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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

God of Heaven, You are great, and we come before Your throne with reverence. Lord, look at us and hear our prayers for our Congress, our Nation, and our world. Make our lawmakers so transparently just and fair that falsehood may be banished by the truth that sets us free. Supply the needs of those who are hurting because of this government shutdown as You give our Senators the conviction that with You all things are possible.

We pray in Your great 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 until 4 p.m. for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the chair.)

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, Senator SCHUMER yesterday on the floor talked about what the House is doing, and he

described it as “Alice in Wonderland.” I don’t know if that is an apt description. Maybe it is beyond that.

Here is where we are. The House has passed a bill to pay furloughed Federal employees—now, listen to this—once the government opens. Well, why wouldn’t we do that? But the problem is that this uncontroversial legislation is kind of unique, isn’t it?

So now what the Republicans in the House are telling—because they are the ones who set the agenda—they are telling all these Federal workers: What we are going to do for you now—even though we don’t like Federal workers and we haven’t given you a raise in 3 years—what we are going to do now is give you a paid vacation.

That is what it is. These people who want to go to work can’t go to work, but they are going to get paid, they know, when they leave here, and we knew that anyway. We heard today that a number of Federal employees are applying for unemployment benefits. So it is really cruel to tell workers they will receive backpay once the government opens and then refuse to open the government.

Let’s open the government. Hundreds of thousands of furloughed Federal servants want to work. They should be allowed to work. We have, for example, right now in our National Security Agency, 1,000 mathematicians—the numbers may be a little bit wrong but very close—we have 2,500 computer scientists, and 940 Ph.D.s who are home. They cannot work. They cannot get paid. It is not fair to them or our country. Let them work.

We get these little piecemeal bits of legislation from the House—for example, open the Park Service. In Nevada, that is great because we have some national forests there. But 87 percent of the land in the State of Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. The vast majority of that land is Bureau of Land Management. We have some beautiful conservation areas. One is

called Red Rock, which over 1 million people visit every year. It is closed. So opening the Park Service does not help a place 8 or 9 miles out of Las Vegas where 1 million people come to visit. They come there to do that. Some of the best rock climbing in the world is there.

These are ordinary Americans who have not been treated very well during the last several years by the Republicans anyway. No pay raises. They treat Federal employees as if they are a lower class of worker than other people.

Now, remember, Federal workers work really hard. The Presiding Officer works hard. All 8 million Federal employees work hard. There are exceptions, just like anywhere else.

I met two people yesterday. This hurts. Federal employees not being able to work hurts others. Lockheed announced today that they are laying off 3,000 people. They cannot get inspections done. I was with someone yesterday evening from US Air. They cannot take custody of a \$180-million airplane, a brandnew airplane. It is just sitting there. They cannot take custody of that airplane. Why? Because they need a final inspection. This is all throughout America. The Federal Government is involved in aspects of life that everyone has here in America—food inspectors, inspectors for making sure there is safety for a \$180 million airplane. Lockheed has things they are building. Some of them are missiles. They have to make sure they are safe and reliable. One man told me that they must, for the warheads in these nuclear weapons, test them after they have been here in service. They just cannot leave them here, they need to test them. The time is here for them to be tested. The safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons—there is nobody to do it.

Now we are saying to the Federal employees: We are going to pay you when this is all over, but right now you just

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



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stay home. You 1,000 mathematicians, you 940 P.H.D.s, 2,500 computer scientists who work for the National Security Agency: Stay home. Watch TV. Play chess. Do whatever you want to do because we will not let you work. But look ahead; you are going to get paid.

On this side of the aisle, we like Federal employees. I like Federal employees. I look with great satisfaction at someone who works for the FBI or the Park Service. I want them to work.

This is really an important time for people to visit our monuments, our national treasures, but they cannot do that. So not only does it hurt people who want to go see the Washington Monument up close, but also—not in Washington as much—take the places around our national parks. There are little motels and restaurants that depend on those parks to make a living. Wintertime is coming. The ability to visit these parks is now very limited.

I have always cared about Federal employees. They do these jobs. Take the people who work for me and all Members of Congress. I have a Rhodes Scholar. She is a lawyer. She could go out in the private sector and make 10 times more money than she makes here. Why is she not doing that? She has two children. Why does she not do that? Because she cares about public service. I have people who work for me who are graduates of the best schools in America. They are here because they believe in public policy. They believe in being public servants. They are being told they are nonessential.

Some Members of Congress are kind of showing off, saying: Well, I am not closing my office.

I have closed my office because I do not think my employees should be treated any differently than someone who is working for the Bureau of Land Management or the FBI. They are home.

Mr. LEAHY. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield for a question from the senior Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the distinguished leader had the opportunity to serve in both bodies. I appreciate what he said about his staff and the other staff.

Is it not the leader's observation that these staff people come here because of their love of this country, love of this government, and without a doubt they put in extraordinary hours—far more hours than the public might realize? Is that not a fact?

