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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 19, 2013, at 11 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2013

The Senate met at 10 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.

Our Father, the giver of every good and perfect gift, live within us so that we will be established in faith and abounding in thanksgiving. Today, help our lawmakers to seek the things that are above, as You empower them to embrace kindness, compassion, humility, patience, and forbearance. May they give You preeminence in all things, rejoicing even in the trials they must endure for Your sake. Lord, inspire them to persevere with joy in the calling You have given them to protect freedom and to keep America strong. Enable them to bear fruits that will bless this Nation and our world.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

NOTICE

If the 113th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2013, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 113th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Tuesday, December 31, 2013, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–59 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Monday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Tuesday, December 31, 2013, and will be delivered on Thursday, January 2, 2014.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster/secretary/cong__record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at http://clerk.house.gov/forms. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT–59.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

CHARLES E. SCHUMER, *Chairman.*

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

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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, December 18, 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.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House message with respect to the bipartisan budget agreement postcloture.

Rollcall votes are possible throughout the day. We will notify Senators as soon as we know that votes will be forthcoming.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1845, S. 1846

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows.

A bill (S. 1845) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 1846) to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to these two bills.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate is debating the House-passed budget agreement which was an important step in avoiding another dangerous and costly government shutdown to our economy such as we had in October. Another shutdown caused by the Republicans would undercut the economic progress of the last 4 years. When Republicans closed the Federal Government for business in October, it cost $2 billion in lost productivity alone. The combined cost of the shutdown and the Republican threats to force catastrophic default on the Nation's bills cost the economy 120,000 private sector jobs in the first 2 weeks of October alone—120,000 jobs.

But the agreement the Senate is considering today will help us avoid another costly shutdown. The bargain rolls back the painful and arbitrary cuts of sequester, including devastating cuts to education, medical research, infrastructure investments, and defense jobs.

This is not a perfect bargain. No compromise is ever perfect. But the Senate should pass this agreement quickly so the Appropriations Committee, under the leadership of Chairwoman MIKULSKI, can begin crafting appropriations bills.

It is unfortunate the Republicans have forced the Senate to run out the clock on this measure, even though it passed the House on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis and has the support of the majority in the Senate. Why are we wasting time? It is time to get back to setting fiscal policy through the regular order of the budget process rather than the hostage taking which takes place so often here by my Republican colleagues. It is time for Congress to show the American people that Democrats and Republicans can compromise rather than lurching from crisis to crisis. Yet Republicans have insisted on wasting 30 hours of the Senate's time before allowing a final vote on this measure, even though they know it will pass with bipartisan support.

I read that the Republican leadership may also force the Senate to work through the weekend and next week by dragging out the consideration of several important executive nominations. That would be unfortunate. But if it happens, it happens. The Senate could wrap up work on the budget bill, pass a defense authorization legislation, and confirm these nominees by tomorrow afternoon. The only thing keeping us here is more Republican obstruction.

I was also troubled to hear the senior Senator from Kentucky say that the nominations we have considered this session and those on which I filed cloture yesterday are nonessential. Nonessential? How about the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security? That is nonessential, the person assigned the task of protecting us from terrorist attacks is nonessential? I think that is wrong.

Does the Republican leader consider the Secretary of the Air Force or the diplomats who run the State Department nonessential? There is a long list of people who have been confirmed who are essential to running this government.

Does the Republican leader consider the judges who try criminal and civil cases in overcrowded courtrooms across the Nation nonessential? We confirmed talented and dedicated individuals to all of those essential posts last week.

Does the Republican leader consider the Chairman of the Federal Reserve who sets this Nation's monetary policy to be nonessential? We will consider Janet Yellen's nomination to lead this very important part of our government, the Federal Reserve—we will do it this week. We will also vote on a number of other nominations, including a new Director of the Internal Revenue Service. Nonessential? And the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

We will consider the nomination of Brian Davis of Florida—a perfect, classic example—to fill a district court seat that has been declared a judicial emergency. His nomination has been pending for more than 650 days. Nonessential? I do not think so.

On the contrary, these are absolutely essential nominees. It is their job to carry out justice, protect our country, and safeguard the economy. It is the Senate's job to confirm them. But how long will it take the Senate to complete its job? It is up to my Republican friends.

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. VITTER. 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.J. Res. 59, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, that the House recede from its amendment to the amendment of the Senate