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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Eternal God, hallowed be Your Name. Today, empower our lawmakers to run with patience the race that is set before them, looking to You, the author and finisher of our faith. Keep them from discouragement as You help them to be persistent in their efforts to meet today's challenges with faith and trust in You. Sustain them ever in Your grace and bestow upon them Your abundant Spirit.

Lord, give uncommon wisdom to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. As its members strive to forge a deficit reduction plan, grant them wisdom and courage for the living of these days.

We pray in Your great 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 13, 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 leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until noon. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes and the majority will control the next 30 minutes. At noon, the Senate will be in executive session to consider the Nathan, Hickey, and Forrest nominations. They are all nominated to be U.S. district court judges. We expect two rollcall votes at around 2 p.m. in relation to these nominations.

Additionally, there is a joint meeting of Congress today at 4 p.m. with the President of South Korea. Senators will gather on the floor at 3:40 p.m. to proceed to the House. We will do that together.

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.

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.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH KOREA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, Senators will have the opportunity to hear from South Korean President Lee, and I know we all look forward to it.

South Korea is a stalwart ally that enjoys a flourishing economy. It is a shining example of how embracing democracy and free market principles can transform a society for the good.

Imagine, in 50 years, they went from a civil war to a military dictatorship to an evolving democracy and on the economic side to a thriving capitalist country that has the 13th largest economy in the world—from a country that was a recipient of foreign aid and Peace Corps volunteers to a country with its own foreign aid program and its own peace corps—all of that in 50 years, right on the same peninsula with one of the last Stalinist regimes in the world. It is a great success story that the United States has had an awful lot to do with promoting.

The South Korean Free Trade Agreement we passed overwhelmingly last night on a bipartisan basis will only make our two economies stronger. Our already strong alliance will be even stronger.

These agreements should serve as an example of the kind of bipartisan legislation Congress should be focused on right now.

Many of us have been amazed to witness, as I indicated earlier, the rapid growth and evolution of South Korea—truly a remarkable accomplishment.

So we welcome this great friend of the United States to our shores. We hope he and his wife have a memorable trip.

As we face together the threat of North Korea and the rapid changes occurring in the strategic balance in Northeast Asia, we look forward to an even stronger alliance with South Korea in the years to come.

I yield the floor.

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

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would just say, as my friend leaves—I know he has an appointment—the work that has been done in the last few weeks in the Senate has been very important. We have been able to work on the FEMA bill, we worked through the problems with that; China currency, we worked through that. Even though, as my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, knows, I did not agree with the trade bills—what they did—I think it is a good sign of our working together. In spite of strong feelings on both sides, people put that aside. There were no dilatory efforts made to hold them up, and we moved forward. I think that is commendable. That should be the pattern for the rest of this Congress.

I also want the RECORD to be spread with the fact that as far as congressional action, this legislation would not have happened but for the Republican leader. He has been laser focused for a long time, and there were some things we had to work through to get here, but one of the reasons I did what I did to help move this along is because of his feelings about the importance of this legislation.

JOBS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we also need to focus on jobs. It is one of the most important things we can do—I believe the most important we can do. I am sorry that this week my Republican colleagues proved once again that the only jobs they care about are their own. They voted against a plan to create 2 million Americans jobs because they believed it was good Republican politics.

Meanwhile, 14 million unemployed Americans are worried about how they are going to make their rent, put food on the table, and fill their gas tank or how they are going to get another job interview.

These 14 million Americans could care less who proposed the plan or who gets credit to get them back to work. What they care about is that Congress gets to work putting them back to work.

Asked whether they support a plan to ask millionaires to pay their fair share to pay for tax cuts for middle-class families and small businesses, construction of roads and schools, and an extension of unemployment benefits, Americans have overwhelmingly said, yes, they support it.

The reason they do that is because, as we see in the newspaper articles around the country, the news stories: "A quarter of U.S. millionaires pay taxes at a lower rate than some in middle class." It is about a 17-percent average. That is untoward.

Two-thirds of Americans support both the plan the Republicans blocked

this week and the way it is paid for. Yet still, Republicans unanimously voted against these tax cuts, infrastructure investments, and jobs for teachers, police officers, and veterans. They voted, I repeat, against 2 million jobs for American workers.

My Republican colleagues pay lip service to the unemployment crisis in the country, but in the end actions speak louder than words.

As Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, the first African-American woman to be elected from the Deep South to Congress, once said:

The citizens of America expect more. They deserve and they want more than a recital of problems.

The American people demand action. They deserve it. I hope my Republican colleagues would have a plan to create jobs, other than the constant talk about let's get rid of regulations, let's lower taxes.

Let's work together to create jobs. If my friends do not like what the President put forward, come forward with something that is constructive in nature. As Barbara Jordan said:

The citizens of America expect more. They deserve and they want more than a recital of problems.

We can all recite the problems. There are lots of them. But let's work together to create some jobs.

I was happy to hear from some of my Republican colleagues that they want to work together to create jobs. I told one of the Senators: Wonderful. Grab any one of the Democrats; they will work with you to help create these jobs. We need to do something. We do not need to continue to recite the problems. Please get off of this, I say to my Republican friends, about lowering taxes as a way to create jobs. If that, in fact, were the case, the Bush tax cuts would have put this country on an economic machine that could never have been driven so fast. But it did not help.

Eight million jobs were lost during the Bush years with these tax cuts. During the Clinton years, 23 million jobs were created. Let's stop the constant cry: We need to lower taxes. None of us are in favor of raising taxes. But certainly we need a fair tax distribution, and that is why the American people are agreeing with us.

We are willing to work on regulations. There are too many of them. We all agree with that. But let's look specifically at what creates jobs.

One of the big issues we fought about last week was farm dust. OK. Farm dust. EPA does not regulate farm dust. They do not want to regulate farm dust. These are all just, as in the grocery business, loss leaders. It is only a way to confuse the American people. I repeat, EPA does not regulate farm dust. They do not want to regulate farm dust. Let's start talking about that which creates jobs, that which puts people back to work.

We are going to continue to do everything we can not to let the American

people down. We will not stop working to pass the proposals contained in the American Jobs Act just because Republicans have used every obstructionist trick in the book to stop it from moving forward. We will continue to ask the richest Americans to share the burden of getting our economy back on track, and we will never give up in the fight to create jobs for the 14 million people in this country who are out of work.

Remember, the American Jobs Act reduces taxes for everybody, except those who make more than \$1 million a year.

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 12 p.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 30 minutes and the majority controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to, first of all, kind of tag on to the remarks of the leader for just a second. One of the things I wish we would do in this body is get out of the business of demonizing certain segments of our population. Both sides are guilty of it, from time to time. But I wish to particularly talk about the major employer of the United States—small business—and the leader's reference to the 5.6-percent surtax.

Documents show that 392,000 American small businesses would be impacted by a 5.6-percent surtax in order to pay for the President's jobs bill. Records show that 72 percent of the American people are employed by small business.

We have to ask ourselves this question: If we are interested in creating jobs, why would we target the job creator that creates three-fourths of the jobs in America and put a surtax on them? It does not make any sense. If there were sincerity in that offer, those people would first and foremost be carved out on any punitive surtax and we probably would have more employment.

I wanted to make that point. I will join anytime, anyplace, anywhere with the leader to work on creating jobs because that is job one for the United States of America.

I was a small businessman for 33 years, ran a small business for 22 years.