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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m., and was called to order by the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, who remains our shelter in the time of storms, we are helpless without Your power. Unless You empower our lawmakers, they can see the ideal but not reach it. They can know the right but not do it. They can comprehend their duty but not perform it. They can seek the truth but not fully find it.

Dear God, help our lawmakers. Enlighten their minds, purify their hearts, and strengthen their wills, enabling them to pass beyond guessing to knowing, beyond doubting to certainty, beyond resolving to doing, and beyond intention to action.

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, October 2, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a

Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HEITKAMP 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. Madam President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate until noon, with the time equally divided and controlled, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is obvious when you check the press that the Republicans have had a very, very bad week. On the same day that Democrats in Congress delivered quality affordable health insurance to tens of millions more Americans, the Republican Congress delivered this Nation a government shutdown.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, yesterday millions of Americans went on line to shop for affordable insurance policies in the new marketplace exchanges. Some compare that to when Google went on line and the many problems that Google had because they had no idea people were so interested in Google. There were some problems they had. Of course, now we know how people feel about Google.

The same is going to happen with this Affordable Care Act. People have until December to sign up. They are on again today as they were yesterday

signing up. But thanks to the Republican government shutdown, hundreds of thousands of public servants were sent home without pay. Thanks to the Republican shutdown, tourists lined up outside Red Rock Canyon outside Las Vegas where more than 1 million people a year go. But they did not go there yesterday. There were gates. They could not get in.

Thanks to the Republican government shutdown, a group of World War II veterans who traveled from Iowa and Mississippi had to break down barricades to visit the Washington, DC, memorial in their honor, some of them in wheelchairs.

Thanks to the Republican government shutdown, 200 very sick patients, including 30 children, were turned away from the National Institutes of Health clinic that offers lifesaving—that is an understatement—lifesaving treatment. Most of the children turned away are suffering from some type of cancer.

I read that modern-day anarchists in the House have been celebrating the shutdown—celebrating the shutdown. They can barely contain their glee at having realized a 2010 campaign promise to halt the basic functions of government. Here is what the tea party spokesperson said. She is their spokesperson, MICHELE BACHMANN. Remember, she is the woman that ran for President and was the leading contender for about 4 hours or whatever it was. But anyway, she loves to talk. Here is what she said yesterday, “It’s exactly what we wanted, and we got it.” You cannot make up stuff like that. Can you imagine anyone saying that when we have babies turned away who are coming for lifesaving treatment? “It’s exactly what we wanted, and we got it.”

It is time for my Republican colleagues to do a gut check. Republicans in the House have proposed one cockamamie, can’t-pass idea after another the last few days: defund

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



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ObamaCare, delay ObamaCare, deny preventive health. They tried that before. They tried it again. They were not satisfied until they said: Now, let's also go after women—things as basic as contraceptives—or else we will shut the government down. That is what they said.

They are obsessed with ObamaCare. Now they have gotten their way. They have shut down the government. As BACHMANN said, "It's exactly what we wanted, and we got it." But none of their wacky ideas are any closer to becoming law. Instead of reading the writing on the wall, House Republicans have turned to a new bad idea, to cherry-pick a few parts of government that they like and reopen only those parts.

Credit for this idea goes, I am told, to the junior Senator from Texas. He goes over to the House and tells them what they should do. He, along with people like BACHMANN, are tea party, they are anarchists. They are happy. Listen, I have come here, and I have talked about how happy they are in hurting government. We now have them speaking out openly. "It's exactly what we wanted, and we got it."

But I do have a little bit of advice for my Republican colleagues in the House. When your latest brilliant idea came from the same person who proposed the "dumbest idea ever" according to one of his own Senate Republicans here, I would think it is a sign you are on the wrong track. It is time for Republicans to stop throwing one crazy idea after another at the wall in hopes that something sticks. Nothing has stuck.

There has been a sensible plan to reopen the government right in front of House Republicans all along: A clean 6-week resolution that opens government today. We passed it in the Senate last week. I believe reasonable Republicans—I hope—are desperately looking for a way out. That is what all of the newspapers said today, all of the news reports. Each day a couple more come forward. I do not blame them for looking for a way out.

