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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, at 2 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, known to us in countless ways and times, lead our Senators in Your way. Lord, keep them aware that they can depend on Your validation of every just cause and the forgiveness of every sin which they, in godly sorrow, confess to You. As they follow You, may their small successes prompt them to even greater understanding for human benefit. Guide them by Your higher wisdom and bring them to a desired destination with hearts at peace with You.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL 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. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL 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, there will be a period of morning business until 4:30 today. Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

At 4:30 the Senate will proceed to executive session with an hour for debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

At 5:30 today the Senate will confirm the nomination of Sue Myerscough, of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of Illinois. There will then be a series of up to three roll-call votes, first on the confirmation of Anthony Battaglia, of California, to be a U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of California; the confirmation of the nomination of James Shadid, of

Illinois, to a U.S. District Judge for the Central District of Illinois; and the motion to invoke cloture on S. 23, the America Invents Act. The filing deadline for second-degree amendments to S. 23 is 5 p.m. today.

In addition, on Friday, cloture was filed on the motion to proceed to H.R. 1, the Defense appropriations continuing resolution. I hope to reach an agreement to vote on H.R. 1 and the Democratic alternative introduced by Senator INOUE on Friday. We are going to vote on this matter sometime tomorrow, even if it is late tomorrow night.

In addition to completing action on the America Invents Act, the Senate will also begin consideration of the continuing resolution and possibly H.R. 4, the repeal of the 1099 section of the bill we passed last year dealing with health care.

PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, budgets and votes have something very important in common: At their heart, both require and reflect tough choices.

Tomorrow we hope the Senate will vote on the Republican response to the President's budget. That is the so-called H.R. 1. Not only is the United States now focused on it, but the entire world is as well. Then we will vote on the Democratic response. Everyone has done the math and everyone knows how these votes will turn out. It is likely neither proposal will pass, which means neither will reach the President's desk, and we will go back to

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



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square one, back to the negotiating table.

But tomorrow's votes are still significant. Just as our budget—that is, how we invest taxpayer money and invest our resources—reflects our values, so will the votes cast on these two competing measures. They will show us which Senators are serious about fortifying our long-term future and which are more concerned with scoring short-term political points. These votes will show us who wants an easy applause line and who wants to strengthen our Nation's bottom line.

As the two parties' vastly different proposals make clear, there is a fine line between a responsible budget and a reckless budget. The Republican plan we will vote on tomorrow is the same plan the tea party already pushed through the House of Representatives. It is called H.R. 1. Now the same tea party is trying to push it through the Senate. That plan will cost 700,000 Americans, including 6,000 Nevadans, their jobs, and I will not support that nor will any other Democrat I know of here in the Senate. The figure of 700,000 is not a figure picked out of the air. Economists generally agree that is a huge job loss for our country—economists led by Mark Zandi, whom I have said on this floor on a number of occasions has a pretty good résumé. He is a chief economist at Moody's now. He is a noted economist and was JOHN MCCAIN's chief economic adviser during the campaign.

The tea party Republicans are hoping America will see their budget's pricetag and swoon over its cuts. They are hoping the country doesn't look under the hood and see what is wrong. That is because they know that when we do, we will see their shiny new budget is a lemon and has a badly broken engine.

I can remember I represented a number of car dealers when I practiced law. One of them was a wonderful man. His son is now running his operations. There was someone out picketing his place of business and he had a great big lemon. He alleged he had bought a car there at Findlay Oldsmobile and it was a lemon. I was an attorney wanting to stop that. I was ready to go to court and get an injunction to stop that. Pete Findlay called me and said, look, there is something wrong with that car and I don't want people to buy cars when there is something wrong with them. Take care of it. We will get him another car.

Well, that is what the Republicans should do with the lemon they are trying to perpetuate over here. As I said, when we look under the hood of H.R. 1, we find it is not a good piece of legislation, and that is a gross understatement. H.R. 1 has not only a broken engine, it is a lemon in many other respects.

To pull ourselves out of this ditch, we need an engine that powers growth, innovation, and our being more competitive. We need one that powers a re-

covery. The last thing we can afford is a broken engine that will drive us right back into recession. We can't fix a broken economy with a broken engine. But that is exactly what the Republican House is trying to sell us with this H.R. 1. The tea party plan will make Nevada's students and workers less competitive and will make Nevada's families and communities even less safe.

It hurts education, which, of course, threatens our future. There are many examples, but let me give two or three, starting where many of our children start—in early education. Head Start is a successful early education program for the poorest of the poor. It has been proven Head Start students are much more likely than their peers to graduate from high school. But under the Republicans' plan—this tea party plan, this H.R. 1—200,000 Head Start students, including hundreds and hundreds in Nevada, will be basically eliminated from the school system. That is a careless short-term cut with devastating long-term consequences.

