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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of life, hear our prayers. Fill us with Your spirit so that we may please You. Today, empower our lawmakers. Help them not to have an excessive focus on temporary things while ignoring the eternal. May their lives bring glory and honor to Your Name as they receive Your approbation for their faithfulness. Lord, create in them humble and contrite hearts that are willing to serve You and humanity. Shelter them in their coming in and going out, so that You can use them to advance the work of Your kingdom.

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.

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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MURPHY 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. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if there are any, the Senate will be in morning business until 5 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the Senate will resume H.R. 3979, as amended, the unemployment insurance extension, postcloture.

At 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote and passage of that legislation.

SPONSORING AMERICANS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, NASCAR fans can easily find their favorite drivers simply by looking at the cars as they fly by because of corporate emblems on the hood of the car. In fact, they are all over the car. For our clothing here in the Senate, we don't bear any commercial logos. Many Republican leaders these days may as well wear the Koch Industries insignia, but as Members of the Senate, there should never be any doubt as to our sponsors—the American people.

We are in the Senate for one reason: To give Americans a fair shot at providing for their families and having their voices heard, but Republicans seem more willing to identify themselves by their billionaire sponsors. While they don't wear Koch Industries ties and jackets, they display their sponsors proudly through their actions in the Senate. So it comes as no surprise Republican Senators stood on the Senate floor and voiced their support for Charles and David Koch. Senate Republicans depend on the Koch brothers to make their job easier.

I appreciate the forthrightness of those who expressed their support of the Koch brothers. The chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee came to this floor praising the richest brothers in the world. If Charles and David Koch helped Republican Members in this Chamber, they should not be ashamed to defend the Kochs' power. If the Koch brothers have bankrolled efforts to keep Senators in their seats, those Members should publicly acknowledge their providers.

If my Republican colleagues find my criticism of the Kochs' shadowy influence unjust, they should take their case to the American people. Senate Republicans should come to the Senate floor and take up the cause of the persecuted multibillionaires, but Senate Republicans shouldn't expect Americans to be easily fooled into ignoring the fact that the Koch brothers are trying to sweep middle-class families under the rug.

Regardless of the words Charles Koch espouses, for example, in his Wall Street Journal op-ed last week, he and his brother don't have the interests of average Americans in mind. They have in mind increasing their wealth and hiding their efforts behind words such as dignity, respect, equality, and freedom. That ran throughout the column they wrote.

Dignity? What about the dignity of struggling, long-term unemployed families? The Koch brothers continue closing plants and laying off employees in Alaska, Arkansas, North Carolina, and other places, devastating the economies in those communities. Americans need a fair shot at getting back on their feet and finding work, but Koch-backed groups are actively opposing the extension of benefits for the long-term unemployed.

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



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What about the dignity of a single mother from Las Vegas, Christina, who is stuck living in her elderly grandmother's living room because she and her son were evicted when Christina's benefits were cut off? Perhaps Charles and David Koch should spend their nights sharing one air mattress, as Christina and her son do, and see what dignity there is living as Christina and her boy do. The Koch brothers want Americans to be dignified as they lose their cars and homes and security.

The Koch brothers hide behind words such as "respect." What about treating the American voter with respect? Instead, the Koch brothers have dumped hundreds of millions of dollars in dishonest ads about health care reform, trying to fool American families into thinking that affordable health care is bad for them. It is good for them. If the Affordable Care Act was so awful, why did Koch Industries use it to their advantage? Koch Industries applied for and participated in the temporary program called the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, part of the Affordable Care Act. This program helped the company Koch Industries pay health insurance costs to retirees who were not covered by Medicare. In other words, the government helped subsidize health care which Koch Industries promised to its retiring employees. So it is OK for Koch Industries to save money through ObamaCare, but if an American family wants a fair shot at health care, they risk being labeled as collectivists. That was all through the article, the op-ed piece, "collectivists." Is that the new rightwing buzz word for Communists? That doesn't sound like respect to me.

The Kochs throw around phrases such as "equality under the law." What about equality for hard-working American women? Yet the Republicans in Congress who carry water for the Kochs are actively campaigning against legislation that will ensure that women are paid equally with their male counterparts for doing the exact same work.