These piecemeal bills are not a way out. The Obama administration already promised to veto them. So they obviously are not the answer. Reopening only parts of government that they like is not a responsible solution. The Senate already has a plan to reopen the government while we work out our budget differences—open the government based on the resolution we passed last week.

If Republicans really want to reopen the government, they should just go ahead and reopen the government. They have had that power all along. Once they do that, we will be happy to appoint conferees, work out long-term budget priorities with the House. Let's go to conference. We talked about it. PATTY MURRAY has been here 18 times to talk about it.

We should not be fighting over a 6-week stopgap budget bill. We should be working out our long-term fiscal

issues. Americans are tired of this type of knockdown, drag-out debt fight, which costs our economy billions of dollars. The way to put our Nation on sound fiscal footing is to set sensible policies through regular order in the legislative process, not to extort concessions through dangerous hostage taking.

First, Republicans must reopen the government. The next move is to go to conference and set our minds on reaching a reasonable compromise. Right now, Republicans led by JOHN BOEHNER are the only thing standing between Congress and compromise. I would suggest he stop taking advice from BACHMANN and CRUZ.

Unfortunately, it seems that some in the Republican conference are simply too mad at me personally, too obsessed with getting me personally to back down from doing what most of America believes is right. The National Review said yesterday that I was "the villain of villains." JOHN BOEHNER could reopen the government if he wanted to, but he is too obsessed with beating the villain of villains, and obviously too afraid of the tea party to do the right thing for the country.

When I read this yesterday, I said: Villain. Huh. Be careful of the words you choose. Gee, no one likes to be called a villain. So I looked it up in the dictionary. Uncouth person. Well, I acknowledge, I probably was not born in a place that most people would like to be born in. I was not raised the way most people like to be raised. But I would hope over the years that I am not uncouth. I have tried my best to become part of mainstream society.

The other definition is I am a scoundrel or a criminal. Well, I am not a criminal. I am not a scoundrel. So they better get a different definition for me. In spite of being the villain of villains, I have some advice and a suggestion. I really do believe there are reasonable Republicans in Congress. They have to, as I said, do a gut check and understand who they represent—understand that America is waiting for them to do the right thing. I know they believe in public service. But they have to understand why public service is important. I urge them to think about 30 babies—babies, little kids, who yesterday were brought by their parents to Washington, DC, for hope—hope that their little babies and children are not going to die, that they can get lifesaving treatment. They were turned away. So I urge them to do the right thing. I urge them to join us to reopen the Federal Government.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER.

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

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, if it was not clear earlier this week

why Republicans were asking to delay ObamaCare, it should be pretty clear to everybody this morning. The rollout of this thing made a trip to the DMV look like a good time. The word of the day was "glitch." You could probably explain one or two of these glitches away, maybe three, but not glitches in Nebraska, Maryland, Florida, Wisconsin, Illinois, and in Kentucky—not glitches all across the country.

Kentuckians who tried to log in yesterday got a message that read "server error." Let me translate that. It did not work. I mean, if the plural of anecdote is data, it seems to me the plural of glitch has to be systemic failure. This is the law that Washington Democrats were so adamant about unveiling yesterday, they were willing to shut down the government over it.

Instead of agreeing to a couple of commonsense proposals related to this law, they stuck to their absolutist position: 100 percent of ObamaCare when and how they want it, no matter what. This, of course, unless the President thinks you are one of the chosen few who deserve a special break.

So basically Washington Democrats shut down the government because they did not think middle-class Americans deserve the same kind of treatment as their employers, and because they did not think Congress should have to follow the same rules on ObamaCare exchanges as everybody else.

These were fair things to ask for. They were reasonable. If the Democrats who run Washington could have brought themselves to that sensible position, they would have voted to keep the government open. But in the end, they got their shutdown, which they apparently think will help them politically. They held on to their absolutist position on ObamaCare regardless of the consequences for American families.

Two days into this thing they still refuse to budge. The President reiterated again yesterday he is not interested in talking. The majority leader made it clear he is not interested in talking either. He shot down just about every attempt to engage in serious discussions with the House or with any one else for that matter.

Look, this week Washington Democrats had a choice: Defend basic principles of fairness when it comes to ObamaCare or shut down the government. They chose the latter. It was the wrong decision, in my view. It is time for them to start finding solutions, to start talking, and put the interests of their constituents ahead of the interests of their party.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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