



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2013

No. 16

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord God, You are infinite, unchangeable, and holy. Thank You for this day and the opportunities to be stewards of Your love, grace, and compassion. Use our Senators to respond to the needs in our world, infusing them with a willingness to do Your will. Invade their hearts and minds with Your peace as they envision Your plans and purposes. Lord, give them power to handle the pressures, light for their path, and patience for their challenges. Let Your wisdom guide them, Your hand guard them, and Your shield protect them.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am going to have to get used to the President pro tempore presiding over the Senate. That is not the script we have followed for quite a few years. I am very happy to see him here, as usual.

Following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consider-

ation of the motion to proceed to S. 47, the Violence Against Women Act. At 5:30, the Senate will vote on the motion to proceed to the bill.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 201 and S. 204

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 201) to prohibit the sale, lease, transfer, retransfer, or delivery of F-16 aircraft, M-1 tanks, or certain other defense articles or services to the Government of Egypt.

A bill (S. 204) to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The measures will be placed on the calendar.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the two decades since the Violence Against Women Act passed—it passed with a very strong vote, a bipartisan vote here in the Senate, and then in the House at the time—incidents of domestic violence have fallen by more than half, by as much as 53 percent. The law has helped millions of women and children escape their attackers and get the justice they deserve. It is a landmark piece of legislation. That is why Congress twice reauthorized this legislation without a hint of controversy or a moment of delay.

But despite the overwhelming evidence this legislation saves lives and protects women, House Republicans used every procedural trick known to

Congress to block its reauthorization last Congress. Despite strong bipartisan support here in the Senate, Republicans in the House refused to join the effort to renew our national commitment to ending domestic violence.

Allowing partisan delays to put women's lives at risk is simply shameful. If House Republicans believe domestic violence is no longer a problem in this country, they are wrong. Every day three women in America die at the hands of their abusers. Every day many women escape with their lives but with the physical and emotional scars of the abuse that exists.

More than one-third of women in this country have been victims of violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a partner—one-third of the women in this country have been victims of violence, sexual assault, or stalking by a partner. It is in our power to help, and it is unthinkable that Republicans in the House would prevent us from taking action and again refuse to do anything, as they did last Congress.

Victims of violence and law enforcement officials who support them have already waited too long for Congress to act. This week, the Senate will pass a strong bipartisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. This is something that was put forward by the chairman of that committee, the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY. He has worked hard on it. He did everything possible last Congress to get this done. Because of the House's intransigence, they refused to do anything in spite of his work.

I thank Chairman LEAHY, Senator MURRAY, and the women of the Senate for their leadership on this issue. I am pleased so many of my Senate colleagues have expressed support for swift action on this legislation, and especially so many Senate Republicans have supported this legislation. The Senate will not allow women to be denied the protection they need and deserve.

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



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We must ensure law enforcement has the means to stop these horrible crimes. We must guarantee communities have the resources to support victims regardless of sexual orientation, immigration status, or where they live, as they heal. Every victim of domestic violence deserves the same vigorous protections under the law. Because of the unique nature of the crime, combating domestic violence and protecting those affected also requires unique tools. Reauthorizing this act would help law enforcement continue to develop effective strategies to prosecute cases involving violent crimes against women. It would provide funding for shelters and transitional housing programs for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and help victims become independent. It would make legal assistance available to victims of violence and safeguard children and youth affected by dating violence and stalking.

Although the Violence Against Women Act expired in 2011, many of the programs established under the law have been funded by continuing resolutions. But not everything. A full reauthorization of this law is necessary to ensure authorities have all the resources they need to fight domestic violence. So I hope the Senate's bipartisan action this week will send a strong message to House Republican leaders that further partisan delay is unacceptable.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Republican leader is recognized.

