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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise Your greatness, might, and majesty. You own all that is in Heaven and Earth. Both riches and honor come from You. Your compassion never fails. Today, use our lawmakers as instruments of Your purposes. Lord, give them the wisdom and courage for the living of these challenging days. May they find encouragement in the knowledge that the full harvest of their labors is yet to come. Unite them in the common endeavor of making America a beacon of freedom for our world. May their thoughts, words, and actions honor You.

We pray in Your sovereign 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, April 20, 2015.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM COTTON, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COTTON thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it has been 164 days—164 very long, long days, especially for a woman by the name of Loretta Lynch. Her nomination is languishing here in the Republican limbo that they have created. For 6 months Senate Republicans have looked for any and every reason to push back confirmation of this good woman to be Attorney General.

Does anyone know why? Can a single Republican Senator tell us why? The answer is no. Her qualifications are impeccable. She has some bipartisan support. But again, for unknown reasons, Republican support seems to be disappearing. Is there a single Republican Senator who can come here to the Senate floor and give an explanation that does not absolutely smack of political foolishness?

Republicans do not know why Loretta Lynch has not yet been confirmed—just listen to what Congressman PETER KING said. By the way, PETER KING is a Republican from New York.

All you've heard from our party for a very long time is how much contempt they have for Holder. Now they're presented with Loretta Lynch, who is by far the best attorney general they could ever have expected this President to appoint, and they still hold the thing up. . . . And for what? Because they think it scores them a few political points? With whom?

That is the irony of it all. Republicans have held Ms. Lynch's nomina-

tion hostage for nothing more than political purposes. Here is something I will read to the people within the sound of my voice, which is a direct quote from the New York Daily News editorial.

The Republicans in the Senate, the meanest and most narrow-minded among them occasionally acting as if they want the Democrats to have the White House into the next century, need to free Loretta Lynch this week.

They need to stop using abortion language in an anti-trafficking bill for cover, they need to stop using Lynch's support for President Obama on immigration as cover, they need to stop insulting Lynch the way they have for months as they have delayed a vote on confirming her as our next attorney general for the simple reason that they can.

The issue here was never Loretta Lynch's policies, always about President Obama's. They have used her to get at him, because to the end they remain obsessed with getting at him. No wonder Jeb Bush stood up for Lynch in New Hampshire. Bush didn't just show grace in doing that, he also showed more common sense than his brother showed in eight years as President.

Jeb Bush has to know that Sen. Mitch McConnell hijacking this process does him absolutely no good, the way it does him no good to have McConnell as an important voice and face of the Republican Party. As long as McConnell is, too many voters completely wide-open about the upcoming Presidential campaign will continue to think the party is still owned and operated by scrubs who think they can push around Loretta Lynch for sport.

“Pushing around Loretta Lynch for sport” is certainly how it seems. How else can you explain the Republicans changing the subject every time her name comes up? Every time Ms. Lynch's confirmation is discussed, they change the subject. Every time when asked, Republicans deflect: “next Congress” or “after Keystone” or “after we try and shut down Homeland Security,” and, of course, the newest, “after trafficking.”

President Obama put it best last Friday when he said:

Nobody can describe a reason for it beyond political gamesmanship in the Senate. I have

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



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