

INTERNATIONAL MEGAN'S LAW TO PREVENT DEMAND FOR CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding passage of H.R. 515, the committee-reported title amendment be agreed to.

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

The committee-reported title amendment was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: "An Act to protect children and others from sexual abuse and exploitation, including sex trafficking and sex tourism, by providing advance notice of intended travel by registered sex offenders outside the United States to the government of the country of destination, requesting foreign governments to notify the United States when a known sex offender is seeking to enter the United States, and for other purposes."

OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, we know our constituents are deeply concerned about America's struggling economy. So let's take steps, as the legislation we will consider proposes, to support more jobs, more opportunity, and more economic growth.

Let's enact permanent tax relief for American families and small businesses. Let's set the table for pro-growth tax reform. Let's permanently eliminate an energy policy from the 1970s that not only costs American jobs but also strengthens America's adversaries like Iran and Russia. This will end the absurd position we are in now, where the Iranians, as a result of the President's deal, can export oil and the United States can't.

Here is something else. We know our constituents are deeply concerned about America's national security. So let's take steps, as the legislation we will consider proposes, to strengthen our national security in a dangerous world. Let's help ensure our military has more of the funding it needs to train, equip, and confront the threats that face us from literally every corner of the globe. Let's bolster the FBI's ability to confront terror within our borders. Let's bring badly needed reform to the Visa Waiver Program. The last provision is especially important. Let's prevent the transfer of dangerous terrorists from Guantanamo's secure detention center into America's communities. Let's provide the people we represent with some long overdue protection from cyber attacks. Let's honor our veterans and enact critical reforms to help address the crises we have seen at the VA.

The legislation we will consider today would take steps to strengthen our economy and strengthen our national security. It would also bolster the First Amendment. It would attack key pillars of ObamaCare and prevent a taxpayer bailout of this partisan law. That last provision is especially important. Protecting the middle class from

financing a bailout of ObamaCare means we are likely to speed up America's day of liberation from ObamaCare as well.

So here is my view. This legislation helps our economy, helps our national security, and strikes more blows to a partisan health law that hurts the middle class. I think it is legislation worth supporting.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, before I leave the floor, I would like to say something about last year. The American people voted for a new majority last November. We were humbled to have their support and take the Senate in a new direction. The Senate has made great strides in the year since. I think we have shown how the Senate can not only get back to work, but also return to a place of higher purpose.

We have committees working again. We opened up the legislative process. We gave Senators from both parties more of a say. As a result, we have gotten a lot done for the American people.

There are numbers that help tell the story, such as the fact that this Senate allowed 200 rollcall votes compared to just 15 last year. But it is the substance of what we passed that truly shows what a new and more open Senate can achieve for the American people: replacing No Child Left Behind with the most significant K-12 education reform in more than a dozen years; addressing crumbling roads and bridges with the first long-term Transportation bill in a decade; a balanced budget for the first time since 2001; help for our veterans; hope for the victims of modern slavery; modernizing changes for our military and its acquisition systems; and notable, bipartisan reforms for programs like Medicare—reforms that set a precedent for further positive action in the future.

We brought a permanent end to more of Washington's artificial cliffs and manufactured dramas by working toward real reform instead of just temporary patches, and we will do that again today. We will enact permanent tax relief for families and small businesses. We will bring an end to a job-destroying, 40-year ban on energy exports. We will finally pass landmark cyber security legislation after years of Senate inaction. And just last night, we passed the first significant environmental reform bill in decades, one that will create more certainty for businesses and ensure uniform safety standards for products our families use.

This is all very good news for the American people. Nearly all the policies I mentioned were, or will be, signed into law by the President.

Others, while important, do not have his support. That includes legislation to rescue the middle class from the pain of ObamaCare, to support Keystone's energy jobs, and to protect Kentucky's small businesses and coal families from Washington's regulatory assault.

It is now clear that it will take a new President—a new President—to achieve those things for the American people. But we are proving that you can still get a lot done with a President from a different party. We are proving you can actually enact significant, long-term reforms, achieve conservative policy goals, and get them signed into law.

I am proud of what the new Senate has accomplished. I wish to thank the many friends across the aisle who joined us in passing so many bipartisan reforms for the American people. We are not only putting the Senate back to work; we are putting it back on the side of the American people.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Madam President, the accomplishments of the first session of this Senate has been a demonstration of what can happen when the minority is not trying to block everything. There has been no need this last year for scores and scores of cloture petitions being filed because we didn't block things; we rarely did that. In the past, of course, it was done all the time. So we have demonstrated that it is important to have a minority that is responsible.

