



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2015

No. 172

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.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 Father, we acknowledge that in spite of the turbulence in our world, You are still God. Thank You for Your goodness, for Your mercies, and for Your steadfast love that endures forever.

Bless our lawmakers. May they bring their fragmentary lives into the wholeness of Your presence. Calm their restless spirits with the soothing strength of Your everlasting security. Make them victors and not victims on life's great battlefield. May they find in You grace, peace, power, and adequacy to be more than conquerors.

We pray in Your mighty 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 (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

AUTHORIZING RETURN OF PAPERS REQUEST

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Secretary of the Senate be authorized to request the return of the papers with respect to PN742; further, that when the Senate receives the papers, the

Senate's action with respect to the nomination on November 19, 2015, be vitiated.

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2329

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2329) to prevent the entry of extremists into the United States under the refugee program, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

POWER PLAN REGULATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, when President Obama tried to push a regressive anti-middle-class energy tax through a Democratic-controlled Congress, his own party said no. Undeterred, the President simply went around Congress to impose similarly regressive—and likely illegal—power plan regulations anyway. He is currently trying to sell that power plan to world leaders in Paris, as proof of the American Government's commitment to his energy priorities. But with all due respect to the President as our Commander in Chief, governments currently engaged in this round of climate talks will want to know that there is more than just an executive branch in our system of government.

More than half of the States have filed suit against the President's power plan. A bipartisan majority in both Chambers of Congress have approved

legislation that rejects the President's plan. The courts appear likely to strike it down, and the next President could simply tear it up. This is the easily foreseeable result of intentionally sidestepping Congress to impose this anti-middle-class power plan.

If left in place, the power plan threatens to punish the poor and could result in the elimination of as many as a quarter of a million U.S. jobs. For what? The power plan won't even meaningfully affect global climate emissions, and it could actually increase emissions by offshoring American manufacturing to countries that lack our environmental standards.

That is pain for the middle class, a climate rounding error for negotiators in Paris. That is not a good policy for America's working families. It certainly would not be responsible to attempt to negotiate commitments based upon an illegal power plan, one that may not even survive much longer, in any event.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW CONGRESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Madam President, on another matter, in the last election the American people chose a new direction with a new Republican majority in Congress. We have been working hard ever since to get Congress back on their side and back to work. Over the past year, Americans have seen committees up and running again. Americans have seen bills passed again. Americans have seen meaningful bipartisan bills being signed into law again. Americans have also seen Members of opposing parties working together to make progress on important issues, from trade to Medicare to cyber security. We have seen examples of it this year on some of Washington's stickiest issues.

We saw the Senate pass a bipartisan multiyear highway bill this summer, 65 to 34. The Republican chairman and

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



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