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Pence attacks "Slaughter Rule"

Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.), chairman of the House Republican Conference, said Tuesday that deeming the Senate bill passed without a floor vote on it would be unconstitutional, sharpening the Republican attack of what he's now calling the "Slaughter House Rule."

"It really tramples on the Constitution of the United States," Pence said during a morning hour speech on the House floor, as he waved a pocket Constitution in his right hand. "Now, I've understood this ever since I saw School House Rock."

He read from Article I, Section 7 to say that the Founding Fathers would never have approved of the procedural move that Speaker Nancy Pelosi suggested she may use during a Monday press conference. It's called the Slaughter rule because it would need to be approved by the House Rules Committee, chaired by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.).

Pence's attack comes as part of the larger Republican strategy to encourage a narrative that the Democrats are using unseemly legislative practices to push an unpopular bill. In his Monday speech, he said Democrats will pass their bill "by any means necessary."

"I believe it's an insult to the American people," he said. "Let us live up to the ideals of our Founders and the expectation of our people, and let's throw this Slaughter House Rule business in the trash heap where it belongs."

In fact the "self-executing rule" or "deem and pass" procedure has been used by both Democrats and Republicans in the past. There is no evidence to suggest it hasn't passed Constitutional muster, but the procedure has never been used on something as momentous as what's being considered by Pelosi this week.

--*James Hohmann*

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