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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

You are awesome, O God. We acknowledge Your sovereignty and might. Give our Senators a sense of Your nearness, as You nourish them with the reality of Your presence. Take their human and finite minds and illuminate them with the light of Your eternal wisdom. May their daily lives validate the faith of our Nation's Founders and all who have sacrificed for freedom. Teach them to think seriously about the blessings of liberty and help them to be grateful for this land of freedom.

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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 17, 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 any leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the Federal Aviation Administration bill. There will be up to 2 hours for debate equally divided and controlled between the proponents and opponents of the Inhofe amendment prior to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Inhofe amendment, as modified. The filing deadline for second-degree amendments to this bill is 10 a.m. today. As a reminder, cloture was also filed on the bill. That cloture vote will occur upon disposition of the Inhofe amendment or, if cloture is not invoked on the Inhofe amendment, immediately following the Inhofe cloture vote. Senators should expect rollcall votes to occur throughout the day in an effort to complete action on the FAA bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the previous order for Senator Coats to be recognized at 1:30 p.m. be vitiated.

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

FAA AUTHORIZATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are at a point where we can finish the FAA bill after all these many years. That was not a mistake. For years, we have been trying to get this bill completed. We are going to have a vote in 2½ hours, an important vote dealing with the so-called slot arrangement; that is, what air companies get to fly into which air-

ports and what time and all that stuff. It has been very controversial.

We have had two main issues that have held up this legislation. One is a labor-management disagreement. That has gone away. Now we have the issue dealing with slots that will go away as a result of the cloture vote that will occur sometime in the next 2½ hours.

We can complete this legislation today. There is no reason we can't complete the legislation today. We have a number of votes that will have to be cast. That is something we will do. We are going to work to complete this legislation. Today is Thursday. It would be an appropriate time to finish.

As I mentioned last night, we have the Presidents Day recess when we need to go home to constituents. As I mentioned last night, I am always amazed—a lot of times, the press writes that we have gone back for a break, and oftentimes they write as if we are going to go back and leisurely hang around the house. The fact is, when we go home, we have a lot of work to do. Our constituents throughout the State are there during the week. We have government buildings that are open, and we can go visit there and do all the many things we have to do. For example, I have to address the Nevada State Legislature next week. These are the kinds of things we need to do during the time we go home.

I, like everyone else, would like to get back to my home in Searchlight more quickly, but we have to finish this legislation. There is no reason we can't. Everyone has had their opportunity to debate, to offer amendments. We could have as many as eight or nine amendments to vote on. There is work being done with Senator COBURN now to see if we can somehow condense his five amendments to a couple. The managers will work that out. We are on a path to being able to finish this legislation. I hope we can finish today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

• 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 assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 minority leader is recognized.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, Republicans in both the House and Senate, led by Senator HUTCHISON, introduced a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to repeal the so-called net neutrality regulations recently adopted by the Federal Communications Commission.

We believe, as most Americans do, that the Internet has transformed our society precisely because people have been free to create and innovate free from government intrusion. As Americans become more aware of what is happening here, I suspect many will be as alarmed as I am at the government's growing involvement in this area of our lives. They will wonder if this is a Trojan horse for further meddling by the government. We intend to use the tools available to us to push back against this meddling, and I want to thank Senator HUTCHISON for taking the first step in our effort.

STIMULUS TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, two years ago today, at a moment of deep economic uncertainty, the President signed a bill that he said would put us back on track. It was a plan, he said, that would "save or create" up to 4 million jobs over 2 years—a figure that he called his bottom line for success, a plan that was supposed to drive unemployment below 7 percent by now. And it was predicated on the notion that government spending—spending borrowed money on government programs—was the recipe for a rebound; a plan that said if we "invest" in government, we will get out of this mess.

We were told the bill included record investments. And then we learned what the administration means by "investment": a plant database project; a multimillion dollar facelift for the Sunset Strip; a study of the mating decisions of female cactus bugs; hundreds of millions of dollars to a solar panel company that was supposed to double its workforce but ended up cutting jobs instead; massive bailouts to the States; turtle tunnels. Senators get the drift.

