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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Holy God, from whom alone all good proceeds, let the graces of faith, hope, and love be felt today on Capitol Hill. Lord, You rule all things by Your wisdom. May our lawmakers, therefore, look to You for guidance and strive to manifest complete subservience to Your will. Continue to shower our Senators and their loved ones with Your daily mercies, as they grow in grace and true holiness throughout the seasons of their lives. May they show their love for You by loving others as You have loved humankind. Help them to continue to expect great things from You as they continue to attempt great things for You. We pray, in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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, following leader remarks 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. Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of S. 744, the immigration bill.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 744 be 12 p.m. today.

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

Mr. REID. The filing deadline for all first-degree amendments both to the substitute amendment and the bill is today at noon.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 for our weekly caucus meetings. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, law enforcement officials who made the arrests and looked at this called it a "modern day plantation." What happened was a string of very profitable convenience stores had undocumented immigrants from Pakistan and the Philippines routinely working up to 100 hours a week for below minimum wage. And although their employers made \$180 million over a dozen years, while pocketing much of their employees' wages, these workers lived packed into apartments unfit for human habitation. Because they lacked the proper immigration paperwork, the workers were simply too afraid to speak up for themselves.

It happens all the time. These were the circumstances at more than a dozen 7-Eleven stores in Long Island, NY, and in Virginia. They were raided last week by Federal immigration officials. The unfortunate conditions ex-

posed by this high-profile bust, however, are all too common. The busts do not come very often. They were able to get to the bottom of this. Most of the time these people are so abused and nothing happens except the abuse continues.

More than one-half of undocumented day laborers say they have been cheated by employers. One-quarter of undocumented workers polled in New Jersey say they have been assaulted by their employers, a crime they rarely report. A lot of times there are language barriers, and they are simply afraid they are going to lose their jobs and maybe be deported.

In one survey virtually every undocumented female farm worker said sexual violence in the workplace is a very serious problem. The 11 million people living in America without the proper documentation are particularly vulnerable to abuse by these employers who are very unscrupulous.

A system under which people can be forced to live as indentured servants, under substandard living conditions and the threat of violence hurts all workers, and it is wrong. It is immoral. The bipartisan immigration bill before the Senate will eliminate the kind of exploitation seen at these rogue 7-Eleven stores and other dishonest employers in a number of ways.

First, it will reduce illegal immigration by strengthening our borders and fixing our broken legal immigration system. We all acknowledged before going into this debate that our system was broken and needed to be fixed. That is what this bill does. The bill will also make the electronic employment verification system, known as E-Verify, mandatory within 5 years. That will make it virtually impossible for people without the proper immigration paperwork to secure jobs, removing the incentive to come here illegally and removing the incentive from these unscrupulous employers taking advantage of those people.

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



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S5103

The legislation will allow temporary workers to change jobs without losing their visas, making it possible for them to escape and report exploitative employers without fear of deportation. They have not been able to do that. They will not until we pass this legislation.

This measure also offers more visas for victims of crime, including employer abuse. These protections will be good for honest workers, helping them stand up for their rights without fear of retribution. It will be good for honest employers, whose unscrupulous competitors have an unfair advantage.

This legislation also recognizes that undocumented workers play an important role in our economy and need an earned pathway from the shadows to citizenship. The path will not be easy; it was not intended to be. Undocumented people will have to go to the back of the line, pay penalties and fines, work, pay taxes, learn English, and stay out of trouble.

The alternative, to deport 11 million people, is impractical, inhumane, and just plain wrong for our economy. Helping millions of immigrants get right with the law will boost our national economy by more than \$800 billion over the next 10 years, and it will reduce the deficit by almost \$1 trillion over the next two decades—a pretty good deal.

Last night's strong bipartisan vote on the Corker-Hoeven border security compromise was a huge step forward for this legislation. Opponents of immigration reform can no longer hide behind false concerns about border security. That is an understatement. There can be any excuse to oppose immigration reform. If it is, it is transparently obvious that they are just trying to figure out a way to vote against this legislation.

I hope those who have stood in the way of this legislation will instead join us to do what is right for our economy and humane for immigrant families. It is time to crack down on crooked employers—that is what they are—who exploit and abuse undocumented immigrants. It is time to give hope to 11 million immigrants who want nothing more than to become citizens of a place they call home.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NATIONAL ENERGY TAX

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in advance of the President's big speech today, I read this morning that one of the White House climate advisers finally admitted something most of us have suspected all along. He said, "A war on coal is exactly what is needed."

