



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

CORRECTION

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

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

No. 122

## Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Lord of salvation, sometimes we are tempted to doubt Your promises and to feel cynical about the chaos in our world. When these feelings come, help us to remember Your great deeds in our Nation's history, recalling the many victories You have already helped us win.

Continue to lead our lawmakers like a shepherd in green pastures and beside still waters. Nourish their spirit with the food of Your wisdom, soothing their doubts and calming their fears. Give them indefatigable courage for the living of these challenging days, using them as instruments to share hope and encouragement to our Nation and world.

Lord, we thank You today for the life and legacy of Ambassador Chris Stevens.

We pray in Your great 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, September 12, 2012.

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 MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Senate will now consider the motion to proceed to S. 3547, the Veterans Jobs Corps Act. Seventy minutes will be equally divided this morning between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

We will begin consideration of the Veterans Jobs Corps bill today. It is unfortunate that we are having to go through another couple of filibusters on this bill, but that is what we have been through.

I mentioned yesterday on the floor that for the 6 years we have had a Democratic majority, there have been 380—this makes now 381—filibusters. During the time of Lyndon Johnson, 6 years, the same period of time, there was 1 filibuster—381 to 1. That is the kind of obstruction that has taken place in this body by the Republicans, and it is untoward by any stretch of the imagination. There has never been anything close to this.

### HONORING OUR FOREIGN SERVANTS

Mr. REID. I was disturbed and saddened to learn late last night of the deaths of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other personnel in an attack on the U.S. consulate in Libya. I would be happy to talk by name about them, but their names have not been released at this stage. It doesn't take away from how important the jobs are of these Foreign Service officers.

I join President Obama in condemning these senseless acts of violence. My thoughts are with the families of those who were killed in this horrible attack. It is too often forgotten that American diplomats risk their lives on a daily basis.

I had the good fortune in my days on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House to travel the world. I always make sure, wherever I go, to visit with the Foreign Service personnel. They are everywhere. There is no group of people—and I tell them this every time I have the opportunity to visit with them—who do more for our country in a positive sense than these Foreign Service officers. They work so hard, and most of the time their duty stations are very difficult.

For example, take this good man, Ambassador Stevens, who was just confirmed a few months ago. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco. He taught English there. He was fluent in Arabic, French, and English. He served in the Foreign Service in Jerusalem, Cairo, and Saudi Arabia. He was the Staff Assistant of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He had an education that was really unbelievably strong and powerful. He graduated from Berkeley. He had a law degree from Hastings, one of the premier law schools in the country. He had a master's degree from the National War College. What a loss to our country.

Our diplomatic corps is filled with admirable and dedicated public servants, and the four Americans who lost

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



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their lives yesterday exemplify the courage that happens every day in diplomatic posts around the globe. They learn the language, and they live with the people wherever they go.

As I have indicated, I have traveled to many of the American Embassies abroad. I have always been so impressed and grateful for their leadership, and I communicate that to them every chance I get. We are so fortunate to have had Hillary Clinton leading the State Department for the last 3½ years.

I have indicated that Ambassador Stevens was not a political appointment; he was a Foreign Service officer. As I indicated, he served in the Peace Corps and spent his life giving his time and his talents to drum up democracy and American values around the world.

I support President Obama's directive to increase securing our diplomatic posts around the world and provide whatever resources are necessary to keep our personnel in Libya safe. I will continue to monitor the situation as we learn more about these terrible events.

#### JAMES BILLINGTON'S 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Mr. REID. Madam President, Henry Ward Beecher, the famous abolitionist, once said, "A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life." I agree. Our Founding Fathers also agreed, and that is why we have the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress was initially the library of Thomas Jefferson. That is what started the Library of Congress. It was established in 1800. It was this country's first Federal cultural institution. It is the largest library in the world. There are 35 million books and 838 miles of bookshelves. The numbers are staggering. Almost 10,000 new items are added every day.

For 25 years the Librarian of Congress has been Dr. James Billington. He has been a faithful and effective leader. I first got to know Dr. Billington in 1986 when I came to the Senate. There was a little squabble between a couple of the more senior Senators, which was a wonderful opportunity for me because one of the very senior Senators thought that maybe he deserved more than being the chair of the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch. I grabbed that. I was happy to do that. I loved that experience. I learned a lot about what goes on here and how we pay for things. At that time it was an effort to really hurt the Library of Congress, so I had that opportunity to stand for the Library of Congress. Every time we had a vote, we won and they were not able to damage the Library of Congress.