Of course, we know the issues that have passed this year are issues that we worked on for a number of years and that had been blocked by Republicans. We are glad to have been part of this Congress and able to move forward on a number of issues that have been languishing for a long time.

Of course, next year we need to do more for the middle class. There are lots of things that we haven't been able to do and should do—minimum wage, making sure that my daughter and my granddaughter are paid the same as a man who does the same work.

We also have to understand that the lack of college affordability is crushing our country. It is often said it is a larger debt than credit cards, and we have to do something to relieve that pressure on the American people.

It is often said that legislation is the art of compromise, and I know that is true. Crafting bipartisan legislation is hard, tedious work. It requires a complex calibration of competing interests, needs, and realities. The legislation that will soon be before this body, the combined omnibus spending bill and tax extenders package, is a perfect example of a bipartisan compromise wrought in good faith.

It wasn't easy. In fact, coming to an agreement on this package was a painstaking endeavor by Senate and House leaders and by House and Senate Members, but it was especially hard for our staffs. I am so appreciative of their exceptionally good work. I know it meant

long hours, late nights and weekends spent here in the Capitol. Without their diligent efforts, we wouldn't be here voting on this legislation today.

On my leadership staff, no one worked harder than my chief of staff, Drew Willison. He was my lead negotiator, and he did an admirable job—a tremendous job. He worked very, very hard. I won't go into all the hard work that he did, but I remember one night I was having trouble dozing off. I called him at midnight, and he responded on the phone. For the next three hours I still didn't do too well sleeping, so I called him at 3 a.m. He still responded. He was here at the Capitol working—working to make this agreement a reality. In all his years here, I have found that Drew, a congressional fellow who came in from the Environmental Protection Agency, was so good that I wouldn't let him leave, and he has been a Senate person since then. He was selected by me to be Assistant Sergeant at Arms. In everything he has been asked to do, he has done a remarkably good job. So I wasn't surprised at all that he was able to do the work he did on these bills with tremendously difficult legislative issues that will be before this body shortly.

I want to speak for just a minute about Gary Myrick, Secretary for the minority. He has been my floor general and my chief of staff. I depend on his expertise on the issues now before us, which soon will be before us, and on everything we do here in the Senate. He is an expert on Senate rules, and I appreciate very much his good work.

Bill Dauster, my deputy chief of staff—nobody on Capitol Hill better understands policy or legislation than Bill. Anytime legislative staff—not just mine, but anyone's staff in the Senate—has an issue dealing with legislation, they know Bill will be available. I admire him. He is a fine man. I so appreciate the example he sets in being good to everybody.

Kate Leone is my senior health counsel. To say she does an exceptional job is an understatement. Kate is probably the world's leading expert on ObamaCare, and she is an absolute expert on all health policy issues. She brought her expertise to this agreement in full force with the able assistance of McKenzie Bennett, who also works on health care issues for me. Again, I appreciate very much her hard work.

Ellen Doneski, my chief tax policy adviser, deserves praise. Tax policy is difficult. I took a couple of courses in law school on tax policy. To be honest with you, it didn't interest me very much, but for my lack of interest, Ellen has been stupendous. Even while not feeling well, she has worked her way through the last few weeks exhausted, working with Democrats, Republican counterparts, and making intricate tax decisions and putting intricate tax provisions in the agreement that is before this body.

Alex McDonough, my senior policy adviser, handles my energy and envi-

ronmental problems. This legislation is one of the greatest investments in renewable energy in American history. It is amazing what we have done in this legislation. The writing of this legislation was done by Alex. This work that has been done on this bill dealing with renewable energy—picture 65 coal-fired powerplants with an average megawatt production, let's say, of 800 megawatts. Sixty-five coal-fired plants would be gone, and they will be gone. That is how much pollution from fossil fuel will be saved as a result of the work done here. If you don't like that example, try 50 million automobiles will be taken off the roads—not 5 million, 50 million.

Alex, I appreciate your good work very much. This legislation wouldn't be what it is today without Alex.

Gavin Parke, my senior policy adviser and counsel was here working hard on banking and financial in this legislation. He worked like everyone: long, hard hours on very complicated banking issues, housing issues. I appreciate and admire his good work and his pleasant personality. He was assisted by Sammi Swing, who worked with him on some housing issues that were extremely difficult in this bill.

My brilliant chief counsel, Ayesha Khanna, oversaw cyber security, surveillance, and all kinds of things when I needed a good legal mind to help me work my way through understanding these issues. I appreciate her tireless efforts.

