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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIM KAINE, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, Father of all mercies, thank You for Your exceedingly great and precious promises that inspire us. You keep Your promises to supply our needs, to sustain us with Your love, and to provide us with Your peace.

Today, guide our Senators, enabling them to listen to the whisper of conscience as they labor to keep this Nation strong. May their first priority be to live for Your honor, fulfilling Your purpose for their lives. Lord, create in them contrite hearts that they may worthily be instruments of Your peace.

We pray in Your sacred 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 23, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM KAINE, a Senator

from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KAINE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 195, H.J. Res. 59, which is the continuing resolution.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 195, a joint resolution (H.J. Res. 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there will be no rollcall votes today. It was unnecessary to have any because we are in a procedural situation here dealing with the CR. The first vote of the week will be tomorrow at 11:45 a.m. on confirmation of a judge, a Federal circuit court judge by the name of Hughes.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that between now and 6 p.m. Senators be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 338, 339, 341, and 343.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, does the Senator yield?

Mr. REID. No.

Mr. CRUZ. Well, I object. The majority leader asked for consent, and I object.

Mr. REID. OK.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, inside the House Republican bubble, the crowd cheered a plan to deny health insurance to tens of millions of Americans or else shut down the government. Outside the House Republican bubble, the reaction was altogether different. The radical tea party plan to shut down the government unless Democrats agree to deny funding to implement ObamaCare—passed by the House of Representatives on Friday—has been called “the dumbest idea ever” by one Republican Senator. It has been called a “box canyon”—a morass from which Republicans will not escape unscathed—by a second Republican Senator. It has been called “dishonest” by one Republican Senator and a “suicide note” by another Republican Senator. So, Mr. President, the reviews are in, and they are universal: The ransom demanded by House Republicans in exchange for keeping the government open is unworkable and unrealistic.

President Obama has been clear, and I have been clear: Any bill that defunds ObamaCare is dead on arrival in the Senate. The Affordable Care Act has been the law of the land for 4 years now. Democrats are willing to work with reasonable Republicans to improve this law. But we now understand that there is an anarchy movement that is afoot. A lead editorial in the New York Times of Wednesday of last week said that. But we are not going to bow to tea party anarchists who deny the mere fact that ObamaCare is the law. We will not bow to tea party anarchists who refuse to accept that the Supreme Court ruled ObamaCare to be constitutional. And we will not bow to

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



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tea party anarchists in the House or in the Senate who ignore the fact that President Obama was overwhelmingly reelected a few months ago.

These fanatics really point to disapproval for ObamaCare as justification for taking the Federal Government and our economy hostage to their demands. What they fail to mention to the American people and to the Senate and to the House is that 59 percent of Americans either support the law or wish it were even more far-reaching and transformative of our health care delivery system, according to a CNN poll. The vast majority of Americans—including those who disapprove of the health care law—want Congress to work to improve it, not to tear it down. And according to a new CNBC poll, Americans overwhelmingly oppose defunding ObamaCare, especially if it means shutting down the government to do so.

So the facts are that the vast majority of the American people are satisfied with ObamaCare. The simple fact remains that ObamaCare is the law of the land and it will remain the law of the land as long as Barack Obama is President of the United States and as long as I am the Senate majority leader. The latest gamble by Republicans in the House of Representatives—made with the backing of their radical allies in the Senate—only postpones the inevitable.

This week the Senate will act as quickly as tea party Republicans will allow. Once the Senate has acted, House Republicans will face a choice—whether to pass a clean continuing resolution or shut down the Federal Government. So the question is, Are extremist Republicans really willing to shut down the government? Time will only tell. But the world looks to America for leadership. Is this lack of respect for the rule of law truly the example we wish to set for others? Are Republicans so intent on undermining both President Obama and his signature health care law that they are willing to inflict severe damage to our economy in the process? America will know exactly whom to blame—Republican fanatics in the House and the Senate.

I urge those Republicans to listen to the more reasonable Republicans in the Senate. I have read some of their commentary on what is contemplated and how dumb they think it is. I repeat, one Republican Senator said: It is the dumbest idea I have ever heard. Two dozen Senate Republicans have spoken against this foolhardy plan to drive the economy off a cliff—two dozen. This “Thelma and Louise” style is not getting the attention of the American people in a positive tone. If Democrats do not bow to every demand they have, they want to go right over the cliff. We are not going to go with them.

I am glad to see more and more of my moderate Republican colleagues stepping up to speak sense to an extremist element of their own party.

Maureen Dowd wrote in the New York Times on Saturday:

Speaker John Boehner, trapped under the thumb of Tea Party anarchists, called Friday’s vote to defund Obamacare and invite a government shutdown, “a victory for common sense.”

She said:

More like a triumph of nonsense [not common sense].

So a few reasonable Republicans are wise enough to know that risking the Nation’s economic recovery for the sake of a Pyrrhic ideological victory would be another step toward a death knell for the Republican Party.

Mr. President, every one of these Senators whose comments I read to everyone listening, plus the 20 or so others whose comments I did not mention specifically, are conservative people, conservative Republicans, they are just not radical.

So I say to House and Senate Republicans who continue to deny a reality and risk America’s economy: Listen to the chorus all around you. Listen to what they are saying. Your conservative Senate colleagues have urged you off this reckless course. The Nation’s largest business group, the chamber of commerce, has urged you off this reckless course. American families, who are weary both of these foolish partisan fights and of these difficult economic times, have urged you off this reckless course. And on behalf of Democrats, who long for the days when we legislated through cooperation—we did it instead of hostage-taking—I personally urge you off this reckless course.

What remains to be seen is whether my Republican colleagues on both sides of the Capitol are wise enough to listen.

Mr. President, we have a number of people we are trying to get approved, confirming nominations. They have been approved by everyone, as far as I know, and I will again, unless my friend from Texas objects to these people getting confirmed—does my friend object?

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, I am happy to discuss it with the majority leader, but at this point, yes, I object.

Mr. REID. Fine. I will make my request, and the Senator can grab his reservation, and we will talk about it.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 338, 339, 341, and 343; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that there be no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the Record; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate’s action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. CRUZ. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is objection.

Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 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.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations—I stated the request earlier. I would re-engage in that and ask unanimous consent that be the case.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Ann Miller Ravel, of California, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2017.

Lee E. Goodman, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2015.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Evan Ryan, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs).

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Kenneth R. Weinstein, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. 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.

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JAMAR AVERY HICKS AND SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RICARDO YOUNG

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, earlier this month we marked the 12th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon that killed more than 3,000 people.