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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

We praise You, our God and King. You rule generation after generation. You are so high that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain You. Yet You dwell with those who possess a contrite spirit. Thank You for Your kindness and mercy, for showering compassion on all creation.

Bless our Senators. Give them words that will illuminate and refresh. Help them to accept timely advice and valid criticism as a measure of progress. Lord, infuse them with patience and truth as they practice self-control.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO RUBY PAONE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate's doorkeeper, Ruby Paone, will mark her 40th year of service to the Senate.

Ruby has seen the Senate from a lot of different angles. She has had a lot of unique titles—everything from card desk assistant to Reception Room attendant—as she climbed the ladder to her current post.

I am sure that Ruby will tell you that a lot has changed since her first day here back in 1975. I am sure she will tell you a lot has stayed the same. One thing that won't change is the Senate's gratitude to its many dedicated employees. That is why the Senate community extends its congratulations to Ruby Paone this morning and why we thank her for her many years of service.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in about an hour the Democratic Party will confront a momentous choice. Will Democrats launch a historic filibuster against helping oppressed victims of modern slavery because leftwing lobbyists appear to demand it? Will they do that at the behest of these leftwing lobbyists?

Democrats filibustering help for terrified children and abused women would represent a new low in the Senate. Filibustering help for terrified children and abused women certainly represents a new low for the Senate, and the American people will not soon forget it—nor should they. It is hard to even keep straight anymore why Democrats would filibuster this human rights bill.

The bill Democrats apparently now oppose was introduced months ago by a Democrat and a Republican. The bill Democrats now oppose was originally cosponsored by 13 of our Democratic friends. Thirteen of them cosponsored it. The bill Democrats now oppose was approved by every Democrat on the Judiciary Committee. Every single Democrat on the Judiciary Committee supported the bill.

The bill Democrats now oppose was brought to the floor last Monday after Democrats agreed unanimously to do that. But that was Monday. By Tuesday, Democrats were threatening to launch a historic filibuster against helping the abused and the enslaved—launching a filibuster against the abused and the enslaved.

Democrats' supposed rationale was that they had not bothered to read the very bill they introduced, cosponsored, and voted for. That in itself is a stunning admission. But as embarrassing as this admission might be for Democrats, it doesn't tell the full story. It is obviously absurd to believe that not a single one of the 13 Democrats who originally cosponsored this bill and not a single member of any of these Democrats' well-educated staff would have read this bill before agreeing to support it. It is really hard to believe; isn't it?

The bipartisan Hyde language Democrats now cite as the basis for their human rights filibuster would not have been hard to find. It was sitting right there on page 4.

Democrats would have recognized the bipartisan Hyde provision easily because so many Democrats voted to support the same bipartisan provision just 3 months ago in December. It was in the CRomnibus that most of our Democratic friends voted for in December—the very same language. So they surely would have recognized it sitting right there on page 4.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee certainly would have noticed the Hyde provision he supported in December. He actually offered an unrelated amendment to the very same page as the provision he now objects to.

The bipartisan Hyde language is supported by about 7 in 10 Americans. How do the American people feel about the Hyde language? The Hyde language is supported by 7 out of 10 Americans as a policy principle and has been part and parcel of the legislating process for decades. It appears in just about every funding bill we consider, and it appears in numerous authorizing bills that have received bipartisan support.

Not surprisingly, the leadership of the House of Representatives said last

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

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