

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I will take a few minutes to explain why I am, once again, objecting to the legislation offered by my dear friend from West Virginia, my Finance Committee colleague. I wish to make it absolutely clear that a long-term FAA reauthorization is a priority for this country, and it is a personal priority for me.

Once again, I point out that I have worked with Chairman BAUCUS on reporting a Finance Committee title to the bill that passed the Senate earlier this year. The current lapse in FAA taxes and expenditures authority from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund is a detrimental situation brought on by the Senate majority's refusal to discontinue granting excessive favors for big labor and their refusal to cut any wasteful spending.

As I have said, I share House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman MICA's frustration that favors to organized labor have overshadowed the prospects for a long-term FAA reauthorization.

Last year, the National Mediation Board changed the rules under which employees of airlines and railroads are able to unionize. For decades, the standard has been that a majority of employees would have to agree in an election to form a union. However, the National Mediation Board rules changed that standard so all it takes to unionize is a majority of employees voting. This means the NMB wants to count an employee who doesn't vote as voting for big labor. Somehow, organized labor is able to claim it is democratic to appropriate someone else's vote without that person's input and participation.

The FAA reauthorization bill that passed the House earlier this year undoes this heavyhanded rule and lets airline employees decide for themselves how to use their own votes. The House bill would merely undo a big partisan favor done at the behest of big labor and put efforts to unionize airline workforces on the same footing they have been on for years.

The House bill does not create a new hurdle to unionization. Instead, it restores the longstanding ability of airline employees to make decisions for themselves. The House bill only undoes the NMB action that was taken to reverse 70 years of precedent for narrow political gain.

In addition to an impulse to cater to big labor, the Senate majority also is resistant to any attempt to cut any government spending, no matter how wasteful that spending may be. The House bill I am going to ask unanimous consent for in a few minutes has aroused the ire of the majority because it contains a provision that would limit essential air service eligibility to communities that are located 90 or more miles from a large- or medium-hub airport. This would save \$12.5 million a year. That is right, million with an "m", not a "b" or a "t."

The majority is resisting a provision that already passed this body as part of the Senate's long-term reauthorization bill that would save \$12.5 million a year, and they are willing to put the FAA's finance at risk in the process. The House bill I am going to offer also contains an additional proposal to limit essential air service subsidies for communities where the cost per passenger is greater than \$1,000. This provision would affect a grand total of three airports in the whole country. It is my understanding these three airports would also have ceased to receive EAS subsidies under another provision in the Senate-passed, long-term FAA bill that limited subsidies to airports averaging 10 or more passengers a day.

To sum this up, our friends on the other side, the Democrats, are holding this up over wasteful spending and handouts for President Obama's big union allies.

The point is, the Senate majority has cut the FAA off from its primary source of financing and created confusion for travel companies and tax-paying passengers by objecting to a short-term extension measure that doesn't do one single thing that is not done by a bill that passed the Senate by unanimous consent on April 7 of this year.

I wish to briefly discuss and hopefully clear away some of that confusion. Passengers who bought tickets while the taxes were still being collected may be entitled to a refund if they are traveling during a period in which the taxes have lapsed. I wish to make it clear that the inability of the Senate majority to process legislation should not constitute an additional burden to the already beleaguered travel industry. It is the responsibility of the IRS to refund ticket taxes, and while I recognize they want to do the right thing for taxpayers, I encourage the IRS to work closely with the travel industry. The travel industry is not responsible for the lapse in FAA taxes, and they should not bear extra costs because of that.

The lack of a long-term bill is bad for airports all across the country because they don't have the funding stability to plan and complete projects. Kicking the can farther down the road is not a viable alternative to actually doing what is in the best interests of all parties.

As a Senate conferee to the FAA bill, I stand ready to do everything I can to get to work with my House and Senate colleagues on a long-term FAA reauthorization, as soon as they are willing to get down to work.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2553

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2553, which was received from the House. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Is there objection?

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, have the yeas and nays been ordered on the Mueller nomination?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No.

Mr. LEAHY. I ask for the yeas and nays on the Mueller nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, how much time remains until the vote on the Mueller nomination?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I hope all Senators will step forward and vote for this nomination. I can think of no reason why they should not. Director Mueller is typical of many in our government who serve the people of America tirelessly, without any gain to themselves but instead for what is best for all Americans and for our country. Director Mueller has worked—along with the thousands of individuals at the Department of Justice and the FBI who work around the clock every day to keep America safe to protect us from crime and to protect us from terrorists. Unfortunately some people try to lump together and deride government employees. The fact is the people at the FBI and Department of Justice are very brave men and women, many of whom put their lives on the line for us day by day, and we ought to acknowledge that.

Bob Mueller is the public face of the FBI, as its long-serving Director. Amazingly, he and Ann, his wife of many years, along with their grown children, are able to separate that their private life from the public life. Like so many who serve this country, Director Mueller's public life takes an inordinate amount of his time, and I think it is a testament to his dedication that he was willing to do this job for another two years, but it is also important to acknowledge the sacrifice of his wife Ann and his children. I think all Americans share in the good fortune that when the President asked Director Mueller to step forward and serve for another 2 years, he answered the call.

I also want to compliment President Obama. He knew he had the opportunity to name somebody who would be there as long as he, Barack Obama, may be President, whether he serves one term or two, and beyond. Instead, the President, as he has often done, did what he thought was best for the country.

