

that funds the Government until tomorrow morning will occur at 7 p.m. Senators should be aware that votes on continuing resolutions are expected each day. Senators should also be aware that multiple votes could occur each day starting tomorrow. Negotiations are ongoing, and it is still hoped that agreements can be made to wrap up the 106th Congress prior to the elections.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could ask a question of the acting majority leader.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair. I am wondering if the Senator from Alabama would check with the majority leader to give us some idea of when he is planning to come in tomorrow; he is planing multiple votes. Numerous people have been calling and asking about that today.

Mr. SESSIONS. What I understand is this, that the majority leader has made this proposal to the Democratic leader which has not been accepted as of yet; that he would ask unanimous consent we stand in recess when we complete our business today until 5 p.m. Tuesday, and that the time between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. be a period for morning business with the time equally divided, and that at 7 p.m. the Senate proceed to consider the 1-day continuing resolution and a vote occur immediately on the resolution when it is received from the House without amendments, debate, or motions in order. That will be the proposal at this point, as I understand it. But I am sure the majority leader would be open to improvements.

Mr. REID. Well, I say to my friend, I guess the good news is that ultimately there will have to be an end to the 106th Congress because the calendar is going to run out eventually. I hope we will see fit to maybe wrap up the work we have.

As you know, there has been tremendous work on Labor-HHS during the past 24 hours. Early this morning we thought we had an agreement worked out. As you know, my counterpart in the House on the Republican side, I understand, threw what we refer to as a monkey wrench into the proposed workout of the Labor-HHS bill which now, it is my understanding, is in further negotiations.

Time is really working very fast against us. As you know, we have sent a number of bills to the President. He is going to have to make a decision on those bills, whether he is going to veto them or sign them.

I know the majority leader is aware of all the problems that this Congress faces, but I hope that we exert any influence any of us have to try to work out this Labor-HHS bill. I think if that were worked out, we could probably resolve the other issues, or at least I hope so. There are a few other issues such as assisted suicide and immigra-

tion that would still be outstanding, but hopefully we could resolve those if we got this big final spending bill done.

Mr. SESSIONS. I am sure the majority leader would work toward that end. I know it has been his goal since this Congress began to move the appropriations bills to not find us at this point. Frankly, I am sympathetic with the fact that he has tried to do that and has been frustrated time and again. I think some people wanted us to end up in this very position, and they got their wish. And as far as I am concerned, we can stay here until January 1 or December 31 to do our business. Wiser people will decide that.

Mr. REID. You don't mind if we take at least a day or two for Thanksgiving and Christmas, do you?

Mr. SESSIONS. I do prefer to take off Christmas. But we have a high duty to do our work and do it right.

I thank the Senator for his comments, and I note that he desires, and I do, that we reach an accord.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are in a period of morning business and that the time used by the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Nevada will be deducted from the 2 hours that are evenly divided for morning business, that the Democrats have the first half and the Republicans have the second half. Is that accurate?

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

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what I would like to do for a few minutes is talk about the Governor of Texas and his plan regarding Social Security. I will not go into a lot of detail other than to say that the actuarials that are cited show that his plan is impossible because he is promising the same trillion dollars to two different groups, and in effect, the plan, just in a few short years, would bankrupt the country and we would have staggering deficits again.

So that those within the sound of my voice do not think that these statements that I am making are coming from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee or the Democratic National Committee, let me read a number of quotes.

First of all, from Ron Gebhardtshauer, who is Senior Pension

Fellow at the American Academy of Actuaries, who said:

"I don't see any way they pay off the public debt." And given Bush's large package of tax cuts, "in 2015 the budget will go negative. There won't be a surplus anymore."

Paul Krugman, economist and columnist for the New York Times stated on October 29:

George W. Bush's proposal, admittedly, does not count on the stupidity of markets. Instead, he trusts the people: voters are not supposed to notice that the same pool of money is promised to two different groups of people.

Secretary of Treasury Lawrence Summers, who, by the way, is not only Secretary of Treasury and a brilliant academician but is also a fiduciary with the Social Security trust fund and has an obligation in that regard also, here is what he says:

Now, there is of course, a Social Security surplus of approximately \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. That surplus is currently earmarked to pay the guaranteed benefits for the baby boom generation when it retires. If that surplus is diverted to new accounts, then the resources will not be there to pay the guaranteed benefits when the baby boom generation retires.

Robert Ball, former Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, said on October 27, just a few days ago:

I've looked over Governor Bush's plan. He takes one trillion dollars out of Social Security for savings accounts. But Social Security is counting on that money to pay benefits. His plan simply doesn't add up and would undermine Social Security.

Henry J. Aaron and Alan Blinder, Century Foundation Study of Governor Bush's Social Security proposal, Washington Post, August 24:

In a recent report, we showed that Social Security retirement benefits would have to be cut as much as 54 percent to restore balance under a Bush-style privatization plan.

In an editorial in the New York Times yesterday:

The governor's scheme would siphon money out of Social Security at the very moment when both seniors and younger taxpayers want to see long-term fixes to ensure its solvency.

Mr. President, the fact is that Governor Bush's plan ruins Social Security and ruins our economy. That is not a very good duo, as far as I am concerned, when you take into consideration that Social Security is the most successful social program in the history of the world.

We need to make sure that we do what we can to strengthen the program. Governor Bush's program weakens the program.

MEANINGFUL LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I find myself in amazement when I hear the Republican's spin that the Democrats played partisan politics in this Congress.

The truth is, we have repeatedly asked for the Republican leadership to work with us so we could have meaningful legislative accomplishments for

the people in Nevada and in other States represented in this body.