I got to know Dr. Billington. I had the good fortune to travel once with him to Russia. Dr. Billington, before coming to the Library of Congress, was one of the foremost scholars on the former Soviet Union. He knew every-

thing about that land. He still writes about the new Russia. He is a very stalwart academic. When he took over the Library of Congress in 1987, computers were a scarcity, but he had a vision of what the future should be, and he thought it would be important to digitize the Library's collections and make them available on the Internet. There was a little pushback at first, but, of course, now that is history. That is what happened.

I have such admiration for him as a person. He is a good person not only from an academic standing but as an administrator. I am glad they were unable to slash the Library's budget as they tried, and as a result, people came to a better understanding of what the Library of Congress was all about. I am glad I was able to play a part in that. He has always ensured that the Library of Congress would remain an unmatched resource for knowledge and enlightenment. So it is with pleasure that I congratulate my friend Dr. Billington on 25 years—a quarter of a century—of dedicated service at the Library of Congress.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. REID. Very quickly, Madam President, I was very disappointed to hear Speaker BOEHNER say yesterday that he was giving up on reaching a bipartisan agreement to avoid huge cuts to both domestic and defense programs. I don't feel that way. I can assure everyone within the sound of my voice that I have not given up on finding a reasonable and balanced approach to reducing our debt and avoiding these difficult cuts. Democrats agree that across-the-board cuts are not the best way to solve the problems. Sequestration is a bitter pill, but we did that on purpose. That was no accident. That is why there was overwhelming support for the budget deficit reduction act to have sequestration. The sequestration was engineered to be hard to take, so it forced us to compromise. It was designed to be tough enough to force the two sides to reach a balanced deal. That is why there was widespread bipartisan support for this.

I hope Speaker BOEHNER will reconsider. I believe it is much too early to give up. I urge my Republican colleagues not to give up on themselves because I am not going to give up on them. It is time for them to stop rooting for the economy to fail and root for Congress to succeed and reach common ground. Remember, the markets are watching our every move, with Moody's saying yesterday that they were thinking of downgrading our debt standing credit rating. This is not the right time to say there is no hope in getting things done. I disagree. I say that the glass is half full, not half empty.

The Speaker's statement came an hour after that reminder from Moody's came forward. We are willing to work. I say that to my friend JOHN BOEHNER

and to everyone else. We are willing to negotiate, we are willing to cooperate, we are willing to consider the difficult cuts to programs we hold dear, and I think the Republicans should do the same. So far they have refused. Due to the orders of their leader Grover Norquist, they have refused to raise even a penny of new revenue. They have refused to ask millionaires to contribute their fair share to help reduce the debt and the deficit. And Democrats won't agree to a one-sided solution that lets the superwealthy off the hook while forcing the middle class and those in greatest need to bear all the hardship. I repeat, we are willing to consider difficult cuts to programs we believe are extremely important.

The sequestration is not a perfect legislative tool, but rarely do we do anything legislatively that is perfect. That is the way it has been for generations. But at least it has the benefit of being a balanced approach, and it has the power of law.

Republicans, including Vice Presidential candidate PAUL RYAN, would do well to remember that they voted for the sequestration.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

#### HONORING OUR FOREIGN SERVANTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, we learned yesterday, and are receiving reports this morning, of the attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya. In Benghazi, our Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed in the service of our Nation. Our thoughts and sympathies today are with the families of these brave Americans.

These attacks remind us of the sacrifices made on a daily basis by foreign service officers, diplomatic security personnel, and our marine security guards. I join my colleagues in strongly condemning the murder of these innocent Americans, and I support employing every available tool at our disposal to ensure the safety of Americans overseas and to hunt down those responsible for these attacks.

Yesterday we commemorated the anniversary of the attacks of September 11, and today we are reminded that brave Americans serve us every day at the risk of their own lives. We honor the Americans we lost in Libya and we will stand united in our response.

Among the things we can agree on in Washington is that the attacks on the United States and its representatives will be met with resolve and that America's presence and defense of our national interests across the globe will not be deterred by the acts of violent extremists.