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is so true. These men and women, for example, who are assistant U.S. attorneys, they do not punch a time clock. They do not bill hours, how much they can make an hour. They take care of the needs of this country. If there are bad guys out there, they prosecute them. FBI agents, people who work for the U.S. Marshal Service—they serve warrants to some of the most dangerous

people in the world. They are home now. They are home. They do those jobs, I say to the distinguished President pro tempore of the Senate, because they chose public service.

I will be a little bit personal here. I have four boys and a girl, a daughter. I love my children as only a father could love his children. My daughter is married to a lawyer. She is a schoolteacher. My four boys are all lawyers. My next youngest gave up a job and took a pay cut of \$200,000 a year so he could go to work as a city attorney in Henderson, NV. That is what public servants are all about. They are not in it for the money. They are not in it for the glory. They are in it because it is the right thing to do.

As I look over this Chamber, I see two of my staff in the back row. I look at one young man who is a graduate of Stanford Law School. It is either the first, second, or third best law school every year in America. Could he go someplace else and make more money? You bet he could. He is an expert. He is an expert in finance, the budget process.

Mr. NELSON. Would the Senator yield for a quick comment?

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield to the senior Senator from the great State of Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, since our leader is a former Capitol policeman, might it be noted that all of the Capitol Police Force that is protecting us and protected us the other day with the incident that occurred here—they are still here protecting us, and they are not being paid?

Mr. REID. Madam President, to my friend, I have given a couple of statements the last 2 days about the Capitol Police, but I never brought up the fact that I was a police officer. I was a police officer here in this building. My badge number is 364. I was an original. I still have it in my office here. I am proud of that. I did not have to do the dangerous things these young men and women do here. Some of them are not so young. They are really senior officers. But I carried a gun. I did some of what police officers do.

To think, as we look around this room—plainclothes officers are here, not getting paid. One of the officers was hurt and was hospitalized in that accident. He wasn't getting paid.

Tell me, I say to anyone who will listen or answer this question, why don't we open the government and let people go to work and do their jobs.

Public service is a calling—I won't say it is a calling, but some people feel it is.

I see the Senator from Maine. He and I worked in this building, the Capitol complex. Maybe that is where we developed our love of public service. I don't know where we developed it, but we both have it. Here is a man who has done such remarkable things.

He not only worked in the Senate many years ago, he was in the march for which we celebrated the 50-year an-

niversary. From a tree, he watched Dr. Martin Luther King give a speech. He loves public service, and he has a career that proves that.

The junior Senator from the State of Maine is one of the most dignified, experienced Senators that this body has ever had. That is the way it is with everybody.

The junior Senator from North Dakota has dedicated her life to public service. She held many elected offices in the State of North Dakota. She was a tax collector and attorney for Kent Conrad when he was tax collector. She was attorney general, ran for Governor, and would likely have been elected, but she was stricken with breast cancer. She came back.

She came back because public service is in her blood. She ran against great odds to become a Senator, and she is a Senator—not for the money but because she is contributing to the welfare of this country.

We are having these people stay at home? It is hard for me to comprehend.

It has been 1 week since the Senate passed a bill to reopen the Federal Government—1 week. For 7 days the Senate has been waiting for the House of Representatives to act.

Speaker BOEHNER has refused to allow the vote on the one bill that he said would reopen the government. It would open the government and keep it open. It has been all over the press the last few days.

He came to me and said: We can do a clean CR.

I said: What are the terms of that clean CR?

He said: It has to be at this year's level.

I said: We can't do that. We passed a budget here and we are \$70 billion above that.

We talked and we talked. He said that is how we can get a clean CR. What does that mean? It means we can just get it done quickly. I, as the press has indicated, talked with Senator MURRAY. She may be small in stature, but she is one tough Senator, the chairman of the Budget Committee.

I also had to talk to BARBARA MIKULSKI, the senior Senator from the State of Maryland. It wasn't easy to get those two chairs to agree to do \$988 billion. Once we got that done, I had to go to my caucus and sell that. I did it upon the representation that they would pass that and send it over to us. They sure didn't do that.

The bill we are asking the Speaker to vote on is the one he told me he wanted.

An economist who was JOHN MCCAIN's chief economic adviser during his campaign, who has admiration for Democrats and Republicans, said if the government shutdown drags on for 3 weeks, it will cost the economy \$55 billion.

It is already 1 week. We can all do that math. That cost is on par with the economic damage caused by Superstorm Sandy.

What the House has done with their “Alice in Wonderland” operation is they created another Sandy. It could be \$55 billion.

Although this is not an act of nature; this is a manmade disaster. It is a man-made disaster waiting to happen for national security.

The tea party shutdown is hampering our ability to enforce sanctions on Iran, just when they are beginning to bite hard.

The tea party shutdown is hurting our ability to gather intelligence. I spoke about that today. According to the Chief of Staff of the Army, the tea party shutdown is impacting the day-to-day operations of the United States Armed Forces. If the chief of the Army were not enough, the Secretary of Defense ridiculed what the House is doing. By the way, Secretary Hagel is a Republican.

