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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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night that “any House-Senate agreement on a trafficking bill that includes a victims fund will” have to contain “the Hyde Amendment, as we have done for nearly 40 years.” So the House of Representatives says that any bill that passes the House will also include this language.

What about that great bastion of conservatism—the Washington Post? The Washington Post recently noted in an editorial that “the Hyde Act has been in force for four decades,” and pointedly asked whether the inclusion of this bipartisan provision “justifies the defeat of this important legislation.” Given the long legislative history of this bipartisan provision and the overwhelmingly popular support for what it does, the answer, obviously, is no. No, most of our colleagues on the other side voted for this very same provision 3 months ago.

Let’s remember what this debate should really be about. It should not be about what leftwing lobbyists want. It should be about helping the victims of modern slavery—victims such as Melissa, whom my colleague Senator CORNYN has spoken about before. She was sold into the sex trade when she was just 12 years old. She was beaten regularly and chained to a bed in a warehouse. She was even set on fire by those who enslaved her. That is Melissa’s story. She said she just wanted to die.

When Melissa finally escaped the grasp of her tormenters, she was not treated like a victim. Melissa was treated like a criminal by our justice system. It is stories such as Melissa’s that should motivate every Member of this Chamber to act.

The victims who suffer in dark warehouses may not have the same clout as the lobbyists who appear to oppose this bill, but these victims need our help, and they need it now. So if there truly are Senators who are concerned with removing a bipartisan provision they have supported so many times in the past, they should offer an amendment to strike it and then stop blocking this human rights bill. I offered them a chance to do just that last week.

Let’s have a vote—a simple majority vote—on a measure they now belatedly find they object to, having supported it in the past, and then, as an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women put it: “Win or lose and move on.” But as it stands now, in her words, “Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.” That is the spokesman for the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women.

The White House needs to get involved here too. So far the White House has barely lifted a finger to help us pass this legislation, and that needs to change. I think the White House should do this because it is the right thing to do. But if that is not enough, they should also consider the consequences of Democrats making a historic mistake.

If Democrats actually vote to filibuster help for oppressed victims of modern slavery, I cannot imagine that the American people will forget it.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### TRIBUTE TO RUBY PAONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the longest serving Member of this body is the President pro tempore emeritus of the Senate, PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont. He came to this body in January of 1975, 40 years and 2 months ago. But nipping at his heels is an individual well-known in this Chamber, Ruby Paone. Ruby came to the Senate right out of college and has worked in the Reception Room and other places in the Senate for decades—four decades, in fact.

Today marks Ruby’s 40th anniversary of working in the Senate. To put that in perspective, she has worked through 7 different Presidential administrations, 16 different Sergeants at Arms, and has seen 383 Senators serve in this Chamber during her time.

After working with 383 different Senators, one would think that maybe she could not remember these names and faces, but that is not Ruby. She knows everyone and remembers everything during her time here in the Senate.

During these 40 years in the Senate, a lot has happened, not the least of which is meeting her husband, whom we all know, Marty. Marty also worked in the Senate for many, many years, eventually serving as the secretary of the majority, and we all depended on him so much.

In fact, Ruby and Marty were both here in the Capitol working on their wedding day. The Senate was in session until 12 p.m. that day. Marty and Ruby decided to get married 3 hours later, and they did.

Ruby and Marty have three wonderful children. I can remember their careers in soccer and working their way through school. Their children are Alexander, Stephanie, and Tommy. Ruby and Marty are rightly very proud of these three fine young people, one girl, Stephanie, and the two boys.

No words can adequately sum up the 40 years of service to our country, but Adlai Stevenson came close when he said: “Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.”

I appreciate very much Ruby’s steadfast dedication. I admire her continued support of this institution that is very dear to so many of us. Thank you, Ruby, for your 40 years of faithful service, and we look forward to many more.

#### AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that ap-

peared and was posted last night at 7:14 p.m. in the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 16, 2015]

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ADDS 16.4 MILLION TO HEALTH INSURANCE ROLLS

(By Lenny Bernstein)

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities and states that expanded their Medicaid programs, administration officials announced Monday.

The total includes 14.1 million adults who joined the insurance rolls since October 2013 and 2.3 million younger adults ages 19 to 25 who were able to remain on their parents’ health insurance plans since October 2010, when that provision of Obamacare went into effect.

Richard Frank, the assistant secretary for planning and evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, called the gains “historic,” comparing the impact to the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in the mid-1960s.

HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell said she was “pleased” with the numbers but added that the government still can enroll greater numbers of African Americans and Latinos.

“African American, Latino [rates] are not exactly where you want to be, because the [uninsured] numbers are still high,” Burwell said. “I believe we can do more.”

The Latino uninsured rate dropped by 12.3 percentage points between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2015 as 4.2 million adults gained coverage. That ethnic group, however, continues to have the lowest rate of insurance coverage.

About 2.3 million African Americans enrolled, dropping that group’s uninsured rate by 9.2 percentage points, and 6.6 million whites obtained coverage, a decline of 5.3 percentage points.

The data are based on surveys conducted for HHS. The totals do not show whether an individual obtained coverage through the new insurance marketplaces, a private employer or some other method. No numbers on children were included.

States that decided to expand their Medicaid insurance programs for the poor recorded bigger gains than those that didn’t, reducing their uninsured rate by 7.4 percentage points as compared with 6.9 points for states that declined to expand.

Meena Seshamani, director of HHS’s Office of Health Reform, said the 16.4 million newly covered adults no longer need to put off health care “because they can’t afford it” or “worry about going broke” if they face a serious illness.

“Today’s news is good for the health and financial security of millions of Americans,” she said.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, referring to this article just printed in the RECORD: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released some very good news, further proof that ObamaCare is working and insuring millions of Americans—16.4 million to be exact.

Reading from the Washington Post report that is now part of this RECORD, I state:

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities—