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Senate

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.

O God, our defender, we call to You in prayer. Our Nation cannot prosper without Your watch care and Your gracious providence. For Your loving kindness and tender mercies, we praise Your Name.

As our Senators grapple with the complex challenges of our time, be for them a shepherd who leads and guides. Lead them to live with a generous spirit that comes from a confidence in Your abiding presence. May they walk in the path of gratitude, meditating on Your words and glorifying Your Name. Thank You for being our refuge and defense. 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, September 19, 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 any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business. During that period of time Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2832, which is the trade assistance legislation as tied in with the GSP bill.

At 5:30 there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed. We hope to get consent to begin consideration of the bill after the vote.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 4:45 p.m. today so that Senators can speak regarding the tributes they wish to make to former Senator Charles Percy of Illinois.

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

RENO AIRSHOW TRAGEDY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was saddened to hear of the terrible accident on Friday at the Reno airshow, which killed 10 people and injured many more. I just received word an hour or two ago that another person has died in

the hospital. My heart goes out to those who were hurt, and my thoughts are with the families of those who lost their lives when the pilot of a World War II airplane crashed into spectators.

I commend the many first responders who rushed to the scene Friday. Their quick thinking and skillful assistance saved lives. While this crash was devastating—and it was—it is fortunate and I am glad the pilot took quick action to avoid additional loss of life by avoiding a grandstand packed with thousands of spectators.

My four grandchildren and my son attended the show on Thursday. My oldest grandson Mitchell was at the event with a Scout Troop on Friday, just hours before this terrible accident. Although officials are investigating the crash, initial reports indicate that a piece of the plane's tail broke off prior to the accident.

I hope this terrible event, the first of its kind in this Nation, will not deter people from attending airshows in the future. Thousands of people enjoy these shows every year. The late Senator Ted Stevens attended this show many times and told me it was the best of its kind. I will continue to monitor the investigation, of course.

REMEMBERING SENATOR CHARLES PERCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this weekend Senator Charles Percy of Illinois, the progressive Republican and father-in-law of Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER, died at age 91. He had been failing for some time, and I maintained contact with Senator ROCKEFELLER about his wife's father. I didn't know Senator Percy—only by reputation. But I do know he was an independent thinker and a moderate who always put his country before party. The Senate could use more of his brand of pragmatism today.

Senator Percy was a proponent of tough environmental regulations and

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



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consumer protections and was an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war and a proponent of nuclear non-proliferation. He was also a Navy veteran and businessman who was often mentioned as a Presidential contender.

This body, the Senate, honors him for his faithful service to his country as a sailor and as a Member of Congress. My thoughts are with his family, including Senator ROCKEFELLER and his lovely wife Sharon.

REDUCING THE BUDGET DEFICIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today President Obama laid out a common-sense plan to substantially reduce the budget deficit. I congratulate President Obama for his vision. Last week he presented the country with a roadmap to reduce our jobs deficit, a proposal to create nearly 2 million jobs and reduce unemployment by a percentage point. Today he has also offered a pathway to reduce our budget deficit—not only the jobs deficit but a budget deficit. It is a concrete strategy to cut the deficit by more than \$4 trillion over the next decade and to do it fairly.

The plan calls for shared sacrifice for all Americans, including those who can best afford to help. It calls on those who have benefited from the tax policies that sunk this country deeper and deeper into debt to help get us out of this debt.

Americans know shared sacrifice is the best path to fiscal sustainability. All the polls indicate that Republicans believe that, Democrats believe that, and Independents believe that. They believe many of the richest few should pay more, and one of the richest of all of them, Warren Buffett, agrees. That is why the President has proposed the so-called Buffett rule, that no American making more than \$1 million a year should pay a lower tax than this Nation's middle class.

This would apply to the top three-tenths of 1 percent—that is all, a small group of Americans—but they are the richest of the rich just like Mr. Buffett. Warren Buffett believes it is unfair that he pays a lower income tax than his secretary. This is what he said:

If you're in the luckiest 1 percent of humanity, you owe it to the rest of humanity to think about the other 99 percent.

Actually, it is more than 99 percent; it is 99.7 percent. There are about 22,000 people in this country who make more than \$1 million a year—this is net income—yet paid less than 15 percent of income in taxes. The top 400 earners in this country, all of whom make more than \$110 million a year, pay a small percentage of their income in taxes. They pay a smaller share than plumbers and teachers and factory workers. More than anyone else these millionaires and billionaires benefit from these tax cuts that contributed \$3 trillion to our deficit. They helped plunge this Nation into a financial hole. Yet congressional Republicans believe the

middle class and seniors, not the millionaires and billionaires who enjoyed trillions in tax breaks, should bear the burden of getting us out of that hole.

A balanced approach to reducing the deficit means those who benefited the most from policies that created our deficit should also help solve the deficit crisis we have. A balanced approach means everyone pays his or her fair share. It means middle-class seniors and those who can least afford it will not bear the heaviest burden. So I commend President Obama for insisting on basic fairness as we address our deficit problem.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last week was a productive one in the Senate. We reached a bipartisan agreement to pass emergency aid for communities affected by devastating floods, tornadoes, and wildfires. We also reauthorized the Federal Aviation Administration, keeping 80,000 safety inspectors and construction workers on the job. We passed a highway bill keeping 1.8 million people at work building bridges and highways.

Congress has no duty more pressing than putting people back to work, and this highway legislation will do just that. But we can and must do more. That is why this week the Senate will take up the trade adjustment assistance legislation. The TAA Program helps U.S. workers who lose their jobs because of international trade to learn new skills so they can reenter a changing workforce, and it helps them pay for health insurance while they are training for new jobs.

A global economy means fierce global competition. Unless our workforce is flexible and well-trained, we cannot hope to compete.

Between 2001 and 2008, Americans lost 2.4 million jobs because of trade with China. The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program is retraining many of these people, getting them back to work and into the workforce and boosting our economy at the same time. It is unfortunate that my Republican colleagues who say they care so much about free trade have prevented three such agreements from moving forward because of objections to this trade adjustment assistance legislation.

We have known for a long time we were going to move to this trade adjustment assistance. It is unthinkable that the Republicans would stop us from doing that, and that is just what happened. As we struggle to rebound from the worst recession in generations, it is unthinkable that we would abandon hard-working Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

The trade adjustment assistance legislation provides a lifeline they need to get back on their feet.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

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 4:45, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded, and to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, in the decade that has passed since the devastating attacks of 9/11, we have seen enormous changes in our daily lives. For many of us, these changes have become routine. We have become more alert to potential suspicious activities, accustomed to additional screening procedures at airports, and understand the need for additional security precautions in places that could be seen as potential targets for terrorists. For many other Americans, though, their lives were altered in ways that are anything but routine. These are the families, friends, and brothers in arms of those who have given their lives in the global war on terror, including the over 3,000 lives taken in the horrific attacks on our Nation on September 11, 2001.

This past Sunday was a somber day to reflect, remember, and honor the lives that have been cut short by terror. On Sunday morning, I spoke at my church about the impact 9/11 had on me personally and us collectively as a nation. It is important to take the time in the Senate Chamber to remember these brave heroes. We all remember where we were at the time the planes struck the towers and the awful feeling when we realized this was not an accident. We remember the emotional outpouring our Nation shared and how the tragedy brought us all closer together. What happened after the moments of devastation on September 11, 2001, unified our Nation and demonstrated the perseverance and the will of the American people.

We remember the people who refused to leave an injured coworker and those who led others to safety. We remember the firefighters, the policemen, and all the first responders who saved lives that day, many of whom gave their