Within a year of its passage, the so-called stimulus bill had become a national punchline.

Nearly a trillion dollars was added to the debt as a result of this bill in the name of investing in our future. And in the 2 years since it was signed, we have lost millions of jobs.

And now they want to do it again. They are back for more.

Just as amazing is the fact that the same people who touted this bill now refuse to cut government spending. We learn about another wasteful stimulus project just about every day, and they say they can't find a dime's worth of government spending to cut?

It defies common sense.

I mean, if we can't cut a turtle tunnel when the country is \$14 trillion in the hole, we have problems. It is time to turn over the credit card.

The bottom line here is that 2 years after the President told us he was investing in our future, here is what we have to show for it: higher unemployment than they predicted and trillions more in debt.

The fact is, dangerously high debt has actually slowed the recovery, making it harder to create private sector jobs.

So in my view this second debate was over before it started.

Massive government investment of borrowed taxpayer money as a tool for economic growth has been a failure.

TRIBUTE TO PADUCAH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the people of Paducah, KY, for all of the efforts they have made to make their city one of our country's best places in which to work, visit or live. Now that hard work has paid off. Paducah has been recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of their Dozen Distinctive Destinations in America in 2011.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation seeks to recognize cities and towns that offer an authentic cultural and recreational experience. They take into account a community's commitment to the historic preservation and revitalization of its downtown, its rich cultural history, attractive architecture and a town's core character. Obviously, I think Paducah ranks highly in all of these criteria, and I am glad the National Trust for Historic Preservation, after considering thousands of communities across the Nation, agrees.

The history of Paducah is a history of life on the river. Paducah was originally settled because of its strategic position on the Ohio River, and traffic on the Ohio and the Tennessee River drove its economic development. As rivers were America's original highways, Paducah was founded on vital arteries of trade and commerce.

That history is still alive in Paducah because of the hard work of many to preserve their city's heritage. For years I have worked along with local leaders to enhance some of the city's greatest attributes; namely, Paducah's downtown and riverfront. Paducah is

now a vibrant river town. I would encourage my colleagues, the next time they are planning a vacation, to keep Paducah in mind.

The National Quilt Museum of the United States, the River Discovery Center, the Lower Town Arts District, the Upper Town Heritage Walking Tour, and much more await them there. I will point out that the National Trust for Historic Preservation also recently named Paducah as having one of the most romantic main streets in America.

The Paducah Sun recently published an article about this high honor received by the city.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From paducahsun.com, Feb. 15, 2011]

CITY NAMED DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

(By Will Pinkston)

Paducah keeps adding awards to its trophy shelf, as the city was named one of the 2011 Dozen Distinctive Destinations in America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Since 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation annually selects communities across America that offer cultural and recreational experiences setting them apart from typical vacation destinations. Consideration for this honor comes with communities exhibiting a commitment to historic preservation and revitalization of their downtown centers, displaying their diverse cultural history and architecture, and showing efforts to implement sustainable "green" concepts.

"This is an incredible honor to be named by the national trust," said Rosemarie Steele, marketing director for the Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau. "There's strong criteria for qualifications and we've met all of them."

Steele said several factors helped to put Paducah in the running for the trust's honor.

"Paducah's history is really rich in the diversity and the prosperity of being a river town," Steele said. "The spirit of the people who decided to save and preserve downtown, which started years ago, and kept the moment alive, have made us a vibrant river town."

The trust considered Paducah attractions, such as the National Quilt Museum of the United States, the annual Quilt Show, the River Discovery Center, the Lower Town Arts District and Upper Town Heritage Walking Tour.

"(The National Trust for Historic Preservation) wants to know what the hidden gems are, like all the creative experiences we have," Steele said. "More than 5,000 people learn their craft in Paducah, not just quilting, but the arts, throughout lower town."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation also considered the city's "walkability," according to Steele, with many of Paducah's historic and cultural attractions centered within only a few blocks of one another.

"Paducah celebrates its past in a wide variety of ways, from protecting and restoring landmark buildings to commissioning artists to create life-sized historic murals," said Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

While being included on the Dozen Distinctive Destinations list is an honor in itself,