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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 21, 2011, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2011

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise, You are surrounded by inaccessible light. Today, help our lawmakers make substantive progress in their efforts to keep America strong. Remind them to trust You for today's challenges and difficulties, knowing that You hold all our tomorrows in Your hands. May this perspective of trusting the future to Your powerful and loving providence infuse them with a spirit of optimism to believe that they will reap a bountiful harvest if they persevere in doing what is right. Lord, give them the serenity to accept what they cannot change, to change what they should, and the wisdom to know the difference.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND 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, October 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 KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

RAISING TAXES

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I want to make a couple of observations this morning about what is going on in Washington at the moment and what is not. What is going on is that Democrats are obsessed for some reason with raising taxes. That is the only possible way to explain their latest idea to impose a permanent tax hike on about 300,000 U.S. business owners and then use the money to bail out cities and States that cannot pay their bills. That is the proposal we will be voting on apparently tomorrow.

I do not know if our friends on the other side have noticed, but Wash-

ington cannot pay its own bills right now. Think about it. The Federal Government spent \$3.6 trillion last fiscal year, a new all-time record. And in the wake of the single largest spending year in history, Democrats want to put together another bailout.

Add up the projected deficits of all 50 States this year and you get \$103 billion. That is all 50 States' deficits added up. Well, what about us? What about us here in Washington? We are expected to run a deficit of \$1.3 trillion. Washington needs to prove it can get its own house in order before it starts demanding more money from job creators and throwing together another bailout.

This is the third time in 3 years the President has asked us to bail out the States. How many more times? And how many more billions before someone realizes this is a very bad idea? More bailouts. More bailouts are not going to solve the problem. They will just enable it.

But the bottom line is this: Everyone knows the last thing you want to do in a jobs crisis is raise taxes. It is common sense. The President himself has said as much. But for some reason he is determined to keep trying anyway. And Republicans are not about to go along with it. So Democratic leaders in Congress have decided to do nothing instead. If they do not get their tax hike, then they do not want to do anything at all. That is why rather than working with us on legislation that would get the government out of the way so the private sector can create jobs, including legislation that is in the President's own bill, they have

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



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choreographed a political sideshow this very week.

Here is how it works: The President proposes a stimulus bill and calls it a jobs bill. Congress rejects it in a bipartisan way for very sensible and straightforward reasons. The President then goes on a bus tour to criticize Republicans for voting against the so-called jobs bill. Democratic leaders consult with the White House on breaking the same bill into smaller pieces. And how do they break it up? By identifying parts they know Republicans will oppose, then add the tax hike just to make sure. Then another bus tour or a press conference with the President complaining about Republicans again. Repeat for 13 months in the hopes that Americans will forget they are all now living under the economic policies that were enacted during the first 2 years of the Obama administration, and hope for success. That is the game plan. In other words, they are actually designing legislation on the other side to fail so they will have someone else to blame for the economy 13 months from now. That is what is going on in the Senate this week.

So what is not going on? What is not going on is the kind of bipartisan cooperation Americans want. My friend the majority leader is out there telling people the Republicans are rooting for the economy to fail. Nothing could be further from the truth. Look, if Republicans wanted the economy to fail, we would all line up behind the President's economic policies rather than opposing them, because they have not solved this jobs crisis we have been in. We have done that.

The President got everything he wanted the first 2 years he was in office. So I think it is time Democrats realize they were elected to lead, not to choreograph political theater. It is completely preposterous. At a time when 14 million Americans are looking for a job in this country, for the President to be riding around on a bus saying we should raise taxes, it is completely preposterous for the President to be riding around on a bus saying we should be raising taxes on the very folks who create jobs.

Think about that. We have 14 million people out of work and two self-identified conservatives for every liberal in this country, and the President is out there doing his best Howard Dean impersonation. He is completely out of touch. Let's forget about the tax hikes.