Second, what about students who are already out of high school and go to college thanks to Pell grants? If the Republican plan were to pass, those Nevada undergraduates who rely on Pell grants would see their tuition assistance cut by more than \$600 a year. That means one of two things: These students' tuition bills will go up or they will be forced to drop out. We can't afford this. Either choice is a bad choice.

Third, what about those who are already in the workplace who are looking to join the job market? This tea party proposal would cost Nevada \$30 million in job training investments. That would hurt about 8,000 potential Nevada workers. These cuts won't do anything to help unemployment go down or help Nevada's economy get back on its feet.

We all know we have to make some sacrifices. We know there have to be cuts made. We have made them. But these Republican cuts, as indicated in H.R. 1, dealing with education alone, as I have mentioned, are counterproductive. If we slice budgets in the name of a stronger future but cut the most important way to strengthen our future, what have we accomplished? Nothing. We have made things much worse.

It is not just education. Let's talk about a few more of these dangerous consequences the Republicans' reckless budget would have for Nevada. The same would apply to Connecticut. It would pull the plug on renewable energy jobs in Nevada, including 600 new jobs at the State's largest solar plant. It would fire another 600 Nevadans who work at community health centers. One of the outstanding things we did in the health care bill is we put \$10 billion in that bill to build 10,000 new community health centers across the country. These aren't just for poor people, but they do help poor people a lot. It gives

a place for people to go so our emergency rooms don't become overrun. All of the medical economists say it will cut down the cost of health care delivery significantly. But that isn't what the Republicans do. The 600 Nevadans who work at community health centers would basically be eliminated, which means fewer Nevadans would have jobs and the neediest among us would have fewer places to turn when they need help getting healthy.

It would cut more than \$1.5 million from local law enforcement programs to help Nevada prevent crime, fight domestic violence, and keep our neighborhoods safe from gangs. The plan would cut homeland security investments by about \$1 million which puts every Nevadan and everyone who visits Nevada at risk. Some 60 million people a year visit Las Vegas alone. These cuts threaten the health of our economy, our communities, and our citizens.

The Democrats know we cannot make our economy work again for the middle class unless we invest the taxpayers' money as responsibly, efficiently, and transparently as possible. So for anyone to say we don't think there should be cuts—we believe there should be cuts. We have proven that. We have already cut \$51 billion below what the President recommended, and it was a pretty austere budget he presented. Yes, it is easy to demonize any investments we make by calling it government spending. It has always been a political shortcut to demand that we slice zeroes off the end of the national budget. But before we go on a reckless cutting spree, let's think about what these investments do, whom they help, and how much they mean to our future.

That is what Democrats have thought about as we drafted our plan. We made responsible cuts to the tune of \$51 billion below President Obama's budget. We have made some difficult choices. But where the Republican plan cuts indiscriminately, we have cut carefully. Where the Republican plan is based on ideology, ours is based on reality.

Some of the ideological cuts: Eliminate public broadcasting, eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. There are scores of things they have done, cutting indiscriminately. Where the Republicans' plan is based on ideology, ours is based on reality. That is because we know the whole point is to cut in a way that strengthens our economy, not in a way that weakens it. Our cuts eliminate redundancies, end unnecessary programs, and stop funding for earmarks. Our plan recognizes our job isn't to cut a billion here and a billion there just to say we did.

Our plan recognizes, as Democrats do, that we are not in competition to determine who can cut the most without regard to consequences; rather, we need to cooperate and figure out where we can cut the smartest.

The budget is complex, but the choice is very simple: If we want to create jobs, the Senate simply cannot pass the plan the tea party has already pushed through the House. We want to responsibly make the cuts we all agree we have to make. The Senate should pass the Democrats' proposal to bring down the deficit and keep our economy moving in the right direction.

If we want to realistically get something done before it is too late, the House and the Senate Democrats and Republicans should return to the negotiating table where we know a good compromise on common ground awaits us. The country is waiting too. Time is not on our side.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce morning business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I don't think a 6-percent reduction in spending that is proposed by the House is going to cause the U.S. Government to sink into the ocean. States are making far more serious reductions in spending than that.

The language the majority leader is using seemed to me like the language of 1994—reckless Republican spending cuts, poor people thrown to the street, and that sort of thing. But what happened in 1994? The American people, through their newly elected Congress, balanced the budget in 4 years. They balanced the budget when people said it could not be done. They said the spending reductions were going to destroy America's growth and prosperity and everything else they could imagine. But it didn't happen. It helped create a period of outstanding growth.

