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## Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. 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:

Eternal God, receive our prayers as incense of thanksgiving for Your goodness to the children of humanity. Lord, thank You for strengthening our Nation, protecting it from evil and guiding its citizens by the unfolding of Your powerful providence. Bless our Senators. Show them solutions to their problems and give them the courage to press on. Protect them from the traps of evil and the snares of transgression. Keep them from even desiring to do wrong as You guide them on the path that leads to life.

We pray in Your wonderful 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.

### HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 266, S. 1846, the flood insurance bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 266, S. 1846, a bill 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 suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1845, which is the unemployment insurance extension.

The filing deadline for all first-degree amendments to the bill is 3 p.m. today, and the deadline for all second-degree amendments to the Reed substitute is 4:30 p.m. today.

There have been some discussions going on. The Republican leader and I have spoken. I have spoken with Republican Senators and Democratic Senators, which I am sure my friend the Republican leader has done. We have one vote scheduled this afternoon at 5:30, and that is on Robert Wilkins to be a circuit court judge. We will see if we are going to go forward with the two additional votes on cloture tonight or put them over to tomorrow. We are not in a position today, neither the Republican leader nor myself, to do anything other than to proceed. If we get something worked out before we have the first vote, then we will maybe set this over for a reasonable period of time. If we can't, we will just have these two votes.

### CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is often said that actions have consequences, and that is an understatement, but in

the Senate inaction also has consequences. My Republican colleagues are very effective at creating gridlock in this body—at preventing the Senate from doing its job. While this type of obstruction may serve Republicans' political purposes, it does not serve this country's purposes generally; that is for sure. It may serve the Republicans' political purposes, but it does not in any way lead to something that is good for the country's purposes.

On Friday I received a letter, as did the Republican leader, from Secretary of State John Kerry. John Kerry is someone who understands the Senate, having served here for a quarter of a century. After a year at the State Department, more than a third of Secretary Kerry's leadership team remains vacant—1 year and it remains vacant. Four of his six under secretaries have yet to be confirmed, and 58 State Department nominees are pending before the Senate. In just that one department, that one cabinet slot, we have 64 spots that are left floating around out there someplace. This is unacceptable. At a time when our Nation needs a robust presence abroad, the Senate is stuck. The State Department cannot afford for a third of its leadership positions to be vacant. It is not good for the State Department, it is not good for our country, and it is not good internationally.

This is what Secretary Kerry said, among other things, in the letter he wrote to us:

It is not an overstatement that today so many critical national security positions are still awaiting confirmation that it is now affecting our ability to do the nonpartisan work of American foreign policy; defend the security of our Nation, promote our values, protect our interests and help our businesses compete overseas, which creates jobs for Americans. Simply stated, the backlog in confirmation of State Department nominees is impacting our national security and weakening America's role in the world.

Mr. President, the Senate's inaction, its failure to carry out its duty to advise and consent, has consequences.

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



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Why are we not moving forward? It is because of obstruction by the Republicans in the Senate.

Under the adept leadership of Chairman MENENDEZ, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is expected to report out at least 31 State Department nominees this week. Many of those nominations were made months ago and returned to the President at the end of the first session of the 113th Congress. Why were they returned? Because of obstruction of the Republicans.

It is incumbent upon the Senate to promptly consider all nominees, and in particular the vital nominees who will protect our national security and our role as a world leader. Unfortunately, Republicans have made it difficult and time consuming to confirm any nominee no matter how essential or how noncontroversial. If the Senate can't even fill its constitutional duties, how can we hope to engage in a robust amendment process?

We waste so much time trying to get simple nominations done. They complain about not having amendments. In this last work period, Mr. President, we spent weeks eating up time that meant nothing to anyone.

The same Republicans who wasted months of the Senate's time last year are now bitterly complaining that the Senate does not spend enough time considering amendments. Every hour Republicans force us to spend watching the clock, waiting to confirm nominees, to vote procedural motions before even beginning debate on legislation, is an hour we could have spent debating and voting on amendments.