SPENDING CONTROL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the American people are deeply unhappy with the way Washington operates these days. They are tired of people telling them what they want to hear instead of what they need to hear. They are tired of all of the political games and gimmicks that substitute for real action on the problems we face as a Nation. Given what we have seen from the White House and Congressional Democrats, frankly, it is hard to blame them. As I have said repeatedly in recent weeks, we need to find a way to control runaway Federal spending and debt. We need to do it quickly. This is absolutely essential if we are to avoid a European-style catastrophe. It is what we need to do if we are serious about removing government obstacles that stand in the way of a robust recovery and new jobs.

Reducing the debt will throw off a wet blanket that has been weighing on our economy for entirely too long. This is a serious challenge. It demands serious spending reforms from both parties here in Washington. Yet if you were to listen to the Democrats, you would think all of our ills could be solved by

raising taxes on private jets or energy companies.

These are not real solutions. They are poll-tested gimmicks. Just take the tax hike on so-called corporate jets. It would not raise enough revenue to offset more than 1 week—1 week—of the decade-long sequester—1 week. Of course, anytime you have a tax hike, there are going to be negative repercussions for growth and jobs. We do not have to look too far into the past to see how disruptive those consequences can be. In 1990, Washington politicians tried to enact a "luxury tax" on just about everything you could associate with the upper class, including yachts and aircraft. It was a total failure. Not only was it linked to the destruction of literally thousands of jobs in the boating industry, but, according to one study, the government actually—listen to this—spent more in unemployment benefits and in lost taxes than it was able to raise through the luxury tax itself. In other words, while the tax may have seemed to serve as a useful wedge issue for Democratic politicians, it made just about everyone worse off than they were before it passed. Workers, consumers, taxpayers, and the government were all worse off. That is why a number of Members of today's Senate Democratic caucus voted to repeal that particular tax a few years later in 1993. They even agreed to send refund checks to some of those impacted by it.

So why are they proposing to go down this same sorry road one more time? Well, in a variation of the old saying, you can conclude that they do not want the facts to get in the way of a good political talking point.

But the larger point is this: The challenge we face right now is the fact that government spending is completely and totally out of control. So to focus on a tax of any kind is to miss the point entirely. The amount of revenue we bring in as a percentage of GDP is set to return to the historical average of the past few decades. Spending, on the other hand, is way above historic norms, and spending is projected to actually get much worse in the years to come; that is, unless we do something about it today.

The American people elected a divided government. They expect it to work. That means both parties need to engage and offer serious solutions. Proposing a return to failed tax gimmicks of the past is not by any measure a serious solution. If White House officials want to replace the same sequester they themselves proposed in 2011, it is their responsibility to lay out what concrete spending cuts they would be willing to consider as potential offsets, as House Republicans already have. If they do, then we Republicans are happy to hear them out and to work collaboratively on effective reforms. But if this is just another opportunity to trot out the Democrats' focus-group-approved policy stunt, if this is another fake fight designed by the White

House to push us to the brink, then Republicans are not interested in playing along. We are going to keep fighting for real spending reform, because that is what the American people expect us to do.

Every day spent talking about corporate jets is a day wasted. Given that the President again missed the deadline to submit a budget on time this year, there is not much time to spare. The clock is ticking. It is past time to get serious.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to proceed as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ADELE HALL

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a most remarkable woman. In just a few hours, a celebration of life service will be held at St. Andrew's Church in Kansas City for Adele Hall, described by the Kansas City Star in a front-page headline as "first lady" of Kansas City.

Adele was in Hawaii with her husband Don Hall, chairman of Hallmark Cards, when she passed away. To say they were a remarkable couple is an understatement. They met when she was 3 years old and Don was 6. Adele said: I don't ever remember falling in love with Don. I just grew up being in love with him.

As the Star reported, her priorities were always with her husband and her three children. In addition to her love and caring for her family, Adele Hall had a unique ability to lead, and lead she did. Living a life of caring and contribution, making a difference and demonstrating to all whose lives she touched and made better, she was a wonderful example of honor and respect.

Adele's many accomplishments were almost legendary. She would demure from that description with her wonderful smile and give credit to others. It