

Today, we have the opportunity to help a great number of species. One bill ready for action, the Shark Conservation Act, will improve Federal enforcement of an existing prohibition on the killing of sharks just for their fins. Because of a loophole in the existing law, animals are still caught, their fins are severed, and the dismembered shark is sent back into the ocean to die. But they don't just die, they suffer a horrible and protracted death—all of that cruelty for a bowl of soup.

Another important bill is the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act, which will strengthen programs that provide emergency aid to seals, whales, and other marine creatures that get struck by boats or tangled in fishing lines. This happens all the time.

Other bills, such as the Crane Conservation Act, the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act, and the Southern Sea Otter Recovery Act, will protect some of the most rare and remarkable creatures anywhere on Earth. Without our help, many of these creatures could disappear within a generation.

I also wish to draw attention to the efforts of Senators MERKLEY and KYL today to clear an important bill that will end the appalling practice of animal crush videos. It is hard for me to comprehend what some people do. They torture animals and take pictures of them and sometimes sell those pictures. There are people sick enough to want to watch a little animal or a big animal be crushed and killed. They call them animal crush videos. The law we passed in 1999 outlawing these videos was struck down by the Supreme Court in April of this year. Senators KYL and MERKLEY have worked to write a more narrowly tailored bill that respects the first amendment while still punishing those who seek to profit from the torture of puppies, kittens, and other helpless animals.

As I understand it, the Supreme Court said you can't stop people from buying these videos to watch. But we can stop people from doing these terrible things that people want to watch.

I hope we can work these out and pass these by unanimous consent. Why do we need debate on these issues? These are good bipartisan bills that deserve to be passed.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a number of unanimous consent requests that I am going to ask. But I have been told the Republicans want to look a few of these over, and I have no problem with that. I can do it later tonight or tomorrow sometime. These are important issues. I have given a brief synopsis of some of the awful things going

on around the country as they relate to animals. We should do something to take care of this. I hope we can get these cleared. These are not great legal issues, but they are moral issues. If we can't treat animals in a fair way, we can't treat ourselves in a fair way.

When we come in, in the morning, I will ask for these consents. I appreciate my friend from Mississippi for his usual manner of being so courteous in allowing me to go forward with my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. WICKER are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. WICKER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 39

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, September 29, at 10 a.m., the Republican leader or his designee be recognized to move to proceed to the consideration of S.J. Res. 39, a joint resolution providing for Congress's disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5 United States Code of the rule relating to the status as a grandfathered health plan under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; that there be 2 hours of debate on the motion to proceed, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the adoption of the motion to proceed; that if the motion is successful, then there be 1 hour of debate with respect to the joint resolution, with the time divided as specified above; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution; provided further that if the motion to proceed to the joint resolution is defeated, that no further motion to proceed to the joint resolution be in order for the remainder of this Congress; further, that no amendments or any other motions be in order to the joint resolution, and that all other provisions of the statute governing consideration of the joint resolution remain in effect.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NEVADA OPERA THEATRE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 25th anniversary and great impact of the Nevada Opera Theatre in Las Vegas, NV. A pillar in the arts, education and entertainment in southern Nevada, we are proud of the Nevada Theatre Opera and its many achievements since inception. It is my great pleasure to honor this fine institution along with its participants, patrons and volunteers here before the U.S. Senate today.

Known as a global center of entertainment and the arts, Las Vegas, NV, enjoys an incredible atmosphere of music and theatre. Eileen Hayes desired to add the immense impact of opera to this reputation and realized her goal with the foundation of the Nevada Opera Theatre in October of 1985. She brought opera music and performance to southern Nevada. Her work has been instrumental, and since the first performance in August of 1986, audiences have been captivated by productions including: La Boheme, La Traviata, Tosca and Die Fledermaus, to name a few.

The theatre continues on today as the major nonprofit opera company in southern Nevada. Comprised of Nevada Opera Theatre artists, chorus, and children's chorus and orchestra, membership surpasses 120. Many of the included artists are nationally and internationally recognized, while others are talented regional and local performers. All artists exude an excellent caliber or professionalism in the development of their craft.

As I have previously mentioned, these citizen performers not only entertain. Opera Outreach has performed for over 115,000 Clark County School District and private students, touching a great many lives in the ongoing education of our youth. Everyone is invited to participate by either joining the theatre or becoming a patron, making the education all the more tangible. Outreach encompasses not only programs in the schools but additional programming in local malls, hospices, hospitals, and for civic and community organizations.

I join with my fellow Nevadans in honoring the Nevada Opera Theatre for its 25 years of service. Now well into its third decade, this institution has worked to bring a knowledge and appreciation of music to the people of southern Nevada, and I have no doubt that it will continue to do so for years to come. I am grateful and honored to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Nevada Opera Theatre.