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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. John Yates II, Falls Church Baptist Church. Incidentally, he is the pastor of Holly Richardson who works with me and of whom I am so proud.

We are glad to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. John Yates II, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Our Father in heaven, You are the King Eternal. You rule over all. Your light divides the day from night.

Thank You for the gift of this new day. Give us a spirit of gratitude and wonder at Your creation. Drive from us all wrong desires; guide us in the way of peace and justice that, having done Your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give You thanks and rest in Your care.

We pray today for statesmen, leaders, and rulers everywhere and especially for the Members of this United States Senate and their fellow workers.

May they be quiet in spirit, clear in judgment, able to understand the issues that face them. May they think often of the people on whose behalf they speak and act. May these Senators remember You. May they remember that keeping Your laws bring us only good and happiness. Grant them patience; grant them courage; grant them foresight and great faith. In their anxieties, be their security; in their opportunities, be their inspiration. By their plans and their actions, may Your kingdom come; may Your will be done.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MIKE CRAPO, a Senator from the State of Idaho, 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 ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Idaho is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. unless an agreement is reached for the consideration of the energy and water appropriations conference report. It is hoped the Senate will begin that conference report at approximately 11 a.m. for 45 minutes of debate. If that agreement is reached, Senators may anticipate that the first rollcall vote will occur at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Following the party conference meetings, the Senate may begin consideration of the digital millennium legislation or any conference reports or appropriations bills available for action while waiting for the continuing resolution from the House. Therefore, Senators may anticipate votes throughout the day.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

FACING THE DEADLINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are facing a deadline this week—October 1. Every family in America knows about deadlines: April 15, you had better get your taxes in. A deadline is coming for shopping for Christmas, for Hanukkah. We are faced with many deadlines. October 1 is another deadline; that is our fiscal year. If Congress does nothing else during the course of a session, we are supposed to pass spending bills so when the fiscal year starts, the agencies know how much money they have and can go about the business of conducting their affairs and managing the Government.

Now, I will have to be honest with you; in the 17 years I have been on Capitol Hill, in the House and Senate, rarely, if ever, has any party in control of the Senate or the House really met that deadline, had everything in place by October 1. Sometimes it takes a little extra time to put it together. But I would have to tell you that in my experience on the Hill, I can never recall a time when we reached October 1, as we will this week, with such chaos. There appears to be no plan in place, no conversation between the leaders on Capitol Hill and the White House, and we will be asked today to vote on what is called a continuing resolution; that is, an extension of about 3 weeks so we can continue the business of Government while the leaders of the House and Senate get down to the business of leading. I hope that happens because, frankly, to date, we have seen precious little leadership when it comes to the important issues facing our country.

I am going to yield the floor at this point to my colleague from the State

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



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of Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, who is a member of the Labor-HHS appropriations subcommittee, a very important subcommittee when it comes to spending money for education. She comes to the Senate floor speaking not only as a Senator from Washington but as a former classroom teacher. So her perspective on education and what we are doing to either meet our obligations or fail to meet them is especially important.

At this point, I reserve the remainder of my time and yield to the Senator from Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair and my colleague from Illinois for defining for us what our challenge is in this week as we reach the October 1 deadline and our commitment to make sure the budget is enacted and appropriations bills are passed. Clearly, we are going to be unable to do that.

LABOR-HHS APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what is most appalling to me is that we have left the Labor, Health, and Human Services bill to the very last. This bill is extremely important to every family in this country. It funds everything from health care to NIH research to education, key programs that we are responsible for at the Federal level, being a partner in making sure every child in this country gets an education so they can be successful.

Last night, we referenced the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services. We were unable to offer any amendments, and I was disappointed in that. I was pleased that the Republicans put forward a budget that does appear—and I use the word “appear”—to fund education at much better levels than the House, and we are grateful for that. We have been out here on the floor innumerable times saying education is a top priority and in this budget we want to make sure that happens. Surely our colleagues have listened to this, and the numbers on the paper show they have. However, what is underneath those numbers is very disconcerting to me, and it should be very disconcerting to every parent and every family across this country.

Let me talk for a minute about a very important initiative we passed last year to reduce class size in the first, second, and third grades.

It was a bipartisan effort. We negotiated with our Republican colleagues. Every Member in the Senate and House voted for it and agreed with us that reducing class size would make tremendous gains in education across this country. In the budget that is put forward that the Labor Committee will be hearing this afternoon, I do not see any class-size money. This money has been taken away. The 30,000 new teachers who have been hired this year who are in our classrooms looking our children in the eyes as we speak will be fired if

we pass this Labor bill as it now appears before us.