My senior adviser, Tyler Moran, I don't think there is anyone in Washington who understands immigration issues more than Tyler. She worked in the White House. I was able to coax her into coming from the White House to work with us, and she has done an outstanding job on everything dealing with immigration—whether it is the DREAMers, whether it is litigation that followed the President doing an Executive order, helping the DREAMers' parents, whatever it is, children coming across the border, all related issues, including refugees and visas.

Jessica Lewis is one of the most pleasant, nicest people I have ever known. She is my national security advisor. I so appreciate her demeanor, her intellect, and her hard work. Late yesterday, when we finished work here, we went to one of the secure rooms in the Capitol, and we spent time with her telling me what is going on around the world. A lot of it is not very pleasant, but that is her job. I appreciate her work on foreign policy and intelligence issues. She is assisted by my deputy national security advisor, Julie Klein, who is also a good person and knows foreign policy.

Sara Moffat worked on interior-related issues and many other environmental issues but especially wild horses, sage grouse, and many other environmental issues that kept popping up on this bill.

George Holman helped me to fend off attacks on campaign finance reform and other issues as they arose.

Caren Street spent weeks on the EB-5 visa issue. I found her to be someone who is very intelligent and always available. I appreciate her good work and her wonderful smile.

Bruce King is stunningly smart. He is a Stanford person. He is my adviser, my confidant on issues relating to budget and finance. He is formerly staff director of the Budget Committee. He worked on all budget components of this bill and there were lots of them. I admire his soft speaking and his directness. I really like him as a person.

Jason Unger is my legislative director. I have such admiration for him. He also is quiet and very effective. He is a person who believes in public service. This young man, who graduated with high honors from UCLA, decided he wanted to do something in public service, so he taught for the Teach For America Program for 5 years in Compton, CA. It is a very difficult job. He taught little kids, and I bet he did a wonderful job, as he has done in the Capitol working with me as my legislative director.

My staffers were not alone in their efforts. They were helped tremendously by staff from other offices. The four principal leadership negotiators were, as I mentioned, Drew Willison, my chief of staff; Hazen Marshall from Senator MCCONNELL's staff; Dick Meltzer from Leader PELOSI's staff; Austin Smythe; and Cindy Herrle from Speaker RYAN's office. They worked well together. I am sure once in a while they would raise their voices with one another, but it worked out real well. It was a good team, and we have the result to prove it.

As I indicated, these were tough negotiations, but these five individuals worked very hard. They made tough choices and brought them to their principal and decisions were made. It was amazingly cooperative. It was done in a collegial manner. I believe that all the leaders were exceptionally well represented by these men and women.

I would be remiss not to mention BARBARA MIKULSKI's outstanding appropriations team. The entire staff deserves our thanks but especially Staff Director Chuck Kieffer, who is an institution of the U.S. Senate. He is a fine person, a hard worker, and no one understands the appropriations process better than he does, and of course Deputy Staff Director Jean Eisen, who has been remarkably involved.

This leaves me to say a word about BARBARA MIKULSKI. When the history books are written of what has taken place in the U.S. Senate during the last 40 years, she will be a principal of that history. I had the good fortune of being able to come to the Senate with her. We served on the same committees. We have served on the Appropriations Committee for sure and enjoyed our relationship. There is no one I have served with in public office I have more respect for than BARBARA MIKULSKI. I admire her. I admire how she has been so dynamic in the U.S. Senate. She is

one of the finest orators we have ever had in the Senate while I have been here. She does it in a unique way, but we all listen.

BARBARA MIKULSKI, thank you very much.

We also had to work hard with the Finance Committee. I extend my appreciation to our ranking member, RON WYDEN. He and I have served together in Congress for a long time, more than three decades, but not only do I appreciate his work but also his staff director, Josh Sheinkman. I may not pronounce his name just right, but everybody knows Josh. I want the Finance Committee and all of their staff to know how much we appreciate this product that they were responsible for piecing together.

I already talked a day or so ago about Dennis McDonough, the President's Chief of Staff. He is a remarkably fine man.

Brian Deese, Senior Adviser to the President, was one of the reasons we got the great agreement we got out of Paris with those accords dealing with the environment.

Katie Beirne Fallon, President Obama's Legislative Affairs Director, I have already laid out on the record what a wonderful person she is.

Jason Furman, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, I extend my appreciation to him and his entire family whom I know.

Marty Paone, I talked about him.

We really care a great deal about them.

There are many others who helped craft this compromise.

From the Republican Leader's office: Brendan Dunn and Scott Rabb.

From Speaker RYAN's office: George Callas and Matt Hoffman.

From Leader PELOSI's office: Katherine Monge and Wendell Primus.

From Senator CORNYN's office: Monica Popp.