Director Mueller is a fine public servant, and I would urge all Senators to vote "aye" on this nomination.

Madam President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1 minute.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I see no one else seeking the floor, so I yield back the remainder of the time, which is now about 30 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Robert S. Mueller, III, of California, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a term expiring September 4, 2013.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 118 Ex.]

YEAS — 100

Akaka	Gillibrand	Moran
Alexander	Graham	Murkowski
Ayotte	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Hatch	Paul
Bennet	Heller	Portman
Bingaman	Hoeben	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hutchison	Reed
Blunt	Inhofe	Reid
Boozman	Inouye	Risch
Boxer	Isakson	Roberts
Brown (MA)	Johanns	Rockefeller
Brown (OH)	Johnson (SD)	Rubio
Burr	Johnson (WI)	Sanders
Cantwell	Kerry	Schumer
Cardin	Kirk	Sessions
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Kohl	Shelby
Chambliss	Kyl	Snowe
Coats	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coburn	Lautenberg	Tester
Cochran	Leahy	Thune
Collins	Lee	Toomey
Conrad	Levin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Corker	Lugar	Vitter
Cornyn	Manchin	Warner
Crapo	McCain	Webb
DeMint	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Durbin	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Menendez	Wyden
Feinstein	Merkley	
Franken	Mikulski	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, a motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The majority leader.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have spoken to the Republican leader fairly recently—it is all relative time, I guess. There will be no more rollcall votes tonight.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business until 6:30 p.m. tonight, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. Senator COBURN is not on the floor, but I understand he wanted to speak for more than 10 minutes. I ask that Senator COBURN be recognized at 5:30 p.m. for 30 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object, I would like to get 20 minutes to speak following Senator COBURN.

Mr. REID. Sounds good to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. The rest of the Senators will be limited to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 6:30 p.m., I be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kansas.

#### THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I have spoken several times over the last several weeks with regard to the issue at hand. Clearly, the time continues to escape us, and the day of reckoning is coming in regard to the debt ceiling issue. I have said from the very beginning that in my view it would be irresponsible not to raise the debt ceiling, but it would be as irresponsible if not more so to raise the debt ceiling without reducing the spending, getting our books more in balance, and moving us in the right direction toward a balanced budget in the future. I recognize this cannot be accomplished overnight, and I recognize there are those who bring different points of view and perspectives to the Senate floor. This is a body of people who represent individuals who live in all 50 States and have points of view and philosophies and backgrounds that are different than perhaps the constituents I represent from the State of Kansas.

I have been a strong supporter of the legislation entitled “cut, cap, and balance.” I actually believe it is not just cut, cap, and balance; it is cut, cap, balance, and grow. We could do so much for our country both in the fiscal sense and with the idea that we could better pay our bills if the revenues are increased by putting people to work, by creating a climate in which people could find jobs, people could improve their situation in regard to their jobs, and in the process of doing that the revenues increase to the Federal Treasury.

It was back in the days of President Clinton that we came the closest to having our books balanced. While there was spending restraint and disagreement among Republicans and Democrats about new spending programs or bigger government, in my view, the

real reason we had a balanced budget was because the economy was growing.

So I again ask my colleagues to pay attention to what I believe was the message of the 2010 election: It is the economy. It is the desire of people to have a better life, to save money for their children's education, to save money for their retirement, and to be satisfied that the job they have today is the job they will have tomorrow.

I believe there is much that we can do with regard to the regulatory environment, making the Tax Code fair and certain, issues regarding access to credit, a trade policy that will allow us to increase exports—both agricultural and manufactured goods—and a trade policy that reduces our reliance on foreign energy and gives us greater control over its costs. But the time has come for us to reach an agreement, and we anxiously await what action the House of Representatives may take.

In light of this point in time, I would like to share with my colleagues in the Senate an e-mail I received from one of my constituents, a Kansan named Gina Reynolds. Gina is from Shawnee. She expresses this point of view I think very appropriately for where we are today. In asking Gina if I could share with you what she wrote to me, she indicated this was the very first time she had ever written a Member of Congress. Here is what she had to say that I hope we will take into account. Again, while we bring philosophies and viewpoints and approaches to government to Washington, DC, there is an opportunity for common sense and good judgment to prevail.

Here is what she says:

I firmly believe the United States needs to start living within our means. However, I am frustrated beyond belief with the inability of Congress to do their jobs and ensure that we do not throw the country back into recession. While I and my husband are employed, we feel lucky to have jobs. We work hard, pay our taxes and try to raise our children the right way. It absolutely boggles my mind that we cannot come to a compromise on the debt ceiling issue that is so critical to the financial markets and the average American citizen.

For it is us, the middle class, that will suffer the most; from lost jobs, to lost 401Ks, and lost savings. We need real tax reform, real entitlement reform (for even though I am 42 years old, I do not believe I will ever see a dime of Social Security) and real spending cuts. Congress has had months to work on this issue, and now the time is to act in the best interests of the People, not the political interest groups, not some ideology.

It is sad to say, but I honestly don't know if my children will have a better future than me. I know that there are a lot of tough decisions yet to be made regarding spending and taxes, but we only make it harder by defaulting on any of our country's obligations. I am fiscally conservative and generally vote Republican, but I do not blindly follow any one path. I try to use my vote wisely and pledge my loyalty to my God and my country, not a political party.