unity that heals. May they seek You with such intensity that they will experience the joy of Your continuous presence.

We pray in Your Holy 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, June 14, 2016.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. ERNST thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MASS SHOOTING IN ORLANDO, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION AND COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the terrorist attack in Orlando continues to horrify our country. The FBI and our intelligence community will determine whether that terrorist was in direct contact with ISIL or inspired by ISIL. Either way, this much we know already: ISIL is a disgusting group who crucifies children, enslaves women, and throws gay men to their deaths from rooftops. They are determined to continue exporting their signature brand of inhumanity to our country.

The principal way we can prevent ISIL-inspired or directed attacks is to defeat ISIL. The President has led a campaign intended to contain ISIL which has been insufficient to prevent the attacks in Paris or Brussels or inspired attacks, such as in San Bernardino.

We need to do what we can to fight back now to prevent more heartbreak like we saw this weekend. That means, for instance, better preparing this administration and the next one, regardless of party, to deal with threats like ISIL, and we can do so by passing the National Defense Authorization Act before us. It will provide our men and women in uniform with more of the tools they need to take on these threats. It will strengthen our military posture. In short, it will enhance our ability to take on the challenges currently facing us and better prepare us for those we will face in the future, all while supporting our soldiers with better benefits, improved health care, and the pay raises they have earned.

I thank the Senators from both sides who worked diligently to move this bill forward. My gratitude extends most deeply to the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Senator MCCAIN has been unwavering in his support for our men and women in uniform. He also understands man's capacity for inhumanity to man better than most of us, and that is why he is so dedicated to taking on these threats. He knows that passage of this bill will present a serious and necessary step toward a safer country that we all want because, look, we are a nation at war. We are a nation under attack. We need to continue taking action to protect our country.

This bill will send a strong signal to the men and women in uniform, it will send a strong signal to our allies, and it will send a strong signal to our adversaries. We need to pass it, and we need to pass it today.

We will have other opportunities this week to keep our country safe and to take on terrorism. We need to defeat, not contain, ISIL, and we need the tools necessary to take down terrorists inspired by its brutal ideology.

The appropriations bill we are about to consider offers important opportunities to continue this debate. We need to be able to better address the threat of lone wolf terrorists. We need to be able to connect the dots of terrorist communications in order to disrupt their

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

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