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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O God, the King of Glory, Your never failing providence sets in order all things both in Heaven and Earth. You give comfort to all who seek You. You have promised to supply all our needs with riches from Your celestial bounty.

You are at work in the events of our lives, bringing melody from cacophony and unity from division.

Bless our Senators as they trust Your mighty power. Bless, also, the members of their families who support them in their arduous work. Remind each of us that righteousness is the only true national defense.

O God, we wait for You to answer and trust You with our future. Help us to live by faith, so that we are acceptable to You. May the lives we live tell the world of Your marvelous deeds.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee,

and the second 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE TRANSPORTATION BILL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this week we have been talking about a fundamental standard to guide our debates in the Senate.

As we do our work, we need to ask a simple question: "Are we doing right by America?" We need to ask that question on policies affecting farmers, seniors, and veterans. And we always need to ask whether we are doing right by American families when it comes to economic policies.

While the economy has finally started adding jobs these past few months, this comes after 2½ years in which the economy lost jobs every month. What is clear to many of us is that we still have a long way to go, and we need to do more to help improve our economy. That is one of the main reasons it is so unfortunate that we have not completed the long-overdue transportation reauthorization bill—legislation that expired at the end of last September.

The ability to plan how roads and bridges will be built has suffered greatly due to Congress's failure to get this bill completed on time. Well over 100,000 jobs have been lost due to this delay. And each month that we do not complete our work brings more job losses.

Job creation will suffer, too—in South Dakota and across the country. In my State, because our construction season is short, there is not enough time to plan ahead and put people to work, even if we passed a bill today. But we will not pass a bill today.

Earlier this year, on February 12, the Senate passed S. 1072, the Safe, Ac-

countable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act. It was passed by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 76 to 21. The Senate bill would authorize \$318 billion over 6 years and is revenue-neutral. It is fully paid for and does not increase gas taxes.

Nearly 400 organizations, representing the full spectrum of transportation interests, all support the Senate funding level.

The Chamber of Commerce, the Associated General Contractors, the governors, the State legislators—the list goes on and on. All attest to the need for this kind of infrastructure investment.

The Senate bill would create over 1.7 million jobs—new, good jobs for the millions of Americans who are looking for work. In my State, the Senate bill would create over 6,500 jobs. It would also provide for important transportation needs on our rural roads and Native American reservations, and would allow us to move forward with high-priority projects in towns like Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Yankton, and Pierre. These are important projects that simply will not get completed without the assistance of the Federal Government.

One might ask: "What was the Bush administration's response to the Senate's bipartisan job-creating bill?" Their response has been, a veto threat—hardly the answer that Republicans and Democrats alike were hoping for; hardly the response that the economy needs; and hardly the response that the infrastructure deficit we have in this country cries out for.

Fast forward to April 2. After a bipartisan House plan to offer a bill at a \$375 billion level was scuttled by the Bush administration and the Republican House leadership, the House passed H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act. This bill authorizes only \$284 billion over 6 years, and is not fully paid for. Again, one might ask: "What was the Bush administration's response to the House bill?" If it did

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



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not like the original bipartisan House proposal at \$375 billion, and it did not like the bipartisan Senate bill at \$318 billion, how about the reduced bipartisan House bill at \$284 billion? The answer was another veto threat.

Again, hardly the answer that House and Senate Republicans and Democrats were hoping for from their President and hardly the response the economy needs.

Fast forward one more time to June 23, when the Senate conferees voted in the conference committee meeting with the House to resolve the differences between the two bills. The Senate made a formal offer to the House in the amount of \$318 billion and requested that the House respond to the offer at the next meeting on July 7. So, yesterday, after 2 weeks' time, the House and Senate met again. There had been hopeful signs that the House conferees might be prepared to accept the Senate's funding level, and many of us thought we might have a breakthrough that would move the bill forward. But what did we hear yesterday? The House was not yet prepared to respond to the Senate's offer.

What is clear to many of us is that unless the White House and the Republican leadership in the House release their stranglehold on House conferees, we will not have a transportation bill this year.

Transportation has almost always been—and has been in the Senate again this year—a bipartisan priority. Chairman INHOFE has done a superb job of guiding the bill forward. But he cannot do it alone.

I remain hopeful that the Bush administration will realize that our economy, our infrastructure, and American families need and deserve a good transportation bill, a bill that will create good jobs and provide the investments in our Nation's infrastructure that are so desperately needed.