These legislative accomplishments should include meaningful prescription drug benefits that help people—not the HMOs; a meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights—benefits to ensure the American people receive the urgent medical care they need rather than an HMO litigation protection bill; meaningful funding for education; that is, funding for school construction, repair, and modernization rather than denying States any Federal assistance to maintain our Nation's schools.

We always hear that this takes away from local control. No one on this side of the aisle wants to take local control away from schools.

We have many programs that we have worked on that have been very helpful in school districts.

I have not heard a single person from the Clark County School District, the sixth largest school district in the country—basically Las Vegas—complain about too much Federal money, or too much Federal control. Quite the opposite. The calls I get are for more help, especially school construction and repair and modernization.

I think we need a meaningful tax cut; that is, a significant tax to ensure we can still pay down the debt rather than a tax cut of such magnitude that we forget our current obligations; targeted tax cuts, for example, that would allow a child to go to school not based upon how much money the parents have but how much ability they have. A tax credit to allow the parents to deduct up to \$10,000 a year per child would be most helpful to the American people. That is what we call a targeted tax cut. Of course, we need a minimum wage increase.

Speaking of Governor Bush, the reason Governor Bush has not been an advocate for a minimum wage increase is the State of Texas has one that is almost \$2 an hour less than the Federal minimum wage.

In some States, the wages are much higher. You have some jurisdictions that have a minimum wage as much as \$11 an hour. But here we don't. We have a \$5.15 minimum wage. We want to increase it 50 cents an hour. We are getting all kinds of static for trying to do that. We need to do that.

Campaign finance reform: Certainly with this campaign season, people understand how we have to do something to take money out of campaigns. We need to have campaigns more meaningful. It shouldn't be how much money you are able to raise. It should be what the merits of your claims are.

As we get closer to Halloween, the debt of the American people should scare them more than any ghost. Instead of giving them treats, this Republican Congress, in my opinion, played a dirty trick on the American people. They are scheming to drive a stake through the heart of the positive Democratic agenda—an agenda that could make a real difference in the lives of working people.

We do not have the legislative accomplishments that we need. Instead we have accomplishments that could have been.

I know that there are others here wishing to speak. We have a limited amount of time.

I see my friends from Illinois and Minnesota. I would be happy to yield my time to either of them.

How much time does the Senator from Illinois desire?

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to ask for 20 minutes.

Mr. REID. How much time do we have, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Forty-five minutes.

Mr. REID. I give 20 minutes to the Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President. I ask the Chair to advise me when I have consumed 10 minutes.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE AMERICAN CHOICE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me follow up on a statement made by the Senator from Nevada about the choice the American people are facing in just a very few days.

I think if you believe that governing America is easy business, then the choice is easy, too.

I happen to think that the set of circumstances the next President will face is pretty challenging.

I can recall only a few years ago on the floor of the Senate when we spent most of our time debating deficits and talking about constitutional amendments to end deficits. But now we are debating surpluses. What are we going to do with the extra money?

We believe on the Democratic side that the first obligation has to be to reduce the national debt so that our kids don't carry that burden, and strengthening Social Security and Medicare. We believe that after we have met those obligations, we should target tax cuts to help the middle-income and working families deal with problems that are meaningful, problems such as paying for college education for their kids.

We believe on the Democratic side we should be able to deduct up to \$12,000 a year of tuition fees paid for your children in college. I have taken that across the State of Illinois, a pretty diverse State, and it is widely accepted. People believe that is an excellent change in the Tax Code.

We also want to give families—working families, single mothers, too, for that matter, who need to have good quality day care—an additional tax credit so they can afford to leave their kids in safe day care. We say to the mother who wants to make the sacrifice to stay home with the kids, you deserve a tax break too; you are making a sacrifice. Our Tax Code should

recognize that. That is targeted tax cuts the Democrats support.

So many people have aging parent and grandparents. We want to increase the deductibility of expenses incurred in caring for their parents. Baby boomers have noted their parents need extra help as they live a longer life. They need extra assistance. We want to be there. The Tax Code should support families who do their best to help relatives, to help their parents.

We believe, bringing this together, we can keep America moving forward because we won't be embarking on a risky tax scheme, one that has been proposed by Governor Bush. The idea of \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts, 40 percent of which go to the wealthiest people in America, is a bitter pill to swallow. Who are the top 1 percent wage earners in America? People who make over \$25,000 a month, over \$300,000 a year. Governor Bush says these poor struggling people making only \$300,000 a year need a tax break, \$2,000 a month worth of a tax break.

I am sorry, but, frankly, I prefer to target that tax break to the people who really need it. A fellow such as Bill Gates at Microsoft has been very successful, God bless him for his creativity, but this man's net worth is greater as an individual than the combined net worth of 106 million Americans. Does he need Governor Bush's tax break? I don't think so. I know a lot of families across Illinois want to have a tax break to send one of their kids to college so that kid might have a chance to have a successful career and business or whatever they choose.

That is the difference. That is the choice. I think a lot of people in this election want to overlook a little history. Let me share some of that history.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

I ask unanimous consent that the time I consume asking questions not be charged against the Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It will be charged against the Democratic time.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from Illinois, does the Senator agree the best tax cut the American people could get would be if they paid down the national debt? That would give Bill Gates a break and everybody in America a break; is that not true?

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from Nevada is right. If we pay down our debt, we stop borrowing to service the debt. As we stop borrowing, the demand for capital goes down. That is, the cost of capital goes down, which is the interest rate. As interest rates go down, every family in America can feel it on their mortgage payment, on their loan for school payment, or their auto payment. That is as good as, if not better than, a tax cut, if we reduce that burden on our kids and bring down the interest rates in the process.

Mr. REID. One more question I want to ask my friend from Illinois. I have a long-time friend; we went to high