RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2207

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for its second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2207) to improve women's access to health care services, and the access of all individuals to emergency and trauma care services, by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the delivery of such services.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). The Senator from Texas.

MARRIAGE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about a hearing we are going to have tomorrow in the Senate Judiciary Committee on the subject of marriage. I know the last thing I thought I would be doing, coming from Texas to Washington, DC, would be talking about traditional marriage, but such are the times we live in.

Earlier this month I chaired a hearing in the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution regarding the U.S. Supreme Court's decision last summer in Lawrence v. Texas, as well as the Goodridge decision from the Massachusetts Supreme Court that resulted from it, and the subsequent explosion of the marriage controversy across America. I thought we had a very thought-provoking discussion, a bipartisan discussion, and one that will continue at our hearing tomorrow where proposed constitutional language is the subject.

At the hearing earlier this month I was moved by the sentiments of Pastor Daniel de Leon of the Templo Calvario Church in California and Rev. Richard Richardson of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston, who we were honored to have in attendance.

Both testified they would rather be at home than having to defend traditional marriage here in Washington. But it is because of the work they do in their own communities, because they see the results of the decline of marriage in their communities every day, that they believe traditional marriage is so important and worth defending.

This is a discussion we will continue to have in the coming months. I believe it is vital that we have a national discussion on the importance of this institution, and a discussion based upon the facts.

In recent months, a lot of people have spent time talking about the benefits of marriage for adults. They have talked about hospital visiting rights and inheritance problems, even though many of these issues can be solved simply and quickly by statute or arrangements that can be achieved by simply signing a few simple documents.

This discussion, in terms of the benefits to adults, has included discussion of Government benefits, even though with these benefits come burdens, and the actual financial ramifications of these benefits are a matter for future debate.

Today it is time to turn the debate to what I believe is an even more important issue—that is, the benefits of marriage to children.

It is easy for some people to step back and say: The same-sex marriage controversy doesn't affect me. But the facts, demonstrated by experiments in other countries, show us otherwise. The facts show us this issue affects everyone, but especially children. None of us can pretend to ignore this issue, and none of us can afford to be neutral on this subject.

Scandinavia has treated same-sex households as marriage for more than a decade. This practice was instituted in Denmark in 1989, in Norway in 1993, and in Sweden in 1994. The direct reaction was relatively small. Very few people were actually interested in being part of this new arrangement, and to this day the number of participating individuals and households remains low.

The greatest effect was not on those who had sought the new institution but, in fact, on society at large. Sad to say, there has been an enormous rise in family dissolution and out-of-wedlock childbirths in these countries since they embraced the institution of same-sex marriage.

Today, about 15 years after Denmark created this new institution, a majority of children in Scandinavia are born out of wedlock, including more than 50 percent of children in Norway and 55 percent of children in Sweden. In Denmark, a full 60 percent of first-born children have unmarried parents. In Scandinavia as a whole, traditional marriage is now an institution entirely socially separated from the idea of childbearing or child-rearing. It is regarded as an incidental union, not an important one.

Respected British demographer Kathleen Kiernan drew on the Scandinavian case to form a four-stage model by which to gauge a country's movements towards Swedish levels of out-of-wedlock childbirth.

At stage one, the vast majority of the population produces children within marriage, such as in Italy. In the second stage, cohabitation is tolerated as a testing period before marriage and is generally a childless phase such as we currently have in America. In stage three, cohabitation becomes increasingly acceptable and parenting is no longer automatically associated with marriage. While Norway was once at this stage, recent demographic and legal changes have pushed it further into stage four, along with Sweden and Denmark. In this fourth stage, marriage and cohabitation become practically indistinguishable, with many children—even most children—born and raised outside of traditional marriage. According to Kiernan, once a country has reached this stage, return to an earlier phase is highly unlikely.

As you can see, the dilution of marriage is passed on to children, to the next generation, and the devaluation continues. And in America, the results could be even more significant than in Scandinavia; after all, we are already facing the problem of too many single-parent households, particularly in inner-city communities.

When the ideal of traditional marriage is removed, when cohabitation and marriage are equally regarded, and when childbearing is no longer something that ought to ideally come within the context of traditional marriage, I fear the problem of single-parent households will only worsen.

While many single parents do a very good job day in and day out raising children against long odds, no one considers it the best arrangement for raising children—with good reason. Indeed, we have a wealth of social science research from hundreds of sources over the course of decades which consistently reflects both the positive ramifications for children of a stable traditional marriage, and the negative effects of family breakup.

Marriage provides the basis for the family, which remains the strongest and most important social unit. Countless statistics and research attest to this fact. It is not ideal to raise children outside of marriage. While everyone is free to choose his or her own path, no one wishes divorce on children but, rather, a happy and stable home.

In America, we have made the decision that we ought to particularly encourage and support those who marry and have children. This is not a partisan issue. As one of the most distinguished Democratic Members of this body, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, observed more than a decade ago, we must stop ''the breakup of family inevitably'' as best we can:

[T]he principal social objective of the American national government at every level . . . should be to see that children are born into intact families and that they remain so.