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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.

Our Father, the giver of every good and perfect gift, we need Your power. Strengthen us for today's challenges and use us to glorify Your Name.

Empower our lawmakers to do Your will. Direct them in their labors, strengthen them to meet each challenge, and shield them from discouragement. May they not depart in words, thoughts, or deeds from Your purposes for their lives. Lord, give them the wisdom to trade in the spirit of self-importance for the spirit of self-sacrifice, inspired by the certainty that You are guiding their steps.

We pray in Your sacred 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. INOUYE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 29, 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.

DANIEL K. INOUYE,
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 a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans will control the next 30 minutes. Following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 5297, the small business jobs bill. The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons. At 2:15, the Senate will proceed to a roll-call vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Small Business Jobs Act.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5175

Mr. REID. Madam President, H.R. 5175 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5175) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to prohibit foreign influence in Federal elections, to prohibit government contractors from making expenditures with respect to such elections, and to establish additional disclosure requirements with respect to spending in such elections, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. 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. McCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATION OF GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate's confirmation hearing for Gen. David Petraeus is now underway. Seeing Gen. Petraeus should remind all of us of the successful counterinsurgency campaign he led in Iraq and of the sacrifices made by coalition forces there before and after the surge of forces in 2007. Regimental and brigade combat teams protected the population and fought hard battles while a counterterrorism campaign, led by General McChrystal, was conducted against insurgent leaders.

Today's hearing also reminds us of the divisive debate that preceded that successful counterinsurgency campaign and of the skepticism and criticisms leveled against General Petraeus by some of our colleagues across the aisle at the time.

Fortunately, the critics did not prevail, either in their attacks on General

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



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Petraeus or in their calls for a hasty withdrawal of troops based on political timelines rather than the security and stability of Iraq.

If we learned anything from that debate, it is that our national security and the stability of the region outweigh short-term political calculations.

It is clear that our Nation's efforts must be integrated in Afghanistan, just as they were in Iraq. It is worth remembering our forces in Afghanistan have been conducting a counter-terrorism campaign for more than 8 years, and this has been insufficient to keep the Taliban from regaining the momentum in Afghanistan. American and Afghan security forces must do more to ensure the Afghan populace that it will be protected, something undermined by withdrawal deadlines.

The surge of forces into Afghanistan ordered by the President is not yet complete. General Petraeus is the right General to command this operation and he should be confirmed quickly.

Madam President, my understanding is that the senior Senator from Washington has a unanimous-consent request she would like to propound.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

**UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1237**

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I thank the Republican leader.

I came to the floor last week and spoke in support of S. 1237, which is the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act of 2010, an extremely important and timely bill that will help many women, women with children, and men with children today who served our country, who have come home and do not have the support and services they need and end up homeless on our streets. So I come to the Senate floor today to urge our colleagues to pass this bill quickly.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 360, S. 1237, the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act; that the committee-reported substitute amendment be considered; that an Akaka amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; that the committee-reported title amendment be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will have to object on behalf of my colleague, Senator COBURN from Oklahoma, he has some concerns about this legislation, particularly, as he indicates in a letter I will ask to have printed in the RECORD, that it be paid

for up front so the promises to America's veterans are, in fact, kept. So I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the letter from Senator COBURN to myself on this matter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, June 24, 2010.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I am requesting that I be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous-consent agreements regarding S. 1237, the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act of 2010.

I strongly believe we must honor our commitment to our nation's veterans as well as our taxpayers. This means we must fulfill the promises made to veterans who made sacrifices defending our freedom, but in a fiscally responsible manner that doesn't bankrupt our country, endangering those very freedoms for which they sacrificed.

This bill authorizes \$3.4 billion in new spending over the next five years. Yet, the legislation does not reduce spending by other government programs to pay for this new spending. At this time, when our nation is projected to add more than a trillion dollars a year to our already unsustainable \$13 trillion national debt, it is irresponsible to authorize any new spending that is not paid for because the end result will either be a false promise to our veterans or a lower standard of living for the children and grandchildren of those veterans who will be burdened with the debt.

I would like to pay for this legislation by reducing lower priority and wasteful spending elsewhere in the government. There are many options to do this, including:

Eliminating nonessential government travel which would save \$10 billion over ten years;

Reducing unnecessary printing costs of government documents which would save \$4.4 billion over ten years;

Disposing of unneeded and unused government property which would collect up to \$15 billion;

Eliminating bonuses to government contractors whose projects are over budget or behind schedule;

Collecting \$3 billion in unpaid federal taxes from government employees, including nearly \$2.5 million owed by Senate staff; and

Rescinding the \$100 million increase Congress approved for its own budget this year.

There are also hundreds of duplicative, outdated, and wasteful programs that could be eliminated to pay for this bill.

Several months ago, the Senate passed S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, which authorized \$3.6 billion in new caregiver benefits for some veterans. At that time, I warned that unless they bill was paid for—which I offered amendments to do its—passage would be “an empty promise to veterans and benefits no one except perhaps the career politicians who will claim credit for doing something to help veterans without really having to make any difficult choices.” Unfortunately, I was right.

The same is likely to be true of this bill. It contains billions of dollars of additional promises which are unaffordable to taxpayers and uncertain for veterans in need.

Veterans and taxpayers should be weary of unpaid for, election year promises made by Washington politicians. With the percentage of Americans approving of Congress' performance barely above single digits, more broken promises and red ink will only bring greater disdain to this institution.

I would, therefore, insist as a condition of my consent for the passage of this bill that the new and expanded benefits in this legislation be paid for upfront so the promises it makes to veterans are kept.

Again, thank you for protecting my rights regarding S. 1237, the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act of 2010.

Sincerely,
TOM A. COBURN, M.D.
U.S. Senator.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I again thank the Republican leader. I know he is objecting on behalf of another Senator. I just wish to say that this is such an important bill.

We had an amazing woman come and visit last week. Her name is Natalie, and she has two young children. She is living in Issaquah, in my home State of Washington. She has been through some very tough times. She is a Navy veteran. She is a single mom. She came home from serving our country and ended up without a place to live, and they are now living on the streets. She, like any mom, wanted to do everything she could to take care of her kids and provide them the kind of quality of life every one of us does, but she could not find a stable job or income and ended up on the streets.

Natalie became homeless in 2007 when she could not find work and had to move out of the house she was staying in.

Natalie wanted nothing more than to provide her two children with the stable and loving home every family deserves, so she fought to secure transitional housing, and she was very fortunate to find a program called Hopelink in Washington State that gave her the support she needed to get back on her feet.

Natalie is now back in stable housing, taking care of her children and advancing in her nursing career. She came to Washington, DC, last Tuesday to help make sure no other family has to face the challenges she overcame so bravely.

Unfortunately, not every family gets the support that Natalie's did.

Homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children are two terribly vulnerable groups that are growing by the day.

Back in my home State of Washington, veterans service organizations and homeless providers have told me they are seeing more homeless veterans coming for help than ever before.

And unfortunately, more and more of these veterans are women, have young children, or both.

In fact, female veterans are between two and four times as likely to be homeless as their civilian counterparts and they have unique needs and often require specialized services.