



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015

No. 177

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.

O Lord, our Lord, the majesty of Your Name fills the Earth. We see Your handiwork in the beauty of the sunrise and the majesty of the sunset.

As the world listens to the American political rhetoric and history waits to judge us, guide our lawmakers. Lord, make this upper Chamber of the legislative branch a truly deliberative body. Learning from the lessons of history, may our Senators strive to defend our Constitution against all foreign and domestic enemies. Grant that this defense will involve looking before leaping. May our Senators make decisions that will not seem foolish in the cool light of retrospection.

Arise, O Lord. Remind the nations that they are merely human.

We pray in Your sovereign 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.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, both parties have long agreed that No Child Left Behind is broken and needs

to be fixed. The House of Representatives passed reformist replacements for this law over the past few Congresses, but the Senate didn't consider legislation on the floor for years—until now.

A new majority in Congress thought it was time to finally change that dynamic. So we have demonstrated how a functioning committee process and a functioning Senate could help break through the gridlock. We showed how it could lead to important work across the aisle from a Republican like Senator ALEXANDER and a Democrat like Senator MURRAY, and in so doing, we not only proved that conservative reform was possible, we proved that it could pass by big bipartisan margins.

The version of the Every Student Succeeds Act the Senate considered this summer passed 81 to 17. The Every Student Succeeds Act before us just passed the House 359 to 64, and soon we will have the opportunity to send it to the President for his signature.

The Wall Street Journal dubbed this bill “the largest devolution of federal control to the States in a quarter-century.” It will stop Washington from imposing Common Core. It will strengthen the charter school program. It will substitute one-size-fits-all Federal mandates for greater State and local flexibility. In short, the Every Student Succeeds Act will put education back in the hands of those who know our kids best: parents, teachers, States, and school boards. It will help students succeed instead of helping Washington grow. That is something all of us can get behind because all of us represent different States with different children who have different needs.

I know Kentucky's newly appointed education commissioner is enthusiastic about this landmark reform. He wrote me to say that this bill would be good for Kentucky because it would do things such as ensure more flexibility, support rural schools, and help the Commonwealth provide for teacher development.

I thank the senior Senators from Tennessee and Washington for all their hard work on this bill. Some may have questioned whether Washington could ever agree on a replacement for No Child Left Behind, but today we have the Every Student Succeeds Act before us. It is a good replacement. It is a conservative reform with significant bipartisan support and one that will do right by those who matter most in the discussion: our children and our future.

Just days after the President signed an important bipartisan highway bill we passed, we soon expect to send him an important bipartisan education bill to sign as well. We might even pass it as soon as today. Passing either of these bipartisan bills after years of inaction would have represented a very big win for our country. What is more, it is notable that both could now be signed into law within such a short timeframe.

Passage of these bills follows Senate passage of many other achievements for the American people too, on issues ranging from cyber security, to trade, to energy, to entitlement reform, even combatting modern-day slavery.

Sometimes it was assumed that Washington could never come to an agreement on certain issues, but not only did we pass some long-stalled priorities for America, we often did so on a bipartisan basis. The question is, How do you achieve passage of important bills? One way is to foster an atmosphere where both parties can have more of a say on more issues, starting at the committee level. Let me give an example. Consider what the American people saw in the debate over the Education bill. They saw Senators they sent to Washington having their voices heard again, regardless of party. They saw them making meaningful contributions in committee. They saw them working across the aisle. They saw them having more opportunities to offer amendments. The American people actually saw the Senate take more

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



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