We cannot have the extension of emergency unemployment insurance be bogged down by a raft of political amendments. Republicans are so obsessed with taking pot shots at the Affordable Care Act and staging political stunt votes that they are willing to derail a bill that will help 1.4 million out-of-work Americans. We can't allow that. It is unfair.

Still, the complaints of the minority have not fallen on deaf ears.

First my Republican colleague said they would not vote for an extension of unemployment benefits unless it was fully offset. I compromised. It is fully paid for in the bill before this body.

Next my Republican colleagues said they would not vote for this legislation unless it enacted real reforms for the unemployment insurance program. I agreed. That is in the bill before the body.

Now many of my Republican colleagues say they will turn their backs on Americans who have been out of work for months and months unless they have an opportunity to vote on amendments to this bill. Although I wonder what Republicans will demand next, I am willing to do what it takes to protect middle-class workers struggling to find jobs. So reasonable amendments, a reasonable number, relevant amendments, of course we would

be happy to take a look at that. I would be happy to do that. We have Tuesday caucuses every week. I will go over this with my caucus in some detail. But my Republican colleagues can't take yes for an answer. If they insist on swamping this important measure with extraneous political amendments, it will be clear they never wanted to extend unemployment in the first place.

If Republicans are serious about offering relevant amendments to strengthen and improve this bill, I am willing to sit down and talk about it. I am willing to allow votes on these amendments. However, I am not going to allow this legislation to be bogged down, as I have indicated, by meaningless votes or derailed by another doomed crusade to strip millions of Americans of the affordable care they have now. And once Republicans get the amendment votes they want, I hope they will give 1.4 million out-of-work Americans the vote they want and need.

My Republican colleagues should remember that a final vote on this legislation—a vote for middle-class men and women who desperately want to work and desperately need help—is the only vote that really matters.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, my friend the majority leader is talking about the crush of nominations. Of course, the reason we have a crush of nominations is because of the decision of the majority to break the rules of the Senate to change the rules of the Senate last year, which produced the inevitable, entirely predictable consequence of sending an enormous number of nominations back down to the administration at the end of the session.

So the decision of the majority to run roughshod over the minority has a lot of consequences, one of which is pretty clear already: that it didn't streamline the nomination process as it was sold to the minority to do. It only made it more difficult.

On another matter, I would like to say a word about unemployment insurance.

The reason for the holdup should be pretty obvious at this point. Republicans have a lot of good ideas on how to pay for this extension. We also have a lot of proposals for getting at the root of the problem, proposals that would make it easier for folks who are struggling in this economy to actually find stable and fulfilling work or get retrained so they can find good jobs. That is a goal on which I expect we could all agree.

Unfortunately, up until the weekend the majority leader wasn't terribly in-

terested in any of these ideas. He only seemed to want to extend the program without really paying for it, without doing much of anything to help private sector job creation, and without creating opportunities for targeted training that would help folks who are currently receiving unemployment assistance actually find a job.

So I think this is unfortunate. There is clearly no shortage of creative, constructive proposals out there which speak to the underlying problems, which speak to the urgent need to create more stable, good-paying jobs, and which make sure we don't increase our already out-of-control Federal debt. Some of these ideas actually come from Democrats. The Presiding Officer's senior Senator from Connecticut has an idea to create a program that subsidizes employment for low-income Americans so they aren't stuck in neutral while they search for permanent work. This is an idea which actually deserves debate and a vote.

As I have indicated in recent days, the majority leader should give other Senators more of a say in what we do around here, including members of his own conference. So hopefully his comments a few moments ago and over the weekend are a sign that we may be able to work this out in a way that the Senate can function the way it used to, which was that Members were able to actually offer amendments and get votes before we moved to final passage on important legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1845, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

Reid (for Reed) amendment No. 2631, relating to extension and modification of emergency unemployment compensation program.

Reid amendment No. 2632 (to amendment No. 2631), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2633, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2634 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2633) of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2635 (to amendment No. 2634), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### RESTORING DELIBERATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Senator MCCONNELL has made a very important call to restore the Senate as