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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Merciful God, enthroned above all powers, thank You for bestowing on us the dignity of being called Your children. You are mighty in power and we are grateful for the masterpiece of another day. Lord, forgive us when we forget that You are still in charge of what happens in our Nation and world. This world belongs to You, and though the wrong seems very strong, Your sovereignty still prevails. Your power is far beyond any conceivable authority.

Guide our Senators with Your sovereignty. Use them, Lord, to solve the critical problems in our time, contributing to the peace and stability of this land we love. Bless those who support them in their work as You surround us all with the shield of Your divine favor.

We pray in Your sacred 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. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is hard to believe what we saw yesterday. Democrats actually filibustered a bill

to help victims of modern slavery apparently because leftwing lobbyists told them to. Yes, their historic mistake is callous and extreme, but more than that it is tragic.

I mentioned the story of Melissa yesterday. Melissa was sold into sexual slavery before she had even become a teenager. She still bears the scars of her years of torment, the beatings, the shackling, the emotional cruelty. When Melissa finally escaped, she wasn't embraced as a victim, she was branded as a criminal.

Melissa's story is heartbreaking, but it is anything but unique. Stories such as hers remind us how important the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act is. It is stories such as hers that remind us that no excuse about not reading a bill and no command from leftwing lobbyists could justify filibustering the critical help this human rights bill would provide.

So we have not given up on the thousands of victims in this country who suffer as Melissa did—shaken and shackled but still hanging on to hope. Democrats owe these victims, not lobbyists, help—help the Senate is so close to passing.

A strong majority of the Senate, including several Democrats, have already voted in favor of this human rights bill. Now all it takes is a few more Democrats of courage to ignore the lobbyists and do what is right. All that will mean is the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee supporting the very same bill still hanging on to hope for just a few weeks earlier.

Apparently, all of these Senators were for this human rights bill before they were against it, and it is not like the bipartisan provision now suddenly in question is anything new. As the Congressional Research Service notes, bipartisan provisions such as this one "have been enacted in a variety of contexts since 1970," appearing in authorizing legislation as diverse as the State Children's Health Insurance Program,

the Legal Services Corporation Act, the Department of Defense Authorization Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, and others—language that is quite common and has been voted for numerous times by our friends on the other side of the aisle.

That is why the distinguished Democratic leader, my friend, had been such a strong supporter of the bipartisan Hyde provision for so many years and why he said during his tenure as majority leader: "My belief in the sanctity of life is why I have repeatedly voted against using taxpayer money for abortions." That was my friend, the Democratic leader. That is the declared view of my friend. It is what he said just a few short years ago before he and his party voted to filibuster a bill that would help the victims of modern slavery.

So this afternoon we invite Democrats to ignore the lobbyists and do the right thing. We invite every Democrat to help us write a happy ending to this story, where the forces of hope and humanity, not powerful lobbyists, prevail.

THE SENATE BUDGET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, several weeks ago the White House released an unserious budget that would have raised taxes by nearly \$2 trillion and increase the national debt by more than \$7 trillion. In other words, it was more of the same old tired, failed policies of the past. Hardly anyone took that budget seriously mostly because it was not meant to be taken seriously.

Contrast that with the balanced budget the Senate will introduce this morning. It is a budget that controls spending, reduces the deficit, and improves programs such as Medicaid. It is a budget that will support economic growth and more opportunity for hardworking families while protecting our most vulnerable citizens. It is a budget

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



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