I know my Republican colleagues are as concerned about the safety and security of the United States as I am. But they need to take a look at themselves and ask are they doing what is right for the safety and security of our country.

I am confident if they thought about it for a minute, they would like to mitigate the impact of the shutdown on intelligence gathering, the military, and a dozen other government agencies, as much as I do. A piecemeal approach to funding the government bit by bit is simply not the answer. Saying: We are going to pay you when we open this place is not the answer. Let them go to work.

No matter how many bites the Republicans take at the apple, there is only one bill that ensures every priority is met: the Senate bill to fully reopen the Federal Government.

Why are they doing this?

The Presiding Officer is a distinguished attorney from the State of Hawaii.

One does not need to be a distinguished attorney from any place to understand how brazen what they are doing is. They are saying: We are not going to do anything until you let us hamper a bill that has already been around for 4 years.

Hamper is an understatement. They are not willing to do anything unless they take a big whack with a meat-ax on ObamaCare. Already, since ObamaCare has been open, only on the Federal Web site, there have been 9 million hits in 4 days.

The priorities the Republicans have addressed so far are: Veterans, national parks, National Guard, and the National Institutes of Health are worthy. But there are many other needs that will go unmet and priorities that will be ignored without fully reopening the government.

Take, for example—I haven’t heard any speeches on the floor from my Republican colleagues about 1,300 rape crisis centers which rely on Federal funding to support victims of crime. They are losing their ability to stay open.

Unless the Federal Government reopens, organizations that advocate for victims of violence will be forced to close their doors or work without pay, and that is in a matter of a few days. Will the House Republicans pass a bill to help them?

I remember when we didn’t have all the domestic shelters we have now. I remember these women as I did domestic relations work. Oh, how sad. They had no place to go. Now they have a few places to go. We have domestic crisis shelters, and we have rape crisis centers, but the Federal Government is the one that supports those. The piecemeal approach of the House indicates that the needs of the people I just described would not be met.

The commander in chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, William Thein—I hope everyone here understands this is not some leftwing organization out there demonstrating against Democrats. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is what I have described it as, veterans of foreign wars. They try to stay as neutral politically as any organization in America.

William Thein, commander in chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, wrote to leaders in Congress this week and said:

We expect more from our elected leadership, and not a piecemeal approach that would use the military or disabled veterans as leverage in a political game.

He is right. Neither veterans, the military, hungry infants nor children with cancer should be used as political pawns. They should not be left out in the cold.

There is only one bill. It is the bill that Speaker BOEHNER asked me to get out of this Senate, and we did that. He needs to allow the House of Representatives to vote, and it would pass by a huge margin. That bill would fund all public priorities I have talked about, both to protect and economy and national security.

The Senate’s clean bill to reopen the government—the one the Speaker said he wanted me to get out of here—and I did it, but it was not easy. We have been waiting 1 week, but the Speaker could end this government shutdown before they go home Sunday. It was the Speaker’s intention all along to pass a clean continuing resolution. I believe that. But instead he was waylaid by this tea party-driven nonsense in the House of Representatives. He has refused to allow a vote on a bill that he proposed.

Republican Congressman CHARLES DENT said last night:

I do believe it’s imperative that we have a clean funding bill to fund the government. That was the intent of the Republican leadership all along, but obviously there were a few dozen folks in the House Republican Conference who weren’t prepared to vote for a clean bill, and that’s why we’re in the situation we’re in right now.

I say to the Speaker: Go with your first instinct. Pass a clean continuing resolution.

CHARLIE DENT said it was to pass and fund the government.

Here is what one House Republican, DEVIN NUNES of California said: The Speaker is taking his orders straight from the junior Senator from Texas. But the next move would be—and this is what is Congressman NUNES said yesterday:

You really have to call Cruz. I’m not even joking about that. That’s really what you have to do, because he is the one that set up the strategy. He’s the one that got us into this mess, and so we’ve got to know what the next move is.

Stop taking marching orders from the tea party, I say to my Republican friends in the House. All the Speaker has to do is find the courage to defy the tea party for the good of our great country.

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 for debate only until 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The President pro tempore is recognized.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thank the distinguished majority leader, not only for how he spoke out today, but also for the fact that he is strong on this issue. He also spoke about what this shutdown is doing to law enforcement.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I am going to speak further on that. But I couldn’t help but think, as I was asked by a friend in Vermont: What is going on?

I said: Well, you know, we had hundreds of hours of committee meetings, votes, and all. We had hours and hours of debate in the House and the Senate, and we passed the Affordable Care Act.

Even though it passed the House and the Senate and was signed into law by the President, however, the Tea Party continues to oppose the law. So they did two things that they thought would knock it out. One, they went to a Republican dominated U.S. Supreme Court and said let’s knock out this law. The Supreme Court said no. They upheld the law.

Then they ran a candidate for President of the United States, whose main argument was that he would get rid of the Affordable Care Act.

He lost badly.

Throughout all this time and after 40 votes to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, the Republicans have not offered what we would get as an alternative? Most parents like the fact that their