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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 God, as the final game of the National Basketball Association reminded us of redemption, we place our confidence in You, the Redeemer of humanity. Be exalted, O God, above the highest Heaven. May Your splendor shine over all the Earth.

Today, use our Senators to do mighty things for Your glory. May they settle for nothing less than their best efforts to fulfill Your purposes. As they depend on Your strength, do for them more than they can imagine. Empower them to strengthen the foundation of justice, righteousness, and truth, doing their part to accomplish Your will.

Lord, make our lawmakers so sensitive to Your grand vision for our Nation that they will be a conscience for our citizens in calling them back to You.

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. SULLIVAN). The majority leader is recognized.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the terrorist attack that claimed 49 inno-

cent victims in Orlando left families broken and our country shaken. It was a deliberately targeted attack inspired by the hateful ideology of ISIL, and it tragically reminded us of the continuing threat of ISIL-directed and ISIL-inspired attacks right here in our country.

We know that the way to prevent more of these terrorist attacks is to actually defeat ISIL where it trains, operates, and prepares for attacks, like in Iraq and Syria.

The President at least appeared to recognize that this weekend when he said that “we are and we will keep doing everything in our power to stop these kinds of attacks and to ultimately destroy ISIL.”

But as the Nation just learned from CIA Director John Brennan, ISIL remains “a formidable, resilient, and largely cohesive enemy.” Our efforts thus far “have not reduced the group’s terrorism capability and global reach”—this is Brennan—and ISIL is “training and attempting to deploy operatives for further attacks” in the West.

It is evident that the President’s campaign to contain ISIL has not been sufficient to defeat this group abroad or prevent more ISIL-inspired attacks right here at home. He needs to finally lead a campaign to accomplish this objective or at least prepare the military and intelligence community to help the next President do so if he won’t.

Here in the Senate, we should continue our efforts to fight terror beyond our borders and prevent attacks within them. These have been priorities for Republican Senators for a long time, and they continue to be at the forefront of our efforts now.

We have offered proposals to help connect the dots with respect to terrorist communications. We have offered proposals to help address the threat of lone-wolf attacks like the one we saw in Orlando. And we have offered proposals to help ensure terrorists are not able to purchase weapons.

We will consider two of them today, along with two Democratic alternatives. The first proposal, from Senator CORNYN, would immediately block the sale of a firearm or explosive or explosives to a suspected terrorist and, once probable cause is shown, not only permanently block that sale but also allow the suspected terrorist to be arrested and detained. This would apply to anyone currently investigated as a terrorist suspect as well as to anyone who was investigated within the last 5 years.

Unlike Senator CORNYN’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not—would not—prevent a terrorist from buying explosives as the alternative pertains only to firearms. Unlike Senator CORNYN’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not notify State and local law enforcement when a terrorist tries to buy a weapon nor would the alternative even give authority for that terrorist to be arrested or detained.

Unlike Senator CORNYN’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not ensure due process, protect our constitutional rights, or require the government to periodically review its procedures to ensure it is investigating the right people.

The second proposal, from Senator GRASSLEY, would improve the background check database by helping ensure all levels of government are actually submitting the necessary records, including mental health records. It would also allow for additional resources to update and improve the system further.

Unlike Senator GRASSLEY’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not study the causes of mass shootings.

Unlike Senator GRASSLEY’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not help prevent failed gun walking operations like Fast and Furious.

Unlike Senator GRASSLEY’s proposal, the Democratic alternative would not require the Department of Justice to

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



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