



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2013

No. 107

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of life, as Senators deal with today's challenges, purge their hearts of anything that does not honor You. Remove that which divides them, uniting them in the common task of doing what is best for our Nation and world. When they are tempted to doubt, steady their faith. When they feel despair, infuse them with hope. When they don't know what to do, open their minds to a wisdom that can change and shape our times according to Your plan. Lord, empower them to trust You more fully, live for You more completely, and serve You more willingly. We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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, July 24, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a

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

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARKEY 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 there will be 1 hour of morning business, with the first half controlled by the Republicans and the second half controlled by the majority.

Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the Transportation appropriations bill. Senators MURRAY and COLLINS have done good work. We hope to wrap up this bill in the next 24 hours. We hope to vote in relation to the Portman amendment sometime this morning. We also expect to consider the student loan legislation today. Under the orders that have been entered, we have the ability to vote on the student loan bill, which is so important. There are several hours of debate—4 hours plus other time on various amendments—so I think Members should consider that at about 4 p.m. this afternoon or thereabouts, we could have a series of votes. We also have other nominations that are subject to vote. So we should have a number of votes today. I hope that, in fact, is the case.

I admire and appreciate the work, as I have already mentioned, on the appropriations bill. Hopefully we can wrap it up soon.

OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is hard to believe that 15 years ago, as the Pre-

siding Officer knows, Police Officer Jacob Chestnut and Detective John Gibson were killed trying to prevent a crazy man from entering the Capitol. We will have at 3:40 p.m. a moment of silence in memory of these two good men. And, of course, every year their families are there.

I really appreciate the work of the Capitol Police to make this building safe for us, staff, and all the visitors, and there is no time more directed toward that than events like this. But because of the sacrifice those two men made, the Capitol is a safer place as a result of the Visitor Center, which now allows people to come into the Capitol in an orderly fashion. They can have their bags checked and everything so very quickly. In addition, there are restrooms and meeting halls. So the sacrifices made by these two men have made this place safer. It is just tragic that it took both their lives to do that.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from Illinois.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2668

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I understand that H.R. 2668 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

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



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The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2668) to delay the application of the individual health insurance mandate, to delay the application of the employer health insurance mandate, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I now object to any further proceedings on the bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar subject to the provisions of rule XIV.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my understanding is that the minority has the first half of morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest 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. MCCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

REMEMBERING OFFICER CHESTNUT AND DETECTIVE GIBSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning I would like to start by remembering the sacrifice of two 18-year veterans of the Capitol Police, Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut. On this date in 1998, Gibson and Chestnut paid the ultimate price while standing in defense of the U.S. Capitol. We know these men fell defending more than just the structure, though. We know they fell defending more than just the Members sent here or even the staffs who help each of us better serve constituents and our country. No, these men died while protecting everything this building represents—our democratic way of life, the freedom granted to each of us by a creator we often thank but never see.

We honor these men for their lives, and we honor them for the final act of heroism that ended those lives. That is why a plaque inside the Capitol commemorates their sacrifice. That is why the Capitol Police headquarters bears both of their names. That, I know, is of little solace to the wives, children, and friends left behind, but it is a small way of saying “we remember” when the scale of the debt owed can never truly be repaid in full.

So today the Senate honors John Gibson and J.J. Chestnut for their sacrifice, and the Senate sends its condolences and its gratitude to those who loved them most.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am glad to see that Senate Democrats have finally ended their obstruction of the bipartisan student loan bill. It has been weeks since the Democrats blew past the July 1 deadline they kept warning about, and it has been even longer since the House passed a bill similar to the one they are actually now agreeing to. But at least Democrats have finally stopped obstructing and arguing. At least now they are ready to put their partisan political fix aside and join President Obama and congressional Republicans in enacting real permanent reform for all students—the only real reform on the table that is designed to help every middle-class family.

I would like to thank the sponsors of this bill for their hard work: Senators MANCHIN, KING, ALEXANDER, BURR, and COBURN. They may come from different political parties, but they all really care about students, and this bill certainly proves it.

There is something else this bill proves too: that Democrats can work with Republicans when they actually want to—when they check their partisan take-it-or-leave-it approaches at the door and actually talk with rather than at us.

That is why it is really disheartening to hear about the partisan speech President Obama plans to give today, the one the White House can't stop talking about. With all the buildup, you would think the President was unveiling the next Bond film or something, but in all likelihood it will be more like a midday rerun of some 1970s B movie because we have heard it all before. It is really quite old.

These speeches are just so formulaic, and they are usually more notable for what they leave out than what they contain. Here is what I mean. We all know the President will bemoan the state of the economy in his speech, but he won't take responsibility for it. He will criticize Republicans for not rubberstamping his policies but will leave out the fact that for 2 years Democrats did just that, and yet the economic recovery is still stagnant.

He won't talk about the fact that since he lost control of the House and his ability to have things exactly the way he wanted, he has refused to engage with seemingly anyone in Congress on ways to get the economy moving. A perfect illustration of that is the fact that instead of working with us on solutions, he is out giving speeches. And here is the kicker: Instead of taking responsibility for his failure to lead, he will probably try to cast this as some titanic struggle between those who believe in “investing” in the country and those who supposedly want to eliminate paved roads or stop signs or whatever ridiculous straw man he invents this time.

Give me a break. There is a real philosophical debate going on in our country, but it is not anything like how he

imagines it. I would say it is more of a debate between those who believe in a government that is smarter and more efficient and some who seem to believe in government against all the evidence; between those who draw the obvious lessons from human tragedies in places such as Greece and Detroit, and some who cannot face up to the logical endpoints of their own ideology, who cannot accept the terrible pain their own ideas inevitably inflict on the weakest in our society.

It is between those who understand the necessity of empowering of private enterprise if we are ever going to drive a sustained recovery for middle-class families and some who can't seem to let go of ivory tower economic theories, even after 4½ years of an economy literally treading water.

Speaking of ivory tower theories, here is another difference. Some of us believe it is actually possible to act as good stewards of the environment without declaring war on vulnerable groups of Americans. I know a lot of people here in Washington who think of Appalachia as fly-over country, but many in my State have another word for it. They call it home. When these struggling families hear one of the White House climate advisers say a war on coal is exactly what is needed, can you imagine how that makes them feel? It makes them feel as though they are expendable, as though Washington does not understand them or, frankly, simply doesn't care. “[It is] like going to some of these big cities and shutting Wall Street down,” is how a coal worker from eastern Kentucky recently put it. “See how it affects everything,” he said. “Coal is our Wall Street.”

This is just one of the many reasons Republicans have long called for an “all of the above” strategy. We understand that traditional sources can be developed in tandem with new alternative energies and technologies and that there is no other sane strategy anyway, since it is basically physically impossible, even putting the catastrophic economic consequences aside here for a moment, to even come close to meeting our energy needs with renewables today. We cannot even come close.

What are we going to do in the meantime, power our country with foreign energy or American energy? This should be a no-brainer, but then again we are talking about Washington here. That is why it is so frustrating when the administration drags its feet on projects such as the Keystone Pipeline. The North American oil that Keystone would bring is basically going to come out of the ground whether we take it or not. So will the administration take it and the jobs that would come along with it or surrender it to places such as China? The White House will not say. The President's spokesman was asked for a decision again yesterday. You know what his answer was? Don't look to us.

Look, this pipeline has been under review for years and years. It is basically