RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

TREATY WITH RUSSIA ON MEASURES FOR FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following treaty which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

TREATY Calendar No. 7, Treaty with Russia on measures for further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

OMBUDS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I want the American people to see something. This is the bill the majority would have us pass; this Omnibus appropriation is 2,000 pages long. I think the American people should think back to this time a year ago—last December—when the Democrats did the very same thing. At that point, it was a 2,700-page health care bill because, frankly, we want us to see what was in it. Only afterwards did we find out about the “Cornhusker kickback,” the “Louisiana purchase,” and all the rest.

This is eerily familiar to anyone who remembers the health care debate. We even have snow in the forecast, which is reminiscent of last year. Last year we voted on health care in a blizzard—the 2,700-page health care bill in the middle of a blizzard.

This bill is so enormous it took the Government Printing Office 2 days to print it. It spends more than $1 billion a page. Let’s take a look at it again.

Here is the bill. It spends—right at 2,000 pages in this bill—it spends $1 billion a page. More than $1 billion in it for the Democratic health care bill we passed last year, the 2,700-page bill that looked pretty much like this. It has $1 billion in it for that health care bill we passed last year.

An ever-growing number of Americans looking at that health care bill would like for us to repeal it, not fund it. This is exactly the kind of thing the American people voted against last November—just this kind of thing. We had a referendum on November 2 on how the American people felt about what we have been doing for the last 2 years, and right at the top of the list was the 2,700-page health care bill.

Frankly, it is just unbelievable. Just a few weeks after the voters told us they don’t want us rushing major pieces of complicated, costly, far-reaching legislation through Congress, we get this 2,000-page bill. They want to ram this gigantic, trillion-dollar bill through Congress, and they are using, once again, the Christmas break as an inducement to vote for it.

Look, we all know this is not the way to legislate. Americans expect more from Congress and they demanded more on election day. That is why today I am introducing this clean, one-page continuing resolution that would operate the government through February 18. So we have a choice. We can pass this 2,000-page bill for $1 billion a page, or we can do this one-page, clean continuing resolution through February 18 of next year. That is the choice we have.

Once the new Congress is sworn in, we will have a chance to pass a less expensive bill, free of this kind of wasteful spending. Until then, we need to take a step back and respect the will of the voters.

I think the message was pretty clear last November. One pundit referred to it as a restraining order. In other words: Quit doing what you have been doing. Here we are 1 month after the election attempting to pass this 2,000-page bill when we could pass a one-page bill that would simply continue the government through February 18.

So we are going to have an opportunity to do this. I hope it makes sense to the American people and to the Senate to move forward on that matter.

Tributes to Retiring Senators

JIM BUNNING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I know there are others on the Senate floor seeking to speak, but I wish to bid farewell to one of our colleagues. Few people can say they have had the same range of experience and successes in life as Senator Jim Bunning. In fact, there isn’t even another Major Leaguer who can say he struck out Ted Williams three times in one game. Jm accomplished that notable feat in just his second year in the major leagues.

Thirteen years after that, he had become the only member of the Baseball Hall of Fame to serve in Congress. For the past 12 years, I have been honored to work alongside this remarkable American in the Senate. We followed different paths in life, but we sure have deep love for Kentucky and its people. It has been my honor over the years to work closely with Jm to advance our common goals.

So today I wish to say a few words about my good friend as we honor his common goals.