I have a daughter. I have four sons. My daughter, if she does the same work as any of my four boys, should be paid the same as they are, but that isn't how it is in America. She is paid only 76 or 77 cents on the dollar for what men make doing the same work.

One of the Koch organizations is ironically called the Independent Women's Forum. They do this all the time. They fund money for the Chamber of Commerce, many other organizations, but one of their organizations is called the Independent Women's Forum, which is making the argument that the disparity between men's and women's salaries is a myth. But this tactic shouldn't surprise anyone, given the Republicans' utter disregard for women that is on display here in Washington.

We are going to vote on Wednesday on a fair pay piece of legislation, simply saying women should get the same amount of money a man does doing the

same work—not too absurd, not too radical. That is what we are trying to do. I repeat. This tactic shouldn't surprise anyone, given the Republicans' disregard for women that is on display here in Washington.

For example, on one of the Sunday shows yesterday comments were made by former Director of the CIA Michael Hayden, who was there for a long time. In responding to the Senate Intelligence Committee's attempts to shed light on the CIA's questionable interrogation methods, General Hayden condescendingly accused DIANNE FEINSTEIN of being too emotional. How about that—DIANNE FEINSTEIN being too emotional. This woman has been an outstanding leader of the Senate Intelligence Committee. She has been fearless. She has been thorough and fair. For this man to say that because she criticizes tactics led by General Hayden as torture she was too emotional—I don't think so. Does this sound like a person or a party who respects women? So much for equality under the law as seen by the Koch brothers.

Finally, the Koch brothers claim they are fighting to restore a free society—also some buzz words: "Free society." Free in what way? They single-handedly turned the American electoral process into a pay-to-play scheme. The Koch brothers' endgame is to elect officials, to elect people who will help overhaul our system of government and replace it with something more to their liking to increase their wealth. Even though they are the richest people in the world, they want to be richer.

So I again extend the invitation to my colleagues, if you bear the logo of the Koch brothers, come on down and announce your affiliation openly. The Koch brothers' agenda is an agenda that is not my agenda, it is not our agenda, but is it your agenda, my Republican friends? If it is, come and tell your constituents that is the case. Let this Nation know where you stand. As for we Democrats, we will continue to defend American families from these oil baron bullies who want nothing more than to enrich themselves. We will continue to oppose their efforts to buy our democracy because we work for America, not just rich Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business for today.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators therein being permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. 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.

ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to discuss the opportunity we have as a nation to truly take a leadership role when it comes to responsible development of the Arctic region. As we discuss the great opportunities and the challenges that face us, I think it is fair to say that I will also be expressing some disappointment with the general lack of resources our Federal Government has invested in this important issue, including, just most recently, through the President's annual budget request.

Back in May 2013 the Obama administration released its "National Strategy for the Arctic Region." The national strategy was really designed to set forth this government's strategic priorities for the Arctic—pretty important to recognize what our priorities are going forward. While that might sound impressive—a national strategy for the Arctic region—what we ended up seeing was just an 11-page document, and it is really hard to describe it as strategic. Perhaps a more accurate description is that it was a glorified memo, a general outline, but there were a lot of gaps that needed to be filled.

Recognizing that this is a new area for us in terms of opportunities and, really, for vision, I was prepared to sit back and listen to what the administration had to say and work with them as they built this strategic vision. So when they released their implementation plan for the national strategy in late January, I was looking forward to it. I was looking forward to what had been gathered in meetings not only in Alaska—the State of Alaska is what makes the United States an Arctic nation—but it was broader than just Alaskans' input; it was input from so many of our agencies, so many of our departments. Yet, when the implementation of our national strategy was released, I have to admit that, again, I was underwhelmed.

I made certain the President and members of the administration knew my concerns, and I told him—these were my words when I wrote to him—my concern was that his plan does not offer a vision to make the United States a leader in the Arctic, particularly as we prepare for the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May 2015, nor does it suggest that the Arctic is a national priority. Instead, the plan provides a snapshot of existing Arctic-related programs and projects with numerous assessments to be undertaken but no real path of action.