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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, take from us anything that doesn't honor You. Remove covetousness, pride, anger, or anything that is unlike You. Replace our negatives with positives, making us lowly, peaceable, patient, and kind.

Lord, fill our lawmakers with faith, a firm hope, and a charity, that they love nothing that displeases You. Raise them up to be seated with You in heavenly realms, as they strive to be instruments of Your purposes.

Thank You for being rich in mercy and for Your grace that never gives up on us.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN 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. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 10, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a

Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,

President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN 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 resume consideration of the motion to proceed to the gun safety legislation. The first hour will be equally divided with the Republicans. They will control the first half, and we will control the final half. Last evening I filed cloture on a motion to proceed to that legislation. Hopefully, today we can reach an agreement to begin debate on this bill—even today.

We also hope to formalize an agreement for the confirmation of Sarah Jewell to be Interior Secretary.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 680 AND S. 691

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told—and I believe this is right—there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bills by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 680) to rescind amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of Defense for the Medium Extended Air Defense System, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 691) to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these two bills.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

IMPACTS OF SEQUESTER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for many months now my Republican friends have promised the impacts of the sequester's arbitrary cuts would be minimal—don't worry about them. When they voiced any concern at all about the sequester cuts, it was over the potential impact on the U.S. military. The impact on middle-class families and the national economy wouldn't be that drastic, they promised in February and in March.

Well, now it is April and contrary to Republican promises, Americans in communities from Massachusetts to Nevada, from coast to coast, in red States and in blue States, are beginning to feel the pinch of those across-the-board cuts.

In the District of Columbia, tourists traveling from home to here for the National Cherry Blossom Festival experienced long lines to go through airport security because of these furloughs. Coming home from Nevada on Sunday there were mobs of people. When anyone sits down to talk to any of them, they will speak about how miserable it is getting through security checks at airports all over the country.

In Murray, UT, a food pantry that feeds more than 1,000 people every month has closed because of these cuts. In Durham, NC, scores of employees at a medical research facility will get pink slips. In central Maine fewer senior citizens will be able to participate with Meals on Wheels. In Bethlehem, PA, more than 100 children are going to be kicked off Head Start.

Now, maybe my Republican friends don't feel this, but I guarantee my colleagues the parents of these little children in Bethlehem, PA, feel it. People waiting in these airport lines feel it.

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



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Why, at this medical research facility, should these people get pink slips? Are they unnecessary? Of course not. If the food pantry in Utah closes, are the people still hungry? Of course they are—more of them than before this cut took place.

In central Nebraska emergency response times have increased significantly since the local airport control tower closed. In southern Ohio the director of the local public defender's office—a man by the name of Steve Nolder—fired himself. He did that rather than lay off other members of his staff. He figured: I am one; I can save the jobs of three people. And that is what he did. That is quite unbelievable, but it is true. He has worked there for 18 years in the public defender's office. I repeat, he gave up his job so three could keep theirs.

Perhaps most concerning of all, community cancer centers around the country are facing difficult choices. For the people who have experienced cancer or experienced cancer in their families, this is something that is noted. Community cancer centers around the country are facing a very difficult choice: send Medicare patients away or just close their doors. The Washington Post reports that because of the sequester cuts to Medicare reimbursements, cancer centers around the country can no longer afford to administer many common drugs. For people who have watched loved ones have chemotherapy—it was just a few months ago when people worried about whether they were going to be able to get the chemo drugs because there was a shortage. Well, now it is widespread.

The Post reports, I repeat, because of the sequester cuts to Medicare, reimbursements for these cancer centers around the country have to make a choice: close or change their hours, which is tough on patients. These clinics, where two-thirds of the cancer patients receive treatments, would lose so much money so quickly they could have to go out of business. So providers are sending cancer patients to overcrowded hospitals instead, not to the cancer centers. For patients in clinical trials for these new cancer drugs—life-saving experiments—the situation is really dire. Some in these clinical trials are going to have to travel across the country, to Washington, DC, Boston, or New York. People can't afford that, especially when they are sick.

As I said last month, the effects of the so-called sequester didn't break over us like a big wave, they sneaked up on us like a rising tide, and that tide is here now. But the effects are devastating, even though we didn't feel them immediately, and there is more pain to come. That is the sad part about it.

In the coming months, meat inspectors, FBI officers, and Border Patrol agents will be furloughed. We haven't even begun to see the worst of the job losses. There will be 750,000 jobs lost because of sequester across the country.

The overwhelming majority of Americans wanted us to compromise before their friends and family members got pink slips or furloughed or were told there is no more treatment for them even though they have cancer. For some it is already too late. But we can repair that damage, perhaps, and we should do it immediately, to put Americans back to work—no more furloughs.

To give our economy a foundation for growth, we must replace the sequester with a balanced approach to deficit reduction. A balanced approach is one that asks the richest among us to contribute a little bit more—their fair share—to deficit reduction. The rich are willing to do this. If we did this, we would avert cuts that hurt American families, harm our military readiness, and hinder our economic recovery.

I want everyone within the sound of my voice to doublecheck my statistics, but I heard on the radio on the way to work the Pentagon has decided that one-third of all of our aircraft simply will not be used because they don't have enough resources to fuel them. So that training just will not go forward. That is what I heard on the radio, and someone can doublecheck what I heard, but I am confident that is right.

In the House and in the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats voted to impose these cuts quite a long time ago, so it is going to take Republicans and Democrats working together to avert them. That is what we need to do. It is senseless to go on as we are done with these cuts that are done with a meat cleaver, not a scalpel.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day this Wednesday.

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

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 649, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 32, S. 649, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in about an hour the President of the United States will release his budget—65 days after the statutory deadline of February 4, the first Monday in February.

Since taking office, President Obama has raised taxes roughly \$1.7 trillion—a number that I know none of us can actually comprehend. But now he wants to raise taxes once again.

I heard the majority leader on the floor this morning advocating for another tax increase. The President's proposed budget will ask for another \$800 billion, and that is on top of \$600 billion that was the subject of the fiscal cliff negotiations at the end of last year.

The President's budget, which will be released in an hour but which we have heard a lot about already, will never, ever actually balance. Every household in America, 49 States, every municipality, county government, everyone else in America has to live within their means but not the Federal Government.

The President's budget, as I said, does not purport to live within our fiscal means, and it does not balance, but the President says this is a compromise. I heard his spokesman on television say this is not the President's ideal budget; this is what he views as a compromise. But here is the simple reality: America cannot afford this budget, and America cannot afford the President's so-called compromise.

Let's review some recent history.

In November and December of last year, Republicans were asking the President to embrace serious entitlement reform. Everyone who has looked at Medicare and Social Security realizes that both of those programs are on a path to insolvency and that they will not be there for future generations. And we asked for some smart reductions in Federal spending—what we have come to know as wasteful Washington spending—in exchange for more revenue. The President refused, citing the need for a “balanced” approach. But I do not want anyone to confuse that with a balanced budget; the President calls for a “balanced” approach but never a balanced budget.

Meanwhile, his Treasury Secretary made clear that the White House was absolutely prepared to go over the fiscal cliff—this was in December—unless Republicans agreed to raise taxes. Well, we did not have much choice because after the expiration of the so-called Bush tax cuts, they were going to go up by operation of law. But now, after getting more than \$1 trillion in new tax revenue as part of ObamaCare and after getting a separate \$620 billion tax increase on January 2, which I have just talked about, as a result of the fiscal cliff negotiations, the President is back for more. It seems as though that is his knee-jerk solution to every fiscal