



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2011

No. 55

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.

Almighty God, accept with favor this, our sacrifice of praise, which we present. We offer You ourselves, thanking You for calling us to serve freedom's cause on Capitol Hill. Lord, You provide us with the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of millions. We are honored to serve You by serving our country. Use our lawmakers who are people of faith to do everything with decency, precision, and integrity. Remove the barriers that divide us, replacing them with such a passionate love for You and country that we will continue to find the common ground of progress.

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. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 14, 2011.

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.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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 any leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until we receive the continuing resolution papers from the House of Representatives; therefore, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two parties. Once the resolution arrives, there will be three rollcall votes in relation to the two correcting resolutions regarding health care reform and Planned Parenthood and passage of the long-term continuing resolution. It looks as though the House will vote around 4 p.m. We thought it would be earlier, but that time has slipped. Senators will be notified when we schedule the votes.

People can come and talk all they want. I am very appreciative of everybody in the Senate—Democrats, Republicans—that we were able to get the consent agreement to move forward after we get the papers from the House. If there were ever an issue that has been talked to death, it is this resolution. I think everyone realizes we have talked about this long enough. If anyone has anything to say before 2 o'clock about this or anything else, you are welcome to come to the Senate floor. There will be no debate. These papers will arrive, and we will vote on them as quickly as we can.

Would the Chair announce morning business, please.

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, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. President, I ask that the time be equally divided during the time of morning business and that if there are quorum calls, they be equally divided.

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

Mr. REID. 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. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

PRESIDENT OBAMA JOINS THE DEBATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, President Obama outlined what he is describing as a "responsible" approach to our Nation's fiscal problems. And my initial response to that characterization is that, with all due respect,

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



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the American people are not inclined to take advice on fiscal responsibility from an administration whose unprecedented borrowing and spending has done so much to create the mess we are in.

After 2 years of adding trillions to the debt and ignoring our Nation's looming fiscal nightmare, the President may be right in thinking that the politically expedient thing to do is point the finger at others. But the truly responsible thing would be to admit that his own 2-year experiment in big government has been a disaster for the economy and itself a major driver of our debt; and that his inaction on the latter is the primary reason others have been forced to step forward and offer meaningful solutions of their own.

That is what most people already believe anyway. So the President's attempt to stake out the high ground in this debate was, I suspect, hard for many Americans to swallow.

Despite the President's imaginative account of how we arrived at the situation we are in, the American people are well past the point of believing that Washington will be able to make good on all its promises if only we let the President and Democrats in Congress raise taxes.

Americans know that we face a fiscal crisis not because we tax too little but because we spend too much. They do not support the reckless Washington spending that has left us with record deficits and debt, and they will not support raising taxes to preserve an unsustainable status quo. Besides, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have already rejected the kind of tax hike on small business that President Obama endorsed again yesterday. So it was counterproductive of him to revive it.

As for entitlements, the President rightly acknowledged that before we know it, the government will spend every dime it takes in just to cover the cost of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the interest on our debt. What he did not say is that the health care bill he signed last year takes more than half a trillion dollars out of Medicare to pay for an entirely new entitlement that could be just as unsustainable as Medicare itself; and which forces nearly 20 million more Americans into a Medicaid Program which, as currently arranged, is bankrupting our States.

So the President can claim to be a great defender of the social safety net. He may claim to stand for a nobler vision of America than those who disagree with him. But the facts speak for themselves. And when it comes to preserving the social safety net, the President's proposals simply do not address the things that have caused our most cherished entitlement programs to be unsustainable in the first place.

Instead, the President would simply tinker around the edges and leave the hard work for others, passing the buck

to future Presidents. And that just won't cut it anymore.

Americans are paying attention. They know the fiscal problems we face will not be solved by continuing the job-destroying policies that got us here. What is more, the centerpiece of the President's proposal, tax hike on top earners, may sound appealing to those whose primary goal in this debate is to protect big government. But looking at the most recent data, the Wall Street Journal points out this morning that even if we were to lay claim to every taxable dollar of every single American who earns more than \$100,000 a year, we still wouldn't raise enough to cover the \$1.6 trillion deficit the President's budget gives us this year.

The best way to bring down the debt and to create the climate that will lead to good private-sector jobs and prosperity is not to repeat the policies of the past but to change them. And that means cutting Washington spending, not squeezing family budgets even more.

Throughout the day today, Senators will have an opportunity to debate a down payment on those cuts for the rest of the current fiscal year. So I invite them to come to the floor to discuss that proposal. After that, we will move onto an even more far-reaching debate not about billions but about trillions. That is the debate that will show Americans exactly where their elected representatives stand on facing up to the fiscal challenges we face. Republicans look forward to that debate.

That brings me to a final point.

Yesterday, the President said that the debate we have been having in Washington about the size and scope of government is not about numbers on a page. It is about the kind of country we believe in. But he left out an important point. And that is, that there are a great many people in Washington and beyond who agree with him, but who also believe in their core that the approach he has taken over the past 2 years represents the greatest single threat to the very future he envisions. America will not continue to be the great Nation it is unless we are able to keep our promises to the current and future generations, and stop spending money we do not have. But the greatest obstacle to that future is not the everyday American who wants Washington to balance its checkbook, or those who look at where the President's policies have gotten us and map out a different path to the future than he would. The greatest obstacle we face is the crushing burden of our debt, as the President now admits.

Unfortunately, the plan he outlined yesterday does not seriously address it. Americans know the stakes in this debate. They know the reason we are in this situation. It is time the President and Democrats in Congress acknowledge it as well. The debate has shifted. And while the President does not seem to see that yet, we will not solve our

problems until he stops campaigning and joins us in a serious, bipartisan effort to change not only his tone but his direction. That is how we will ensure that the future that he—and we—envision and want actually comes about. That is the only chance we have.

I yield the floor, and 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. DURBIN. 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.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a little later today we are going to receive from the House of Representatives a spending bill which, if passed, will fund the government for the remainder of this fiscal year, which ends on September 30. Included in that vote today are two other votes, separate votes, which were insisted on by the House Republicans. One of the votes will defund Planned Parenthood across the United States.

Under title X, a law which was proposed by President Nixon and passed by Congress—and supported for over 40 years since—we have provided money across America to clinics that take care of women, children, and families who otherwise would have no place to turn.

One of the recipients of those funds is Planned Parenthood. They do not receive all the funds or even a majority of the funds. But they do receive support through title X. In my State of Illinois, Planned Parenthood has clinics in many down-State communities, as well as in the Chicagoland area. In my hometown of Springfield, there is a Planned Parenthood clinic. It provides valuable services for many women in my community and State—services which otherwise they could not find or afford: basic examinations by doctors who can screen for forms of cancer, for infectious disease. These are things which many women rely on, and they are valuable services. Yet the House Republicans are determined to take the funding away from Planned Parenthood.

The amendment on the floor addresses that issue. I will vote against that amendment, and I will vote against it because I understand closing down Planned Parenthood as one of the recipients of title X funds will mean that literally 69,000 women in the State of Illinois who rely on Planned Parenthood clinics will then have to struggle to find another source of medical care, and it is not always easy to do it. Many of these women—most of them—are uninsured and very few of them have the economic wherewithal to pay for these services.