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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, today strengthen our Senators to do Your will on Earth, even as it is done in heaven. Give them the wisdom to put their trust in You, expecting You to shield them from danger and to lead them to a desired destination. May they find joy in obeying Your word.

Lord, let Your glorious Name be duly honored and loved by all who labor for liberty. Give us the humility to know that none of us has a monopoly on Your truth and that we all need one another to discover Your guidance together. You are the judge of all humanity. Look with favor upon us today and always.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN 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 8, 2010.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN 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. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will turn to the consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 4213, the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act. The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus luncheons. Rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day in relation to amendments to the tax extenders bill.

Chairman BAUCUS is here. As soon as the leader remarks are finished, he will lay down the amendment that is the substitute for the House message. I hope people will study this legislation and determine what, if any, amendments they wish to offer. We are going to have to work hard on this legislation. We will not be able to work late today because of some events that are taking place away from the Capitol tonight that involve both Democratic and Republican Senators.

On Thursday, we will deal with the Murkowski resolution. That is under a previous order that has been entered.

I hope that today and tomorrow, people will offer their amendments because we are going to have to wind this down as quickly as we can. I want to make sure people have the opportunity to offer amendments. It is pretty clear what is in it. There are relatively few

changes from what has been done in the House. The main change is the fact that we are adding to this money—I think most of us have received calls from our Governors—dealing with Medicare. That is a matter that is going to be laid down by the chairman of the Finance Committee.

GULF OILSPILL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I had the good fortune of having been put on the Environment and Public Works Committee from the first day I came to the Senate. It has been a great experience to serve on that committee. I have served under Chairman Chafee, Chairman Moynihan, and Chairman BAUCUS. Some remember I gave up my chairmanship for Jim Jeffords from Vermont. The committee is terrific. I love the jurisdictional swing that committee has.

As a result of this background, I have watched the oilspill in the gulf very closely. But I say to everyone within the sound of my voice, you do not have to have longstanding experience on the Environment and Public Works Committee to understand how terrible this has been to the environment. We do not know the outcome of the degradation to our environment as a result of this tragedy, and that is what it is. The Coast Guard admiral who is in charge has indicated there is no longer a plume. There is oil going in different places. Remember, the oil well is a mile below the surface of the ocean. So there are tar balls, sheets of oil for hundreds and hundreds of miles. Sadly, the worst is probably yet to come.

The one thing we tend not to focus on very much is the loss of life. Of course, we see the dead animals, and that is tragic. It is so sad. A pelican is an animal. It is not on the endangered species list. We took it off that list in the last year or so. Now these animals are dying by the dozens every day.

What we do not focus on as a result of the negligence—gross negligence—

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



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perhaps criminal acts of BP is that 11 people are dead; 11 people were killed. That seems to be overshadowed a lot of times. Eleven people are dead. Brothers, fathers, and sons were killed on the night of that terrific explosion. I hope we do not, in spite of the horrible conditions that have been caused to our environment, lose track of the fact that this is a personal tragedy for lots of people. Eleven people were killed and many others were injured. The American people are going to have to not forget the personal tragedies of these people who were lost. I am sure they will not.

I thought it important this morning to remind everyone that this is certainly an environmental disaster. But for the persons involved as a result of the cutting of corners that BP did—it is not just me talking. We see it on TV shows and the evidence is coming in. I talked with one oil executive over the weekend, and he is flabbergasted. He is flabbergasted as to what had taken place. There was no redundancy. This company simply did not follow rules that are in place to prevent things like this from happening.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, amid all the various crises Americans face at the moment, one of the most exasperating has to be the increasingly high cost of health care. The American people do not understand how an administration that devoted more than a year talking about health care could end up with a bill that actually raises the cost of care instead of lowering it.

Seniors are particularly upset about this legislation, and that is why the White House is staging an event today aimed at convincing them they are actually getting a good deal. But seniors are right to be skeptical. They were told this law would strengthen Medicare, when, in fact, it takes \$½ trillion out of Medicare to fund a new government program. They were also told that if they liked their plan, they could keep it. Yet now we hear that millions of seniors will lose their Medicare Advantage benefits they already have and like as a result of the Democratic health care bill.

The centerpiece of today's event is a \$250 rebate check the administration will pass out to the fraction—fraction—of seniors who qualify for it. I am sure anyone who gets these checks is happy to take that extra cash, especially in the current economy. What the administration, however, will not mention at today's event is that for every senior who gets a check, more than three other seniors will see an increase in their prescription drug insur-

ance premiums. In other words, behind every \$250 check is more than three seniors who will be paying more as a result of this bill. The reason for this is that the health care bill Democrats forced on Americans earlier this year requires higher government-mandated minimum standards for everyone. Those who opted for anything below that minimum will now see their premiums go up, and the number of seniors in this category far, far outnumber those getting a check. The administration can tout the check it is giving out to some seniors, but by failing to mention those seniors for whom it is causing rates to go up, it is hiding the whole truth.

That has been the story all along about this bill—a lot of promises that could not be kept. That is why the story now is not the bill itself but the administration's broken promises. Americans never wanted this bill. They never wanted it in the first place. And they are reminded every day why they opposed it.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam 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.

AMERICAN JOBS AND CLOSING TAX LOOPHOLES ACT OF 2010

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to H.R. 4213.

The Acting President pro tempore laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4213) entitled "An Act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes," with the House amendment to the Senate amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4301

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the House bill with an amendment which I send to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. BAUCUS] proposes an amendment numbered 4301 to

the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 4213.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be waived.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, a few moments ago, the Republican leader sought once again to throw mud at the new health care law that Congress enacted earlier this year. Let me take a moment to set the record straight.

The Republican leader said the premiums would go up for some Americans. What the Republican leader did not say is the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that health care reform would lower premiums for the overwhelming majority of Americans. After taking into account the tax credits to help buy insurance, health insurance will cost less for 9 out of 10 Americans—no small amount.

The Republican leader mocked the new payments to seniors the President is highlighting today; that is, the \$250 for drug benefits. The President made the point that that is important for seniors. The truth is, seniors will welcome the help they will soon be receiving to pay for prescription drugs in their coverage gap, the so-called doughnut hole. Starting very soon seniors will receive \$250 to help pay for their prescriptions. By the time health care reform is fully phased in, we will have completely eliminated the doughnut hole. This is something seniors care about very much.

No longer will seniors have to choose between their rent and the prescriptions they need. No longer will seniors have to cut their pills in half just to get by. No longer will seniors live in unnecessary pain just because of drug costs. So the fact is, health care reform will help to control the costs in health care. Health care reform will reduce costs for the taxpayer over the decades to come. That is not my assertion, it is that of the Congressional Budget Office. Health care reform will increase access to lifesaving medical treatments for millions of Americans who all too often now must do without.

Madam President, on the matter before us today, 15 million Americans have lost their jobs during this great recession. Although the unemployment rate came down some last month, it remains near 10 percent. At the depth of the great recession, during the first months of last year, the economy lost an average of 750,000 jobs a month. That is practically the population of my State. We have come a long way since then. Even if we exclude temporary census jobs, in the first 5 months of this year the economy has created nearly half a million new jobs. But we still have a lot more to do. We have to get more Americans back to work.

We began doing just that with the Recovery Act. We enacted that as one