Let's drop the talking points about millionaires and billionaires and let's work together on bipartisan jobs legislation that is designed to pass, not designed to fail.

Republican leadership in the House and Republican leadership here in the Senate has been crystal clear. We are ready to work with the White House on legislation on which we can all agree. The two parties did it last week on trade bills. There are other areas where we can do the same.

The House voted on three bills this year, one as recently as last week, to roll back excessive regulations by bureaucrats in Washington who are destroying jobs and threatening to put even more Americans out of work. All three of those House bills got solid bipartisan support. Why do we not have those votes in the Senate and show that we can work together to help businesses create jobs? Let's park the campaign bus, put away the talking points, and do something to address the jobs crisis.

The American people want action. The election is 13 months away. Why do we not do what we were elected to do?

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2112, which is the Agriculture, Commerce, State, Justice, and Transportation appropriations bill.

At noon there will be a rollcall vote in relation to the McCain amendment regarding surface transportation. Additional rollcall votes are expected during today's session. We hope to lock in an agreement on three district court judges as well as the nomination of John Bryson to be Commerce Secretary.

JOB CREATION

Mr. REID. Madam President, my friend the Republican leader—and I will talk in more detail in a few minutes—is complaining about a tax of one-half of 1 percent—one-half of 1 percent on people who make more than \$1 million a year to pay for a program that would stop teachers from being laid off and rehire some of the teachers who have been laid off.

The massive layoffs we have had in America today of course are rooted in the last administration. It is very clear that private sector jobs have been doing fine. It is the public sector jobs where we have lost huge numbers. That is what this legislation is all about. It is unfortunate my friend the Republican leader is complaining about that.

I would also note that my friend said the House passed another bill. Well, they pass lots of bills, but they rarely go anywhere. A report led by HENRY WAXMAN of California, long-time Member of the House, indicated last week that the House has voted 168 times to roll back regulations on clean air,

clean water. These safeguards are important to have a healthier America. But the Republican response has been cutting back environmental and health safeguards, I guess hoping that a sicker, more polluted country is a better place to create jobs. It is not.

I am going to talk a little bit today about the legislation that I moved to on Monday dealing with, as I have indicated, maintaining jobs for teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Seventy-five percent of Americans support this legislation. This is not a poll that some Democratic pollster did, it is a CNN-Gallup poll.

This week, my Republican colleagues have rallied against teachers and first responders. That is our latest proposal, to create hundreds of thousands of American jobs and save other jobs. Republicans point to a similar program with a proven track record keeping 422,000 teachers in the classroom. That is important. They are using this as evidence that our programs are a failure.

I know the American Recovery Act saved Nevada from going into bankruptcy. The money we got there, hundreds of millions of dollars, allowed the Governor, a Republican Governor, to save Medicaid. Money is fungible. It saved teachers. It saved a lot of programs in Nevada.

So I say again, they call Democratic legislation—my Republican colleagues, my friend the Republican leader—legislation that created hundreds of thousands of jobs a failure. That is because they are using a different benchmark for success than we are.

Democrats' No. 1 priority is to create jobs. There are 14 million Americans out of work today. So to us, putting hundreds of thousands of people back to work teaching children, having more police patrolling our streets, firefighters fighting our fires, doing the rescue work they do so well, is our priority.

It seems that the No. 1 priority of my Republican colleagues is to defeat President Obama. Their strategy is to keep the economy weak as long as possible, so they oppose legislation with a solid record of creating jobs. Never mind that Republicans have yet to propose a single idea on their own—a single idea—to get 14 million people working again. Never mind that in the past they have supported every one of the job-creating measures we have proposed. We have a bill that was defeated, so we have taken pieces of that legislation, and virtually every piece of that legislation Republicans, in the past, have supported.

It appears that Republicans suit up every day and come to work with the sole purpose of defeating President Obama instead of suiting up with the sole purpose of creating jobs. And they oppose the policies that will turn our economy around for one reason and one reason only: politics and defeating President Obama.