I do see \$1.2 billion for something called teacher assistance initiative. We have no idea what that is. Clearly, it is not class-size reduction. We do not have any idea what it is, and it is subject to authorization, meaning essentially those dollars will never come forward. If that is the case, this bill is terribly underfunded when it comes to education and the needs of families across our country. But I am very concerned that the class-size money has been taken out of this budget.

I simply cannot support going out and firing 5,000 teachers across this country. These teachers are in place today. This was a commitment we made in the Senate 1 year ago when we told them we were going to work with them to reduce class size.

Why did we say we wanted to reduce class size? Because we know that students from small classes enroll in more college-bound courses such as foreign languages, advanced math, and science. This has been proven. We know students in small class sizes in first, second, and third grades have higher grade point averages. We know they have fewer discipline problems. And we know they have lower drop-out rates.

We knew that last year so we said as a Federal Government we were going to begin a process of hiring 100,000 new teachers across this country so students in the first, second, and third grade can have the attention they need and the teacher time they need to learn the basic skills of English, math, and science. We know those kids who come from those classes will do better.

Smaller class sizes mean higher grades, more kids will be able to compete when they graduate from high school, more kids will be successful, and more students will less likely have discipline problems and, as we all know, turn to violence as a means of making their voices heard.

We are going to fight for class size on this side of the aisle. We want those teachers who have been hired and those children in those classrooms to know what we said a year ago will not be taken away because it is a new year. We want them to know we are committed to education, we are committed to being the partner we are supposed to be, and it is not just for today, it is for tomorrow.

Numbers and rhetoric on a piece of paper do not educate a child. Making sure our kids are in classes that are small enough and that we have the dollars and commitment is critical, and making sure school construction is part of what we do—and there is no money in this bill for school construction—and making sure each child knows we care about them is critical. The Senator from California has been out on the floor many times to talk about afterschool programs, which are funded in this bill but less than what the President requested.

We are pleased the Republicans have brought us a budget with the numbers

on a piece of paper, but we want to know that those commitments are real, that those teachers are not going to lose their jobs because of some rhetoric on the floor this year and smoke and mirrors and no funding, and we do not know how it is all going to happen in the end and, gee, 6 months from now, gosh, the program is gone. We want it real, we want language now, we want numbers now, and we want to tell our kids we care about them in a manner that is true. That is for what the Democrats are going to be fighting. I thank my colleagues on this side of the aisle.

Mrs. BOXER. Will my colleague yield for a few questions?

Mrs. MURRAY. I will be happy to yield.

Mrs. BOXER. First, I thank the Senator from Illinois for setting the stage for this conversation, and I thank him for yielding such time as she needed to the Senator from Washington because, as he has stated, she has been a leader in this whole area of education.

Education, in my view, is the No. 1 issue in this country today. Why? Because we know that if we do not give our children a good education, a series of bad things happen: They will not be productive, they will drop out, they will get into trouble, and all the rest.

We are now in the global marketplace. We all know this. I daresay everyone on both sides of the aisle says that education is important. I want to probe my friend a little bit because she sits on that all-important appropriations subcommittee on education. I want to make sure I understand exactly what she has told the Senate.

My understanding is that the Senate, on paper, is spending more than the House and even exceeds the President's number on paper; is that correct?

Mrs. MURRAY. That is correct. If one looks at the numbers, that is what it looks like.

Mrs. BOXER. But is it not true that out of that increase there is \$1.2 billion for a program that does not exist and the funds will not be spent unless the program is authorized? And is it not true that \$1.2 billion is supposed to replace the lower classroom size initiative that my friend has been pushing in the Senate?

Mrs. MURRAY. The Senator from California is absolutely correct. They took the number of \$1.2 billion, which we passed last year and were supposed to continue this year, to reduce class size, only our commitment was to increase that to \$1.4 billion so we would add on to those 30,000 teachers until we reached our verbal commitment of having 100,000 new teachers.

On paper, they took the \$1.2 billion and put it into something called teacher assistance initiative. I have never heard of that. I do not know what it is. I have seen no language about it. I can tell my colleague one thing: sitting on the education committee in the Senate, it is not a program anyone knows about, and the language in the bill says