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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, thank You for the gift of this day. Help us to use it for Your glory. Guide our lawmakers to labor with diligence for the good of our Nation. Deliver them from bitterness, frustration, and futility as they lift their eyes to You, their ever-present help for life's difficulties. Lord, save them from the futile repetition of old errors and the restoration of old evils. May they live such exemplary lives that people who see their good works will glorify You. Use the Members of this body to increase opportunities for more abundant life to people everywhere. Help our lawmakers to be aware of Your nearness and to recognize Your voice as You lead them to Your desired destination. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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, December 2, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

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

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the health care reform legislation. It will be for debate only until 11:30 a.m., with alternating blocks of time. The first 30 minutes will be under the control of the Republicans; the majority will control the next 30 minutes.

The Senate will recess from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. today. Following the recess, the Senate will resume consideration of the health care legislation. I am hopeful we can have some votes this afternoon. We have been unable to work that out with the minority and so we will see what the afternoon brings.

### HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this historic health care reform bill before us is strong, and it is a strong head start in the right direction toward urgently needed change. But similar to nearly every bill to come before the Senate, it stands to benefit from the constructive input of all Senators. This good bill will be even better when this body debates it, refines it, and improves it.

I am pleased we have begun the amendment process. I hope we will soon be able to begin voting on those amendments—the ones drafted and sponsored by both Republicans and

Democrats. But as we delve into the details and give the individual parts of this bill the considerable thought and attention they deserve, let's not forget the big picture.

So as we begin the third day of debate on this bill, let's remember what it does: First, we are making it more affordable for every American to live a healthy life. Second, we are doing it in a way that is fiscally responsible and in a way that will help our economy recover.

This bill does not add a dime to the deficit—quite the opposite. In fact, we will cut it by \$130 billion in the first 10 years and as much as \$¾ trillion in the next 10 years. We do this by keeping costs down. This critical piece of legislation will cost less than \$85 billion a year over the next decade—well under President Obama's goal. It will make sure every American can afford quality health care. We will make sure that more than 30 million Americans who don't have health care today will soon have it. It will not only protect Medicare, but it will make it stronger. In short, this legislation saves lives, saves money, and saves Medicare.

The Congressional Budget Office and respected economists outside Washington have studied it, and they agree. The bill will do what we set out to do at the beginning of this Congress: It will lower costs and increase value so all Americans can afford quality health care, not just a few.

The experts have crunched the numbers, and they have come back with positive reviews. It will help parents afford to take care of their children and help bosses provide coverage for their workers. It creates more choices and more competition in the health care market. It will protect everyone against insurance company abuses, and for all the changes, in areas where our health care system does work, it keeps it the way it is.

I am very happy with the way Democratic Senators have stood for these

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



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principles and those who have defended them against hollow attacks from the other side. One after another, Republicans have come to the floor with disingenuous claims.

For example, they have talked about health care premiums, overlooking the fact that those costs will go down for the vast majority of Americans—in fact, 93 percent. They have talked about the deficit, ignoring the fact that health care reform will do more to lower the deficit than any other measure has in years—remember, over 20 years, almost \$¾ trillion. They have tried to scare seniors, saying you are going to die soon, as an example, closing their eyes to the fact that we strengthen Medicare and cut waste, fraud, and abuse from the program. They have tried to scare women, closing their ears to the fact that we will make it easier than ever for women to get the preventive screenings they need, and that is a gross understatement. They claim to speak for the American people but neglect to mention that, for the last year, a majority of the Americans have consistently said it is more important than ever to nurse our health care system back to health.

What is the most consistent Republican attack on this bill? They carefully count the number of pages in this legislation but completely discount the number of people it helps. Can anyone think of a more superficial way to measure the worth of a bill than how many pages it is printed on? As far as I can tell, the only threat that poses is more paper cuts, perhaps.

