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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.

Lord God Almighty, how great and wonderful are Your deeds.

Bless today the many people who help our Senators do their work. Lord, we thank You for the many members of their staffs who help them succeed. We thank You for our pages and the significant work they do. We are grateful for those who work without fanfare to keep the legislative process going. Keep these faithful servants of freedom from growing weary in their labors. Remind them that their harvest season will come. May they never forget that faithfulness is more important to You than success. Guide them with the light of Your truth until one day they will experience the joy of hearing You say, "Well done."

We pray in Your great 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. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 5, 2011.

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. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, following any leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will proceed to consideration of H.R. 4, 1099 repeal, with 1 hour of debate. Senators should expect two rollcall votes around noon on the Menendez amendment and passage of H.R. 4, as amended, if amended. We will recess following the votes until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus meetings. We are working to reach an agreement on the small business bill and will notify Senators when additional votes are scheduled.

I am standing in for Majority Leader REID, who has been called to the White House for the meeting with the President and the leadership, the Speaker and the leadership of the House of Representatives. The object of this is obviously to avert a government shutdown.

I listened carefully to the prayer from the Chaplain this morning. I don't know if we will need divine inspiration or divine interjection into this matter, but whatever it will take, I hope people of good will can come to an agreement. We are close. I don't think it is good for us as a government or as a Nation to see a shutdown of basic services that

may cause inconvenience and hardship across America.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam 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. 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.

PAUL RYAN BUDGET PLAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, today the chairman of the House Budget Committee, Congressman PAUL RYAN, is releasing a serious and detailed plan for getting our Nation's fiscal house in order. Congressman RYAN's plan would put us on a path to reducing the national debt, it would strengthen the social safety net so we can keep the promises made to the Nation's seniors, it proposes a way for Washington to start living within its means, and it will repeal last year's health care law which will raise health care costs, lead to fewer jobs, and which Americans have rejected. Congressman RYAN is presenting a plan, in other words, to address our most pressing problems head-on at a moment when the President and other Democratic leaders simply refuse to do so themselves. He is doing what his constituents have sent him here to do.

Anybody can say our Nation's problems need to be addressed, but history will show that Chairman RYAN is one of those who actually stepped up to do

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



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it. He should be applauded for that by people of good will on both sides. Unfortunately, we already know how many Democrats intend to respond to this plan. We have heard their spin already. In the absence of any solutions of their own to a looming entitlement fiasco and the testimony of countless experts on the fiscal perils we face, Democrats intend to use Congressman RYAN's plan against anyone who supports it—despite the facts. They will try to scare the public by claiming it says things that it does not. They will squander the golden opportunity we have right now to tackle the biggest problems we face in a bipartisan way, the way our predecessors did when the two parties shared power in Washington, all in the name of having an edge in the next election. Frankly, it is shameful.

Americans elect their President and Senators and Congressmen to lead. They don't expect us to agree on everything, but they expect us to work together when a problem becomes so pressing that cooperation across party lines is required. Now is such a moment. The debt is at crisis levels, posing a threat not just to businesses and families planning for the future but to our national security.

Since the President has taken office, nearly 3 million Americans have lost their jobs. As a result of the ongoing housing crisis, millions of homeowners are currently underwater on their mortgages. The only industry that seems to be growing is government, and the only city that seems to be isolated from problems most Americans face right now is Washington—all at taxpayers' expense.

The budget debate in which we have been engaged in the past several weeks is the direct result of the fact that Democrats in Congress failed to pass one of their own for the current fiscal year. Republicans had to step in and do it for them. Now, 6 months into the current fiscal year, the President and current Members of Congress still have yet to produce a plan of their own. House Republicans have produced multiple plans, including one they will offer today which funds our troops through the end of the year, keeps the government running, and gets us one step closer to the level of spending cuts that even the senior Senator from New York has described as reasonable. Unfortunately, Democrats would rather take potshots at these proposals from the side lines, hoping they become unpopular with the public so they can benefit politically. They have completely and totally abdicated their responsibility.

I would like to applaud Congressman RYAN not only for the energy and creativity and seriousness which he has brought to these issues but also for his courage in doing so at a time when Democrats in Washington would rather sit on their hands. By stepping forward, he has forced a much needed debate about the many crises of the moment.

It is my hope that our friends on the other side recognize this effort for what it is—a serious, good-will effort to do something good and necessary for the future of our Nation—and that for the good of the Nation, they will join this effort at some point before it is too late.

1099 PROVISION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as I have traveled across Kentucky over the past year, I have heard from countless small business owners who told me how burdensome the so-called 1099 provision in the Democrats' health care bill would be to implement and how it could hamper their ability to create good private sector jobs. I hope they are tuning in to the Senate floor today so they can watch the vote on its repeal.

This has been a hard-fought effort, and all of the credit should go to the junior Senator from Nebraska, my good friend Senator MIKE JOHANNIS. He has led this fight on behalf of the countless entrepreneurs and small business owners across the country who raised the alarm on this issue.

This is a big win for small business. Importantly, it is also the first of what I hope are many successful repeal votes related to the disastrous health spending bill the Democrats passed last year. The more Americans learn about this bill, the less they like it. We hope we can respond to their concerns with many repeal votes like the one we are going to have this morning right here in Congress. Then we will replace it with the kind of commonsense reforms that will actually lower costs and encourage job creation.

Once again, I thank Senator JOHANNIS for his leadership and hard work on repealing this onerous provision. This is a classic example of a Senator who listened to his constituents, developed a solution, won the support of his colleagues, and doggedly pursued a course of action that led to today's vote. America's small businesses can thank Senator JOHANNIS for pushing this initiative across the finish line. I call on the President to sign it into law.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the 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 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Louisiana.

(The remarks of Mr. VITTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 723 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we hear a lot about the disaster and things that are taking place and the loss of lives in Libya as well as many other places, particularly in the last few months. But going seemingly unnoticed is probably just as great a disaster that is happening in Cote D'Ivoire right now as we speak.

I came to the floor yesterday, and I talked about the fact that elections took place in Cote D'Ivoire last November. The President, the incumbent President, Laurent Gbagbo, was challenged by Alassane Ouattara. They claim Ouattara won the election. Ouattara comes from the north, the Muslim area up there.

We found so much voter fraud that we identified, and we specifically talked about on the Senate floor, that I have asked Secretary Clinton, by letter twice, to intervene and demand a new election.

When I say "voter fraud," I entered this in the RECORD yesterday, so I will not do it again today. But this shows how they miscalculated all those votes in the north. In just one precinct, 100,000 votes—well, actually 94,873. Obviously, if we have 100,000 or so votes in that one precinct, it can happen that way.

But use logic. If all else fails, stop and think about this. How could it be possible that in the northern part of Cote D'Ivoire, when they had the election, what we would call the primary election, President Gbagbo got thousands, thousands of votes in each one of the precincts. Yet when the runoff came, he got zero. That is a statistical impossibility. I think for those of us—certainly, the United States thought the U.N. and perhaps France was accurate in their initial response to this thing that we were going to have to get something done.

Let me go ahead and finish what happened. I mentioned yesterday in the town of Duekoue, Ouattara's forces, along with the French, went in there, murdered about—we think something over 1,000 people. We get the reports from the Red Cross and from other sources.

But Ouattara has tried to deny his involvement in this slaughter. His forces took the town earlier, and this was the week after the Gbagbo forces had gone. I think we can just look at Guillaume Ngefa, who is the deputy head of the U.N. mission in Cote D'Ivoire.

He said Ouattara's forces had carried out the killings in Duekoue. "We have evidence. We have pictures. This was retaliation."