



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2011

No. 164

## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Creator and Sustainer of our world, every good and perfect gift comes from You. Give our lawmakers the wisdom to use Your generous gifts for the glory of Your Name. May this proper use of Your bounty provide them with the knowledge they need to solve the problems of our time, as they remember that without You they can do nothing.

As You have blessed us in the past, we trust You, Lord, for our future. Give all who labor for freedom a deeper insight and loftier courage that will empower them to work for the coming day of Your kingdom.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, October 31, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A.

COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS 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 a period of morning business until 4:30 today.

At 4:30, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Stephen Higginson to be U.S. circuit judge for the Fifth Circuit.

At 5:30, there will be a rollcall vote on confirmation of the Higginson nomination.

### REBUILD AMERICA JOBS ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today, I join millions of Nevadans in commemorating the day, 147 years ago, that Nevada joined the Union. Granted statehood during the bitter years of the Civil War, in 1864, our mettle was tested from the very beginning.

Today, our State is once again tested. All over the State of Nevada, too many Nevadans are still out of work or underwater in their home mortgages during these tough economic times. But I know by facing our challenges together, we will once again demonstrate the collective strength that comes from being literally "battle born."

What is on this chart appeared in last week's New Yorker magazine. "I've got mine." "Change, Smange." "Leave Well Enough Alone." "Keep Things Precisely as they are." "I'm good, thanks."

The pictures portrayed are obviously caricatures of very rich people—top hats, vests, cigars. For me, this did not portray people who were rich as much as what is going on with our Republican colleagues. We know all that has been said about the 1 percent—how well they are doing. It was reported last week that during the last 25 years, their percentage of wealth in America has gone up almost 300 percent. So there will be a lot of attention focused on the rich, as it should be.

But also I think it should be directed to the Republicans in the Senate—not to Republicans around the country but those in the Senate—because Republicans around the country don't agree. They don't agree things are just fine. They don't agree we should leave well enough alone. They don't agree that just because the rich are doing so well, things are OK precisely the way they are. The vast majority of Americans disagree with that.

It is true that for a few lucky Americans, things in this country are going just fine. The haves have never had more. My colleagues in the Republican Party in the Senate are singularly focused on making sure it stays that way. Everything on this chart applies to what has happened in the Senate in the last 10, 11 months. The gap between the haves and the have nots has never been bigger. The middle class is falling further and further behind.

That is why, while Republicans advocate for millionaires and billionaires, Democrats are looking out for working Americans.

We have not forgotten that 14 million people are still out of work or millions more are struggling to make ends meet. We have not stopped fighting to get good-paying American jobs.

That is why Democrats will introduce the Rebuild America's Jobs Act tonight, legislation that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs by investing in our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. It would put men 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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women across this country to work, for example, upgrading 150,000 miles of highways and roads, laying 4,000 miles of train tracks, restoring 150 miles of airport runways and installing a modern air traffic control system that no longer relies on World War II-era technology and will reduce travel time and delays.

Since the economic downturn began, more than 2 million construction workers have lost their jobs. That has happened all over the country. This legislation will send hundreds of thousands of those workers back to job sites to build \$27 billion worth of roads, bridges, and other important aspects of our infrastructure.

The plan would fund \$250 million worth of projects in my State and millions of dollars in the State of Delaware and other States. It would support about 3,300 badly needed jobs.

Overall, the Rebuild America Jobs Act would invest \$50 billion, taking our citizens off the unemployment rolls and putting them back to work, ensuring our Nation has top-notch infrastructure once again.

It will also invest \$10 billion to create an infrastructure bank that would leverage public and private capital to fund a wide range of long-delayed projects.

It will do all this without adding one penny to the deficit. Instead, it would require millionaires and billionaires to contribute their fair share—those whose incomes are netting over \$1 million. They would be asked to pay a surcharge of less than 1 percent—sevenths of 1 percent, to be exact—to get this Nation's economy back on track.

Americans overwhelmingly support the Democrats' plan to invest in roadways, runways, and railways. Seventy-two percent of the American people support the Rebuild America Jobs Act.