We need more than a President who simply says "no"—a President who says he will veto a final transportation bill with either the Senate or the House spending levels.

By continuing to say "no," the President jeopardizes 1.7 million new jobs in our Nation and 6,500 jobs in South Dakota alone. He puts at risk necessary improvements for rural and Native American roads.

Next Tuesday, there will be another meeting of the conferees. I hope this critical issue of the investment level will be resolved, and that we can get on with the business the American people expect us to conduct. If we ask ourselves, Are we doing right by America on this transportation bill? The answer is that the Senate has done right. The House has made a start. But, unfortunately, without the President's constructive participation, we cannot complete the assignment. We will not have a transportation bill. We will not create needed jobs. We will be failing the American people.

I urge all Americans to let their Representatives in the House know, and let

the President know, that we cannot afford to fail when it comes to this important bill.

We can do better, and I remain hopeful that the President will confront the challenge, reverse his continued opposition, and join the Senate in supporting a transportation bill that makes sense for our country.

Mr. President, I also want to address a concern that many of us expressed yesterday about our current circumstances, procedurally and parliamentarily.

The majority leader threw down the gauntlet again last night in a very unfortunate decision. That decision, of course, was to file cloture. Having filled the tree, which means not only are Senate Democrats precluded from offering amendments before we have even offered the first amendment or had one vote, it is now the majority's decision to thwart the effort to have the kind of debate that all of us anticipated on class action and, simply said, we will have wasted an entire week in what is a very limited legislative period to begin with.

There is no question the cloture vote will be defeated. We will have wasted that week. We could have disposed of most of the amendments by now. Most of my colleagues had already expressed to me a willingness to offer their amendments with very short time limits. How ironic that in the name of saving time we have wasted time.

I made a legitimate and bona fide heartfelt offer yesterday that we limit Democratic nonrelevant amendments to 5, relevant amendments to 10. I thought it was an interesting juxtaposition—the majority leader actually offered an unlimited list of relevant amendments which would have prolonged debate perhaps for weeks if that had been agreed to.

We have made a good-faith offer. I am troubled and again frustrated that we have come to this point. We have wasted a week. We will waste many more days, if not weeks, in the future with this practice. We have learned from the past how unproductive these approaches to debate can be. It is too bad we have to learn all over.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator from Utah yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. BENNETT. I am happy to.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. First of all, I ask consent morning business be extended 5 minutes on each side.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask on the Democratic side, when our time occurs in half an hour, that Senator HARKIN be given 15 minutes, Senator LAUTENBERG 10 minutes, and Senator CANTWELL 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, one of the things that has struck me since I have been in the Senate is that during debate in the Senate, particularly during morning business, Senators seem to have no sense of history. They seem to create a crisis out of the moment and have no sense of placing their statements in any kind of historic context. This is an opportunity for missing what really is happening. If you do not place something in its context, you do not understand it properly. For that reason, I have decided to talk a little bit about the debates that have been going on with respect to the economy, where the economy is, where the economy is going.

Let me take listeners back to the election of 1992. I have particular focus there because that is the election in which I was first chosen to come to the Senate. During that election, there was a lot of conversation about the economy. We were in a recession, everybody said. We are in a terrible slowdown, everybody said. In fact, as we now know, looking at it in historic context, things were on the rise. There had, in fact, been a recession, but we were in recovery during the election of 1992. It just did not feel like a recovery.

That is one of the historic lessons we should all learn. The sense of where we are is almost always lagging events. That is, we have a feel that we are in a recession when, in fact, we are in a recovery. On the flip side of that, we can have a feel that we are in a recovery when we are, in fact, in a recession. It is because things take a little while to sink into the consciousness even though they are going on in reality.

In 1992, then-Governor Clinton and I, running, obviously, for different offices, both were faced with an electorate that felt the economy was in trouble. We both talked about what we needed to do to get the economy out of trouble. Then, when the normal course of the business cycle brought the economy back, the temptation on the part of all politicians was to take credit for that, as if the recovery that was taking place in 1993 and 1994 occurred solely because we had been elected. That is very satisfying for a politician to want to do. It does not happen to be intellectually accurate, but it is something everybody does.

As I say, I was elected in 1992. In 1993, I joined the Banking Committee. As a member of the Banking Committee, I had the occasion to listen to the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board when he came before the Banking Committee to make his report on the state of the economy. I remember very clearly because the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, had been appointed by a Republican President and was viewed as a Republican