From the Senate Finance Committee: Ryan Abraham, Brett Baker, Kim Brandt, Chris Campbell, Adam Carrasco, Anne Dwyer, Karen Fisher, Liz Jurinka, Matt Kazan, Jay Khosla, Jim Lyons, Juan Machado, Todd Metcalf, Matt Prater, Josh Sheinkman, Katie Simeon, Tiffany Smith, and Todd Wooten.

From the Senate HELP Committee: Nick Bath and Andi Fristedt.

From the Senate Banking Committee: Mark Powden.

From the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: Angela Becker-Dippmann and Sam Fowler.

From Senator SCHUMER's office: Meghan Taira.

From Senator GILLIBRAND's office: Brooke Jamison.

From Congressman LEVIN's office: Karen McAfee.

I realize I may be missing some people. So to everyone who helped push this legislation across the finish line, thank you. You have done America a great service.

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, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. HATCH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. REID. Madam President, will my friend allow me to interrupt for just a second?

Mr. HATCH. I will be happy to yield.

COMMENDING SENATOR HATCH

Mr. REID. Madam President, I had it in my notes, but I didn't do it.

I wish to express my appreciation for the majority staff on the Finance Committee. The chairman of this powerful Finance Committee is ORRIN HATCH. We have served together in the Senate for these many years. There is not a finer gentleman in the Senate than ORRIN HATCH. I apologize for reading over my notes. I appreciate very much his friendship and his leadership.

Mr. HATCH. I thank the leader, and I feel the same way toward him. He and I are dear friends, and we are going to continue to be dear friends, despite our differences.

PROPER OPERATION OF THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise to discuss the state of the U.S. Senate. My 39 years of service in this body have given me an increasingly unique vantage point to reflect upon this institution. Over the years, I have seen the Senate both at its best—rising to meet the lofty expectations of the Framers—and, unfortunately, I have seen it at its worst.

Last year I came to the floor repeatedly to speak out against what I viewed as the abuse of the Senate by the previous majority, under which this great body fell into great dysfunction. In addition to identifying these abuses, I did my best to lay out a vision for how the Senate ought to function—how we could best live up to the best traditions of our forebearers.

Over the past year, since my selection as President pro tempore, I have endeavored to continue to offer what lessons I have learned and what accumulated knowledge I have acquired over my nearly four decades here to help our new Republican majority to get the Senate working again. After a year of hard work, I can report a significant degree of success. Under the leadership of our new majority leader and his team, the Senate is back to work for the American people.

By the end of last Congress, these best traditions of the Senate that have

allowed it to serve the Republic for so well for so long were left, in my opinion, in severe disrepair. The then-majority leadership curtailed debate on an unprecedented scale, moving to cut off debate before this body could even begin considering legislation. The leader also used the so-called nuclear option to permanently weaken the opportunity to debate nominations, including crucial lifetime nominations to the Federal court. In all of last year, the Senate voted on only 15 amendments, with the majority leadership refusing to countenance any amendment it did not support. The 113th Congress set a record for bills that bypassed committees—this institution's incubators of consensus. Instead of adhering to the committee process, the legislation was crafted in the back rooms of leadership offices and brought directly to the floor.

Thanks to this institutional degradation, the Senate became a wasteland of partisan warfare. Much of the time spent in session was wasted on voting on the previous majority's messaging bills. This legislation had no chance of passing the Senate and was designed simply to buttress the majority's election-year arguments. The time that was not spent on this political gamesmanship was otherwise wasted largely on rushing through President Obama's nominees at a breakneck pace.

Our new majority has thus faced the daunting task of restoring the Senate to its proper function so this body can resume its rightful role as the source of wise legislation. These efforts have produced some impressive statistics.

This year, the Senate has held almost 200 votes on amendments of individual Senators. That figure is nearly 9 times as many as last year. Earlier this year, the Senate brought up more amendments in a single week than all of last year.

Debate has also flourished. The Senate spent over 25 percent more days in session than last year. The majority leader has greatly curtailed the practice of filing cloture as soon as debate begins, restricting it to rare occasions that involve time-sensitive measures and, particularly, sensitive bipartisan legislation.

Furthermore, our committees are all back to work. With only a few exceptions, the legislation passed by the Senate has been crafted by the committee rather than by leadership. The close, collaborative environment that the committees foster helps build bipartisan consensus, even in these polarizing times. In fact, many of our committees posted impressive statistics of bipartisan legislating. The Finance Committee—the accomplishments of which I spoke on yesterday—has passed 37 bills, all bipartisan. The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has passed 71 bills, all bipartisan. The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee has passed 10 pieces of legislation, and all but one was bipartisan.