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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.

Eternal God, You are perfect in wisdom and goodness. Thank You for the great and mysterious opportunities of our lives. Empower our Senators to seize these opportunities, thereby, fulfilling Your purposes for their lives in this generation. May Your Spirit guide them in their thoughts, words, and deeds, providing them with the wisdom they need to navigate through life's turbulent seas. Keep their thoughts pure, their words truthful, and their actions trustworthy, giving them consciences void of offense toward You or humanity. Lord, inspire them to be mindful of their eternal destiny and their accountability to You. Use them today as instruments for Your glory.

And, Lord, comfort the families and loved ones of the victims of the Charleston, SC, church shooting.

We pray in Your merciful 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRAGEDY AT EMANUEL AME CHURCH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I don't know another way to describe what I

heard this morning in my morning briefing and then the news accounts of this sickening revelation of what took place in South Carolina last night.

Think about this. The sanctity of a house of worship was violated as a gunman opened fire in the historically Black Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC.

We know now at least nine people are dead, and others, of course, are hurt. I don't know how to describe it. This individual was like a wolf in sheep's clothing. He sat among the congregation for a substantial amount of time before he pulled out a weapon and started firing at people. The thought of people who were in a house of worship being gunned down as they gathered to pray is heart-wrenching, devastating, and is the ultimate act of cowardice and hatred.

As our good Chaplain said, our hearts go out to the families and friends of the people who were gunned down in that church. It is hard to even comprehend anything so awful. So, on behalf of the Senate family, we send our support and our sympathy.

We hope Charleston law enforcement are able to capture this murderer, and the perpetrator be swiftly apprehended and brought to justice.

Mr. President, I had some remarks I was going to give, but they could be deemed partisan in nature and I can give them some other time. I don't feel it would be appropriate for me now to talk about these things that are definitely inappropriate today with this pall hanging over our country.

Based upon that, I would ask that the Presiding Officer announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the time equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, typically I would come to the floor and talk about the business at hand before the Senate, but I think that in light of the horrific news we all woke up to this morning, I wish to touch briefly on the tragic events that unfolded overnight in Charleston, SC.

Although we don't know all the facts, by all appearances, the gunman targeted worshippers while they were in church in a way that certainly shocks all of our conscience and sensibilities. I think it is the sort of act that we all find hard to understand, and it is truly unspeakable.

Law enforcement is doing what it does best, which is conducting its investigation, including looking for the suspect.

I think it is appropriate that we all offer our thoughts and perhaps say a private prayer for all of those who were affected by this senseless and horrific tragedy.

Obviously, the Senate has some important business to do, and I will come back later and talk more specifically

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



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