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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Father Claude Pomerleau from the University of Portland in Portland, OR.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Merciful and gracious Father, may this day begin with an attentive, abashed silence in which we stop and humbly consider the many gifts You give us, the immeasurable mercy of Your love, the many opportunities we have to witness and celebrate Your creation.

We thank You for the challenges of this day. We thank You for the brains and hearts You give us to bring to bear on cruelty and brokenness. We thank You for the creativity and compassion You give us, so that we may craft policies that heal and elevate, that make room for the peace and joy that are Your greatest gifts to all.

Lord, be with us today. Be in this room, walk with us, strengthen our hearts, deepen our mercy, open our ears, overcome our weaknesses, guide our dreams, make us the instruments not of the small matters of men and women, but of the endless love that is You.

Most of all, today help us remember that our greatest charge is to craft a world in which the children of this Nation, and the children of every nation, can find the love and hope they deserve.

With humility, we bow before You and ask Your hand on our work. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 18, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LEAHY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Vermont.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this is a proud moment for our family. I commend our guest Chaplain, Father Pomerleau. For years I have called him "pere frere," which is French for my father brother. Father Pomerleau is my brother-in-law. He is the brother of my wife Marcelle Pomerleau Leahy.

It was in 1965 when Marcelle and I and Father Pomerleau's parents, Phil and Cecile Pomerleau, went to Rome for Father Pomerleau's ordination to the priesthood. I remember the thrill of our first trip abroad, but it was for such a special occasion. He said mass, his first mass, in the catacombs in Rome, something we will never forget.

Father Pomerleau received his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. He is a Holy Cross priest. They are the ones who run Notre

Dame. He received his masters there and got his masters in theology from the Gregorian in Rome and his doctorate from the University of Denver. He has been the rector of Saint George's in Santiago, Chile. He has been a professor at the University of Chile, presently a professor at the University of Portland, and is the religious superior for the order there.

I can go on forever reciting the long list of his accomplishments. More the way we think of him is this Sunday on Father's Day, he joined Marcelle and myself at our home, one of our sons, our daughter, son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren. We were watching the little grandchildren climbing into his lap saying: Uncle Claude, Uncle Claude, will you read us a story? That was part of his pastorage, too.

I am proud to have been able to introduce him. I thank the distinguished leader for letting me have this time.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to consider H.R. 6049, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. There will be a period of morning business today from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the majority controlling the first hour and the Republicans controlling the next hour. Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each during morning business.

Today we expect to be in a position to return to the House message to accompany H.R. 3221, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act.

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



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Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent to speak in leader time. The majority leader, Senator REID, is attending a funeral service for Mr. Tim Russert.

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

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this month the Senate Democrats have tried to confront many problems which face families across our Nation. From lowering taxes and addressing high gasoline taxes to ensuring quality health care for America's seniors and providing a helping hand to American workers who have been unemployed for more than 6 months, time and time again, the Senate Republicans have refused to give us an opportunity to address these issues. Republican obstruction has gone so far in the Senate that they will not even allow the Senate to debate legislation anymore, refusing to admit that these important concerns are worthy of Senate debate.

Yesterday, a new record was established in the Senate, one of dubious worth in the history of our Nation. But the Republicans have engaged now in 77 filibusters. The record previously for any 2-year session was 57. We still have another 6 months to go. The Republicans have now broken the record for the number of filibusters.

What is a filibuster? It is an effort to stop a bill, to stop a nomination, to stop debate, to make certain that the Senate will not engage in even debating the issues which the American people consider to be most important in their lives. And the Republicans have now broken the Senate record again with 77 filibusters.

It may not be news that they have broken the record. We knew this was coming, and I am sure their goal is probably 100 or more filibusters. So they will go down in history as being the most obstruction-oriented minority in the history of the Senate.

But this was a remarkable week. We will have had four filibusters in 8 days. What an amazing record. Republicans must point to that with pride—four filibusters in 8 days, one every 48 hours. They no longer seem content to stop legislation dealing with gasoline prices and Medicare for our seniors and trying to make sure we give unemployed workers across America enough money to feed their families. That is not enough. Now they refuse to even allow us to proceed to the legislation to debate it. They are so frightened by the prospect of an open debate with deliberation and amendments, they consistently vote against even engaging in debate.