Tuesday, we are told, we will have a key vote. It is a very important vote. It deals with the level of spending in which this country is going to participate. It is going to make a national decision that is important. We passed a 2-week continuing resolution that reduced spending by \$4 billion over that period, keeping us on track to meet the House-passed goal of a \$61 billion reduction in spending this fiscal year. It was a good, small, first step. But the big step will be coming up, I suppose, a week from this Friday when the CR that we passed will expire and we have

to pass another one. At what level will we pass it? That is the question that will be before us.

Will we continue the trend of reduced spending that the House started us on and that the American people started us on by the election last November, just months ago, or do we continue business as usual—continue to be in denial and say no more, no mas, we can't do anymore, we give up.

Well, a vote for the Democratic plan that will be presented tomorrow will be a vote to do nothing. That is a fact. It will be a vote to say we are still in denial. It will be a vote that says deficits don't matter, we can just continue to spend, just continue to invest, and it will all get better in the end. It is a vote for more investment and more spending.

Indeed, the Budget Committee, on which I am the ranking Republican, had testimony last week from the Department of Education. They are asking for an 11-percent increase, when the inflation rate is 2. The Department of Energy asked for a 9.5-percent increase. Amazingly, the Department of Transportation came in with a 62-percent increase in spending.

Is this the way to bring this country under control? Is that what the American people expected when they voted in the last election and sent us a new House of Representatives and new Senators? I don't think so. It will be another vote for fear that we can't reduce spending because the Nation will sink into the ocean. I don't think so, and the American people don't think so in the cities, counties, and States that are facing these same situations and making tough decisions and being successful at it.

The decision we make on spending could well determine the fate of our Nation and our economy. It is that important; it really is. Forty percent of every dollar we spend today is borrowed. We will spend, this fiscal year, \$3.5 trillion, but we only take in \$2.2 trillion. Did you know that? Congress knows that. They are in some denial, but that is a fact. It is indisputable, and it is in the President's budget.

Over the next 10 years, pursuant to the budget—the plan the President gave us—interest on the debt will go from \$200 billion last year to \$844 billion in 1 year. We will double the entire national debt, the gross debt, from \$13 trillion to \$26 trillion. They claim they are saving \$1 trillion. I guess it would have gone to \$27 trillion. How can we save \$1 trillion when the deficit is going up every year? The lowest single year of deficit is \$600 billion. The highest single deficit year President Bush had—which was too high—was \$450 billion. The lowest they will have is \$600 billion, according to the President's own numbers, which he sent to us. This is not an acceptable path.

We are on the wrong road. This is a road to decline. It is the road to dependence upon foreign sources of money to finance our spending spree. It

is not the road to prosperity and growth. We simply have to make tough choices. We have to make this government leaner and more productive.

We need to create growth and prosperity. The growth and prosperity have to be in the private sector. That is who pays the taxes, which allows us to continue to have a healthy government. A failure to act at this point in history, after all of the discussion we have had in the debt commission—and several have met and all have called for substantial reductions in spending. But Congress doesn't get it. This is demoralizing for our people, for our government, for investors in the United States, for businesses sitting on capital and thinking about what the future will be like, whether this is not going to be a sound economy any longer or is the Government of the United States incapable of altering its trajectory. They thought perhaps this election was that way.

Well, the House has sent a clear message. Some think it could have gone further. It proposed a \$61 billion reduction in discretionary spending accounts. That is a 6-percent reduction. We have already gotten 4 off that, so it would be \$57 billion. When we take these numbers—and I hope we will think about this—when we reduce the baseline by \$61 billion for spending in discretionary accounts, that is far larger than some people think.

One of the things that got us in trouble is the geometrical problem of increasing spending—when we increase spending at 7 percent a year, for example, for 10 years, we double the size of government just like your bank account doubles at 7 percent interest compounded.

In reducing spending, the same thing occurs. A \$61 billion reduction in the baseline, if there were no more reductions over 10 years built into the baseline, will result in about \$850 billion in savings. In 10 years, that is almost \$1 trillion. That is with just a \$61 billion cut. It does make a difference, and it is significant.

But President Obama's plan and the Senate Democratic plan do almost nothing. He proposes, as I understand it, a \$6 billion cut for the rest of the fiscal year. That is just about a one-half of 1 percent reduction in spending. The Senate Democratic plan, it appears to me, is a \$4 billion reduction, which is less than a one-half of 1 percent reduction in spending this year.

Those are fake cuts; they are not real cuts. This is Washington talk. This is why this country is virtually broke. The President says he proposed a budget to the Congress—as the law requires him to do—and that budget would cause us to live within our means and to begin paying down the debt. That is what he said, and that is what his Budget Director said in testimony before the committee.

What planet are they on? The lowest single annual deficit—and if anybody on this floor wants to dispute this, I