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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Our Father, we honor Your wonderful Name. The angels bow before You; Heaven and Earth adore You. Your voice echoes over the oceans and thunders above the roar of the raging sea.

We pray today, O God, for the families of the dozens killed in the massive tornado in Oklahoma. Bring healing to the injured and comfort to those who mourn.

Today, may our Senators honor You with worthy service. By their words and actions, empower them to glorify Your Name. Lord, guide them with Your loving providence, as they trust in Your wisdom and might. May they commit themselves to Your will and leave the results to You.

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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 21, 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.

OKLAHOMA TORNADOES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon I called home to check to see how things were going, visited with my wife a little bit.

She said: You can't imagine what I am watching on TV. It is hard to watch.

She was talking about the terrible storm that hit Oklahoma, the devastation and deaths, the injuries. She tried to explain to me. It was hard to relate even though she was watching it on TV. Homes were destroyed, schools were destroyed, even elementary schools were destroyed.

I think what Landra did was she described how all of America feels and felt upon watching it. Our hearts go out to the families whose loved ones were lost. The extent of that we don't know. We are still waiting. Those missing in the devastating tornadoes in Oklahoma, we feel so sad for them. Our thoughts are with those who were affected by this tragedy, and so many people have been affected. Families are still searching for their family members, their children.

I recognize and commend the heroic efforts of the first responders who rushed to the scene and have been working tirelessly to help those who were injured. They worked all night. Of course, they are still searching for the missing. I commend the efforts of

neighbors, everyday citizens, young and old, who have been heroic in helping.

Although we may not know the extent of the damage now, we will continue to do everything in our power to help the people of Oklahoma as they recover from these terrible tornadoes, these acts of nature. I will stand vigilant today and tomorrow, ready to help as more storms threaten the region.

Every Federal resource will be made available to help the communities affected by this tragedy. I look forward to hearing the President—his speech will start momentarily—on the disaster. I am pleased that FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate is already in Oklahoma assessing the extent of the damage and deciding how the Federal Government can best assist.

I will continue to monitor the search and rescue efforts. Whenever tragedy strikes any part of our Nation, it really strikes us all. I pledge to the people of Oklahoma my continued support, our continued support, as they begin to recover from this awful storm.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks today the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the final half. Upon conclusion of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, the farm bill. I spoke to Chairman STABENOW last night. She indicated that she believes there is an opportunity to finish the bill, even this week. I certainly hope that is the case. The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 today to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

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



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OKLAHOMA DISASTER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are all thinking today about the tragic loss of life in Oklahoma yesterday, so this morning I would like to take a moment to express my condolences to all who lost family and friends in this horrible disaster. It has been a truly heartbreaking loss of life—dozens injured and killed yesterday, including many children. The tornado that tore through Moore flattened entire neighborhoods and destroyed at least two elementary schools—Briarwood and Plaza Towers—just as students were about to be released for their last week of school before the summer recess. I don't think any of us can comprehend the searing grief of their parents. I am told that two crews from the Louisville Red Cross recently left for Oklahoma to help those who are now suffering.

Kentuckians understand the terrible toll these storms can take. Just last March I toured the wreckage after a deadly tornado in West Liberty, KY, where churches, businesses, and schools were reduced to rubble and where several Kentuckians lost their life. I remember full well the tornado that went through my hometown of Louisville back in the 1970s. It knocked down every house on my parents' street. My mother was in the basement, and mercifully it skipped over our house for some reason but leveled all the houses across the street and the ones next door. It is very hard to accurately describe the devastation a storm such as this leaves in its wake.

As first responders continue to dig through the rubble in Moore, I fear we will hear a lot more bad news in the days ahead. That said, I am sure we will also hear stories of hope and self-sacrifice, as we almost always do when tragedies such as this strike—of strangers shielding strangers, of neighbors helping others rebuild, of volunteers working through the night to sift through the debris to find survivors.

As we have seen time and time again in recent years, Americans are at their best when called upon to help each other in tragic circumstances, and this circumstance can hardly be more tragic. So we in the Senate offer our heartfelt prayers to those affected by this terrible storm. We offer our gratitude to the first responders. We offer our encouragement to Governor Fallin and the many Federal, State, and local officials who are working hard to assist in the recovery and who will aid in the rebuilding of homes and schools and families and lives.

WELCOMING BURMA'S PRESIDENT

Later this morning the majority leader and I will welcome the leader of Burma, Thein Sein. He will be here to discuss the reform in that country and our bilateral relationship. Later today I will have more to say about the reform movement in Burma.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Cantwell) amendment No. 919, to allow Indian tribes to participate in certain soil and water conservation programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. We are now going to resume discussion on the farm bill, but before doing that I see one of the distinguished members of our committee on the floor who I know would like to make some other comments. But I just wish to thank her in advance for her leadership. We are so excited and pleased to have the Senator from North Dakota on the Agriculture Committee.

Having had a chance to be in North Dakota—and she has said it to me a thousand times, so it is burned into my memory—90 percent of the land in North Dakota is in agriculture, and so she reminds me of that every day. She has been a key person in helping us bring this farm bill to the floor. So before proceeding on the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act, I would ask that Senator HEITKAMP be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

TRIBUTE TO BRAD HEJTMANEK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, on the floor of the Senate Senators often come to praise a local university football team that just won a championship or a famous coach who is retiring or maybe even a famous politician who

has passed away. Today I come to the floor of the Senate to thank a man who will never be written about in the history books or even known outside of my small hometown of Mantador, ND. Brad Hejtmánek's life and his accomplishments were pretty modest by national standards, but nevertheless, for the people of my small hometown, Brad was something special.

Brad was a standout high school athlete, a veteran, a softball coach, a National Guardsman, a coworker, a husband, a father, a gardener, and a friend. For most of his adult life, Brad was the mayor of Mantador—not exactly the most glamorous of jobs. Mantador runs exclusively on volunteer labor.

For years he made sure the city water and sewer were working, the Christmas tree got decorated, that barking dogs were attended to, that the garbage got picked up, the roads got fixed, and abandoned lots did not get overrun with weeds and junk.

For years Brad got to do the great ceremonies incumbent of a small-town mayor. For example, after I was elected attorney general of North Dakota, Brad presented me with the key to the city. This was no ceremonial key; it was the real deal. I wondered for months after getting that key what that key actually opened, until one day I got a call from Brad asking me if I could send the key back. You see, the key was actually to the town dump and spring cleaning was coming. But that was Brad.

You can't look anywhere in Mantador and not see his impact. One can go to the small ballpark and remember that Brad organized the National Guard to come and clean out the old grove of trees, look to the large VFW and remember that Brad recruited folks to come and help build it, look to the fire hall and remember the games of pickup baseball we played when we were kids, look to the Mantador grade school and remember that Brad was the kid who always took the dare, the kid who always organized the pickup football games, and that every kid in grade school knew the lyrics to the "Marine Corps Hymn" because Brad made sure at every choir practice we sang it not only once but twice.

Men and women such as Brad Hejtmánek are the unsung heroes of our democracy. They step up and volunteer when their country and their community need them. They are friends when a person needs a friend, and they never forget where they came from. So even though he will never have a chapter in a history book, he will always have a place in the hearts of the people of Mantador. In my book that is an honor unequalled.

Thank you, Brad, for all you did for your country and your small town. Godspeed, my friend. I and all of Mantador will miss you.

I ask unanimous consent to have his obituary printed in the RECORD.