In a little more than a week, the Republicans have blocked motions to proceed and debate the Consumer-First Energy Act, the Medicare Improvement Act, and the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, not once but twice.

Upon the conclusion of my remarks and the pending remarks of Senator

MCCONNELL from Kentucky, the pending business before the Senate will be the motion to proceed to the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act. We tried for the second time yesterday to bring this legislation to the floor so we can have a debate.

What is so controversial about this bill that the Republicans would filibuster it not once but twice to stop the Senate from even considering this bill? This bill passed the House of Representatives last month by a vote of 263 to 160. Thirty-five House Republicans voted for the measure using the Tax Code to help reduce record energy prices across America.

What will this bill do? It extends expiring tax provisions that we need to encourage the development of sustainable, environmentally sensible renewable energy sources—solar, biomass, geothermal, hydropower, and wind.

In my home State of Illinois and many States across the Nation, these tax incentives have led to the development of wind farms, generating electricity without pollution, providing the energy we need for our economy to grow without endangering the planet on which we live.

When we said it is time to renew these tax incentives, let's make this part of our national effort, let's extend these tax provisions, create more incentives for the development of this energy, the development of new businesses, much needed American jobs, the Republicans said no. Let me be fair about that. Not all of them said no. Five Republicans yesterday voted to move forward on this bill, enough for them to say back home they are on the right side of history, but calculated in a way so there were never enough Republican votes to actually go to the measure. Five—Senators COLEMAN, COLLINS, CORKER, SMITH, and SNOWE joined all the Democrats present. We had 53 votes at the end of the day. We needed 60.

This is not an accident that enough Republicans crossed over to be able to say back home that they are doing the right thing for energy development, but not enough to actually move to the bill and debate. It has been a calculated strategy, and it has worked.

The Republicans time and again in the Senate have stopped us from considering measure after measure. They are determined that at the end of the day, this Senate, if they have their way, will accomplish little. They know they were branded in the last Congress as a do-nothing Congress. They are determined to stop us. In a closely divided Senate, 51 to 49, it is easy for them to hold back enough Members to stop us from taking up important measures for America.

Let me tell you what this bill would have done, the bill the Republicans opposed and used their filibuster and their votes to stop. It would have extended incentives for biodiesel fuel usage. Of course, that uses vegetable oil to supplement diesel fuel to reduce

our dependence on Middle Eastern oil. They voted no.

E85 gas pumps so that ethanol would be available in more cities across America so we can use this homegrown fuel and have less dependence on foreign oil. And the Republicans voted no.

Hybrid car purchases, a tax credit to families who buy hybrid cars, plug-in hybrids, for example. We know that is the wave of the future. We want to incentivize that market. The Republicans voted no.

The bill would have provided \$3 billion in tax credit bonds to State and local governments so they can take energy conservation measures with their infrastructure.

It supports the creation of hundreds of thousands of good-paying American jobs right here at home, and the Republicans voted no.

In addition, the bill extended the R&D tax credit which provides critical incentives to over 27,000 companies in America.

And finally, this bill would have helped a lot of American families by lowering taxes, property tax relief. I can tell you that in my State of Illinois, I hear about it wherever I travel—property taxes are too high. People need a helping hand. But the Republicans voted no.

We wanted to expand child tax credits for parents with young children, college tuition deductions for parents with older children, a deduction for classroom expenses for teachers, tax relief for our troops in combat under the earned-income tax credit, and State and local sales tax deductions for families who live in States that have no income tax—all of that tax relief for working families across America. The Republicans voted no. And to top it off, we did something that, frankly, may be new to the Republican leadership: We paid for it. We didn't put these tax cuts in at the expense of the American deficit. We didn't add to the American debt, not like this war President Bush has now waged for 5½ years, which he has failed to pay for, just adding it to the debt of our children. We paid for these tax measures by requiring hedge fund managers to pay taxes on compensation that is sitting overseas and delaying a new business tax benefit that hasn't gone into effect. But to protect businesses overseas and their workers, the Republicans voted no.

They voted no when given a chance for tax breaks for working families and said, instead, they wanted to protect these businesses overseas.

Why do they refuse to even debate this bill? Let's be honest about it, we are going to need their support to pass it. They are going to have their day in court, if the bill comes to the floor. They are going to be able to offer amendments and deliberate.

Senator BAUCUS has proposed a substitute that would do the things the House would do in their bill and provide even more relief for businesses and families, including taking care of the