I don't know if I have been to Jonesboro, AR. I had a case that took me all over that State on one occasion. But a man in Jonesboro, AR, is quoted in last week's *Time* magazine. "The Return of the Silent Majority." I believe Drew Ramey qualifies for that. This is what he told *Time* magazine:

I used to think I was a libertarian. . . . But I like my roads now. I like my public services.

That was Drew Ramey from Jonesboro, AR. He speaks for millions and millions of Americans, Americans of all political persuasions. Even 54 percent of Republicans believe a world-class economy should have world-class roads and bridges. They agree with what we are trying to do.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and labor union AFL-CIO rarely agree on anything, but they agree on this. They agree we should pass the Rebuild America Jobs Act to improve the woe-filled state of America's infrastructure. It is not only labor and business groups but transit officials, mayors, and three-quarters of the American people support our plan—76 percent.

I could quote one dozen of my Senate Republican colleagues who have sup-

ported aspects of this in the past. Why aren't they lining up to support our proposal? Two basic reasons. One, Republicans are determined to see President Obama fail, even if it means Americans fail with him—sad but true.

My colleague, the Republican leader, said his No. 1 goal in this Congress is to defeat President Obama. They would rather see Americans continue to struggle, as I have outlined, to find work than work together with the President and with us.

Second, Republicans are more concerned with protecting millionaires and billionaires than they are willing to work with us to put 14 million people back to work.

I heard on the radio this morning, on National Public Radio, that during the Bush years, we lost 8.6 million jobs. We have only gotten a little over 2 million of those back—2½ million, frankly. It wasn't long ago that a President who was in office for 8 years could boast, if he wanted to, about creating 23 million jobs.

That is what Republicans have given us. They refuse to ask the rich to contribute a tiny fraction more to secure our economic future, even if it costs more jobs.

In recent days, Republicans have shown new interest in the gulf between rich and poor that has motivated thousands to occupy parks across the country and make their voices heard. Apparently, they believe America's staggering income inequality makes a good talking point.

Yet while Democrats fight for jobs for the middle class, Republicans fight for tax breaks for the 1 percent of Americans who don't need our help.

I will bet if we could ask these very rich people would they be willing to give seven-tenths of 1 percent more to create millions of jobs, most of them would say yes. Why aren't my Republican colleagues supporting this simple, commonsense legislation?

I say to my Republican colleagues that I hope they will work with us. We want to work with them. If we can do something good, there is a lot of good will to go around. But we have to make sure the speeches we have heard from some of our colleagues about creating jobs amount to doing something about it. We have not seen it yet.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. AKAKA pertaining to the introduction of S. 1763 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### DEMOCRATIC INACTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is no secret that Congress isn't winning any popularity contest these days. Americans are fed up with lawmakers who are either focused on the wrong thing or determined to block any serious reforms that would actually get at the root of the problems we face. That is why Republicans have been focused not only on legislation which we think has a good chance of jump-starting private sector job creation in this country but which also has a good shot at actually becoming law. Put another way, since taking back the majority this year, Republicans in the House of Representatives have focused not only on legislation which avoids the economic missteps of the previous 2½ years of Democratic control but legislation which also has a good shot of making it through a Democratic-led Senate.

You would never know it from listening to the President, but there has actually been a significant amount of bipartisan work that has been going on on Capitol Hill these days. House Republicans have passed bill after bill—many of them with solid bipartisan support—that would help spur private sector job creation and would help get this economy moving again, but the Democrats who have run the Senate for the past 5 years have ignored virtually all of it. Senate Democrats have decided it isn't in the interest of their party for Congress to get anything done right now. They have adopted a strict strategy of inaction. They simply won't take "yes" for an answer.

The contrast between Republicans who run the House and Democrats who run the Senate couldn't be starker. Since taking over the House this year, House Republicans have searched for areas of common ground and then invited Democrats who run the Senate to take them up and pass them and send them on down to the President for a signature. Almost every single time, Senate Democrats have said no.

House Republicans now count more than 15 pieces of legislation that would help us chart a very different path from the one the President and his Democratic-controlled Congress have charted over the past few years. This is legislation that would unlock America's energy resources, cut back on excessive regulations that are holding back job creation, and enable businesses, such as Boeing, to make their