A war on coal is exactly what is needed. That is one of the President's advisers. It is an astonishing bit of

honesty from someone that close to the White House, but it really encapsulates the attitude this administration holds in regard to States such as mine where coal is such an important part of the economic well being of so many middle-class families. It captures the attitude it holds with regard to middle-class Americans all across the country, where affordable energy is critical to the operation of so many companies and small businesses, and to the ability of those businesses to hire Americans and help build a ladder to the middle class for their families.

Declaring a war on coal is tantamount to declaring a war on jobs. It is tantamount to kicking the ladder out from beneath the feet of many Americans struggling in today's economy. I will be raising this issue with the President at the White House later today.

One of the sectors the President's war on jobs would hit is manufacturing. Ironic, perhaps, because just a few months ago it was President Obama himself who said:

I believe in manufacturing. I think it makes our country stronger.

Well, of course, that is correct. Manufacturing does make our country stronger. Just look at Kentucky. We are the first in the Nation in aluminum smelting. We are third in production of auto parts. Kentuckians know these types of businesses strengthen not just the Bluegrass State but our entire Nation. They provide well-paying jobs, economic growth, and tickets to prosperity for workers and their families. Yet in the global economy of the 21st century, retaining, much less expanding, our manufacturing core has never been more challenging than it is now.

We face relentless competition from all corners of the globe, so policymakers have to be careful about the types of policies they enact. Obviously, American success in this hypercompetitive world is strengthened when we keep taxes low and regulations smart. Perhaps most important, it is strengthened when we ensure energy is abundant and affordable.

These are energy-intensive industries, after all. If the White House moves forward with this war on jobs and raises the cost of energy, that would almost assuredly raise the cost of doing business. That would likely put jobs, growth, and the future of American manufacturing at risk. That is one of the many reasons Americans rejected the President's attempt to impose a national energy tax in his first term.

Even with overwhelming majorities in Congress, including a filibuster-proof, 60-vote majority in the Senate, Washington Democrats were unable to pass the President's energy tax. In the Senate, the Democratic majority would not even bring it up for a vote. Think about that. They could have pushed it through on their own without a single Republican vote, and yet they could not.

Why? Well, for one, the constituents we serve are a lot smarter than some in Washington might like to believe. They know we cannot impose a national energy tax without cutting jobs and significantly raising energy costs not just on their families, but also on their employers.

The data seems to bear out such concerns. I remember some projections showing that by 2030, the Waxman-Markey proposal could have decreased the size of our economy by about \$350 billion and reduced net employment by 2.5 million jobs, even after taking job creation into account.

So Americans made their opposition to this tax abundantly clear to Members of Congress. In the 2010 midterm elections, they ousted a good number of those who voted for it in the House. Because of concerns about job losses, higher utility bills, and reduced competitiveness, Congress is even less inclined today to vote for an energy tax than when the President commanded such massive majorities in the first part of his first term.

It is fairly self-evident to say there is no majority for such an idea in the 113th Congress. The President shall also push ahead and ignore the will of the legislative branch, the branch closest to the American people. Whether they want it or not, he says he will do it by Presidential fiat.

I am sure we will find out more details in his speech today. If I am right, and I think I am, he is going to lay out a plan to do what he wants to do through executive action—in other words, more czars, more unaccountable bureaucrats.

The message this sends should worry anyone who cares about constitutional self-government, that the President can simply ignore the will of the representatives sent here by the people because he wants to, because special interests are lobbying him, and because he wants to appease some far-left segment of his base.

What I am saying is he cannot declare a war on jobs and simultaneously claim to care about manufacturing. He cannot claim to care about States such as mine where an energy tax would do great damage to countless Americans employed in energy sectors such as coal.

Wages are already failing to keep pace with rising costs for many people. Many families have seen their real median income actually decline in recent years. A survey released yesterday shows that three-quarters of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. This is the reality of the Obama economy. Even in the best of times, imposing an energy tax would be a bad idea. In an era of unacceptably high unemployment, an era where Americans are finally desperate to focus on growing the middle class rather than throwing scraps to his wealthy supporters, ideas such as this border on absurdly self-defeating.