Those who want to keep the broken system the way it is throw everything they can at the wall, but nothing has stuck. Incredibly, my distinguished counterpart, the Republican leader, last week, called the health care crisis manufactured, in spite of the fact that 750,000 people filed for bankruptcy last year—70 percent of them because of health care costs. In one sense, my Republican counterpart is right—it was manufactured. This health care crisis has been manufactured by the greedy insurance companies that raise families' rates on a whim and deny health care to the sick.

Remember, the health care industry is exempt from the antitrust laws. They can conspire to fix prices with no civil or criminal penalties. No other business is like that, except baseball. This crisis was manufactured by leaders who enabled them, who empowered them, and who sat idly by while the problem grew worse and worse, until it finally collapsed into a crisis.

My Republican friends have been so busy coming up with distortions that they have forgotten to come up with solutions. They seem more concerned with scaring the American people than helping them. This barrage of baseless accusations underscores how desperate some are to distract the American people from the real debate and from the fact they have no vision for fixing our health care system, which is broken.

Yes, correcting the record has taken a long time. That is OK. We will continue to do so as long as necessary. Democrats are more than willing to defend this good bill. After all, it is not hard to do. As Mark Twain, a great Ne-vadan, said: "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

I wish to note that I especially appreciate the assistant leader, my friend of decades, Senator DURBIN, for his brilliant statements on the floor during the last several weeks on this health care issue. I so admire his spunk, his intelligence, and his ability to deliver a message.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### SERVICE MEMBERS HOME OWNERSHIP TAX ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3590, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3590) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time home buyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 2786, in the nature of a substitute.

Mikulski amendment No. 2791 (to amendment No. 2786), to clarify provisions relating to first-dollar coverage for preventive services for women.

McCain motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 will be equally divided with alternating blocks of time, with Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, to continue our debate on the McCain amendment to ensure Medicare benefits for our seniors are not cut, as would happen under this legislation, I wanted to talk a little bit about the commitments we have made to our seniors and what exactly would happen under the legislation that is before us.

As we all know, seniors have paid into the Medicare Program, and that is

with the expectation that they will get the benefits that have been promised to them. The question is, Why would we, at this point, reduce the benefits that have been promised to them, especially if the purpose is not to enhance the financial viability of Medicare, which everyone knows is going broke but, rather, to use that money to establish a new entitlement program?

Let me break down the list of cuts seniors would face under this legislation: \$137.5 billion would be cut from hospitals that treat seniors, \$120 billion from the Medicare Advantage plan. By the way, that Medicare Advantage plan serves almost 40 percent of the Arizona seniors on Medicare. It cuts \$14.6 billion from nursing homes, \$42.1 billion from home health care, and \$7.7 billion from hospice care. These are deep cuts, and you cannot avoid jeopardizing the health care seniors now have under Medicare by making these deep cuts. That is why the Chief Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—we use the initials CMS—believes these cuts would cause some providers to end their participation in Medicare, which, of course, would further threaten seniors' access to care. There would not be as many providers to whom they could go for their services.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle say part of this is an intention to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. Of course, we have known for many years that there is waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare, but actually doing something about the problem and recognizing it are two different things. If it were easy to wring hundreds of billions of dollars of savings from Medicare by just pointing to waste, fraud, and abuse, we would have done it a long time ago. Certainly the President would, during his first year in office, want to do that, given the fact we are spending a lot of money and he is trying to find sources of revenue for the various spending programs he has proposed. If it were that easy to do, it would have been done before now.

Moreover, Medicare faces a \$38 trillion, 75-year unfunded liability. That is almost incomprehensible. Most of us believe that whatever savings we could achieve in Medicare, to the extent you could eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, for example, you should do that to help make Medicare solvent.

Next I want to talk about what seniors are telling us. They believe, according to public opinion surveys—and I have talked to enough of them to know this is true—that these Medicare cuts are going to jeopardize their health care. They are troubled in particular by this \$120 billion proposed cut to Medicare Advantage. It has been called the crown jewel of Medicare. It is the private insurance addition to Medicare in which many are able to participate in programs they would never have been able to afford otherwise. It gives them this choice to supplement Medicare to provide all kinds