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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who has made us children of promise, thank You for bringing joy to our world. We are grateful for the freedom You have given us to

enjoy. May we use this gift to live steadfast in liberty, refusing to be entangled in the chains that would shackle us with addictions and miseries.

During this season of cheer, give our Senators and their loved ones the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self control. May they fulfill Your command to love their neighbors as they love themselves. Bless also the families and loved ones of our support staffs.

O God, let there be peace on earth. Let it begin with us. We pray in Your great 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.

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*.

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 19, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

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



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appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ 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 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 national defense authorization bill. Rollcall votes are possible throughout the day. We will do our best to notify Senators ahead of time as to when votes will occur.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for more than 50 years consecutively; that is, 50 years in a row every year, the United States has passed the National Defense Authorization Act. This year is not going to be an exception. This tradition indicates the respect and gratitude with which Members of this institution regard the members of our military.

The work to get to this point has been extremely difficult. We have had the usual good work by one of the finest Senators ever, the senior Senator from Michigan, and also the cooperation and hard work of the ranking member of the committee, the senior Senator from the State of Oklahoma. It has been with some difficulty.

The Senator from Oklahoma has had physical problems and the tragic loss of his son in an unfortunate airplane accident. These two men have continued to move forward with this legislation. It is important to mention their counterparts in the House. This is an important piece of legislation that we are going to vote on.

Today, the Senate will continue debate on this critical measure which safeguards our Nation and ensures our

troops have the resources and training they need. This bill includes a pay raise for members of the Armed Forces and reauthorizes dozens of special pay raises and bonuses, such as the bonus payment for servicemembers who are stationed overseas.

This legislation also supports military families who support the mission of our fighting men and women. Also, yesterday, we passed the Ryan-Murray budget—very important—because, among other things, it did away with the sequester, which would have been—if that second year would have kicked in, it would have been a \$23 billion hit to the United States military. That is gone.

This year the National Defense Authorization Act also includes robust new provisions to combat sexual assault in the military and guarantee that the perpetrators are punished.

With cooperation, the Senate could easily pass this bill today. We could have done it last evening. With cooperation, the Senate could also consider a number of pending nominations today and Friday. Without cooperation from our Republican colleagues, Senators should expect late night and weekend votes.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, after we complete work on the Defense authorization bill, this body will consider several essential nominations, including the new Federal Reserve Chair—so important, as we learned yesterday from the announcement of Chairman Ben Bernanke how terribly important that institution is. He is leaving. We need someone to replace him.

We also are going to approve a Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, a new Director of the Internal Revenue Service. We will also consider a nomination that has been pending for 2 years—more than 2 years actually—the nomination of Brian Davis of Florida to fill a judicial seat that has been declared an emergency, as well as a handful of other nominations.

All those nominees are qualified and dedicated public servants. I have not heard a single word about these nominations being flawed in any way. Those nominees have broad bipartisan support. Their positions safeguard the economy, thus ensuring our national security. I am disappointed that Republican Senators have suggested that those nominees are nonessential or unimportant. I heard one Senator say: Just do them next year. Another said: Yes, they are nonessential. They are really unimportant. Why don't we do them next year?

Everyone should understand, the Senate will not wait until the new year to consider these nominations. These are critical nominations. If that means working through the weekend, next week, so be it. The Senate will finish its work before we leave for the holidays. It is our constitutional duty.

Public servants who set our Nation's monetary policy and guard against terrorism and deliver us justice do not hold nonessential positions.

Is Janet Yellen, to be chosen as Federal Reserve Chair, nonessential? It is shallow to even suggest this. Brain Davis. I have already talked about this good man who has waited 2 years to become a Federal trial judge in Florida, that has too many criminal cases, too many civil cases, and it has been declared a judicial emergency. I suggest it is very shallow to suggest this nomination is unimportant and not essential.

Alejandro Mayorkas to be the No. 2 person at the Department of Homeland Security is vitally important, as has been laid out in detail by the chairman of the committee TOM CARPER. How shallow to think this important nominee is nonessential.

How about this one? John Koskinen to be Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service. With all that is going on in this country with ObamaCare, with all that is happening, we need someone to direct the Internal Revenue Service. To suggest this is not a critical position is really very shallow.

With all of the Republican obstruction and delay we have seen over the last 2 weeks, is it any wonder Democrats changed the rules last month? Of course not. The American people want Congress to work, not obstruct. Even under these new rules, Republicans are wasting weeks on matters that could be resolved in mere hours. As always, there is an easy and a hard way that we legislators can take. One is to move; the other is to obstruct. So far, my Republican colleagues have obstructed, and they continue to do so. The choice to obstruct is theirs. Their obstruction has become a bad habit of theirs. For the good of the country, their obstruction, these bad habits, need to go away.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 3304, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the title of the bill (H.R. 3304) entitled "An Act to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict and to authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to certain other veterans who were previously recommended for award of the Medal of Honor," and be it further

Resolved, that the House concur in the first three Senate amendments to the text of the aforementioned bill, and be it further