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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 23, 2015, at 12 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2015

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, strong to save, may this quiet moment prompt us to think thoughts about Your goodness and power throughout this day. May these thoughts keep us faithful and diligent in all our work, motivating us to labor for Your glory.

Lord, inspire our lawmakers to be honorable and generous in their dealing with each other, remembering Your great commandment to love their neighbors as they love themselves.

O God, You have been a refuge for Your people through many generations. Be our fortress in every moment and every need that we face this day. Guide us through the uncertainty and darkness, continually strengthening us for times of testing.

We pray in Your Holy 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, we will vote tonight to bring long-overdue permanent leadership to an agency in urgent need of reform and culture change, and that is the TSA. I wish the White House hadn't waited 6 months to send us a nominee to lead this troubled agency, but now that the administration finally has, we are pleased to see a highly qualified candidate such as Peter Neffenger.

It is never easy to ensure a Senate review process that is appropriately thorough yet necessarily expeditious in the face of so many months of White House delay, but that is just what Chairman THUNE and Chairman JOHNSON achieved with the nominee before us. I thank them both for their good work.

If confirmed this evening, Vice Admiral Neffenger will certainly have a tough job ahead of him. We are all aware of the recent inspector general report that questioned the TSA's ability to meet its security mission without some significant changes. The American people will be counting on Mr. Neffenger to validate the trust their elected representatives place in him tonight by pursuing every necessary reform in the wake of such troubled findings. The Senate appears to

have confidence that he can achieve those goals. There is no doubt the Senate and the American people will be expecting that he will.

TRADE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, when it comes to keeping the American people safe, there are many things Congress can do. Encouraging reform at the TSA is one important step, but so is leading on trade.

President Obama's own Secretary of Defense recently said that the trade legislation before us was as important to him "as another aircraft carrier." This is the Secretary of Defense of the United States who said that the trade legislation before us was as important to him as another aircraft carrier. But he cautioned that "time's running out [to] cement our influence and leadership in the fastest-growing region in the world."

We all know how critical this legislation is for lifting up American workers, American wages, and the American economy as well. We shouldn't let this opportunity for a significant bipartisan achievement slip past us. If we can continue working together in a spirit of trust and if we simply vote the same way we did a couple of weeks ago, we won't miss this opportunity.

I know how important it is—particularly for my friends on the other side of the aisle—to get both TPA and TAA, trade adjustment assistance. That linkage has been acknowledged from the beginning of this process. It is why I set in motion a process last week—filing cloture on the vehicles for both

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



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TPA and TAA so that we get one done followed immediately by the other—that will put both pieces of legislation on the President's desk before the July 4 State work period.

I don't want anyone to think we are getting TPA done this week, with a promise to get TAA done at some other time. The process this week is very clear: We will vote on TPA and then we will vote on TAA. So this is how that will look. Tomorrow, we will begin the process of approving TPA. The next day, we will begin the process of approving TAA, along with the AGOA and preferences measure.

Before the week is out, I intend to go to conference on the Customs bill. This is a bill with broad bipartisan support. Members on both sides want to get it done, and we are going to formally begin the process to complete our work on the Customs bill. So I am committed to concluding work on that conference as quickly as possible. I am sure Members on both sides will hold us to that commitment.

So what does all this mean? It means that with continued bipartisan cooperation, we can ensure that TPA, TAA, and AGOA reach the President's desk this week, and it means we can ensure that the Customs bill is placed on a path to swift approval, too. It was always the goal to ensure that these bills passed Congress in the end. It remains the bipartisan goal today. We are now on the verge of achieving it. With just a little more trust, a little more cooperation, and simply voting consistently, we will get there.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Mr. REID. Madam President, over the past several years there has been a disturbing practice that has become commonplace in the Congress, and sadly it is with no regard for the average American. The Republicans have resolved to govern by staggering from one ludicrous crisis to another crisis—one today, one next week. Unless the Republican leader acts, in just 5 days, for example, we will see the consequences of another manufactured crisis. On June 30, the charter for the Export-Import Bank is set to expire. This is serious business. This institution creates jobs by providing loans and loan guarantees to foreign customers who purchase American exports. This year alone, the Ex-Im Bank supports 165,000 American jobs—165,000 jobs that allow American workers to earn a living. These jobs cost taxpayers zero—nothing. In fact, this Bank saves the American taxpayers money. In the last 10 years, the Bank has returned more than \$7 billion to the U.S. Treasury.

With the threat of this Bank closing—other countries have similar insti-

tutions, such as China. People are going to China and other countries to get their loan guarantees and buy products—not from America but from countries where those banks will take care of their loans. This is so sad.

Despite the positive benefits the Bank provides for our economy and thousands of Americans, Republicans have decided that reauthorization is not a priority. The Republican leader has openly opposed reauthorization of this important Bank. I repeat, there are 165,000 jobs as we speak, and they are American jobs.

Quoting the senior Senator from Kentucky: “I personally think the Ex-Im Bank has outlived its usefulness and ought to go away.” Really? The Bank should be put out of business? I don't think so. This resource supports thousands of jobs for Americans and could not possibly have outgrown its usefulness. But in the 6 months since the Republicans have taken control of Congress, this mindset has governed their decisions. Sensible programs that benefit average Americans and strengthen our economy have taken a backseat to special interests. We can see that by what is going on in this body this week.

Just as he has on countless issues so far this Congress, the Republican leader is intentionally ignoring deadlines that are obvious—these deadlines are obvious weeks and even months ahead of time—and offering no plan or solution to these pertinent issues facing our Nation. Today, we are talking about two of those—surface transportation, and I have talked about the Export-Import Bank. No plan. No solution. No urgency. That is how Republicans have chosen to govern.

This misguided policy is not governing at all. It is all about crisis management and doing a very poor job. This crisis management could be avoided by not playing dodgeball with issues important to our country.

There are less than 5 days until thousands of jobs are threatened for no apparent reason. The senior Senator from Kentucky should put his partisan agenda aside, choose American jobs over political benefits, and allow a vote to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. This measure would pass. It would pass overwhelmingly because Republican Senators want this to pass also. So if a vote were allowed on this, it would get a sizeable majority.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Senate also faces another looming deadline manufactured by Republican leadership. At the end of July, Republican funding for the Federal highway program will expire. In 5 days, we will lose the Export-Import Bank. In just a few weeks, we are going to lose the highway program.

Our Nation's roads, bridges, highways, and transit systems are in des-

perate need of repair. Some 64,000 bridges are structurally deficient. This isn't 6,400; it is 64,000 bridges. Fifty percent of our roads are dangerously in need of repair. Still, Republicans in Congress have refused to work with Democrats in making an adequate long-term investment in our country's surface transportation programs.

Delaying and stalling has become their normal practice. Republicans are content to take a page straight out of their playbook. That playbook is called “Republican Manufactured Crisis Playbook.” They do this day after day. They just go to that playbook that has been used over and over again. We have seen it before, and we are seeing it again with highways. We are seeing it with Ex-Im Bank. Instead of working with Democrats to create long-term solutions to our Nation's woes, the Republican leader will wait until the deadline is imminent—and on highways, we can see it coming—and he will offer another short-term extension to stave off a disaster of his own making. That is unacceptable. We have already had 33 Republican short-term fixes—33. We don't need a 34th.

Governing by crisis is a reckless strategy that leaves the well-being of Americans and our economy hanging in the balance. The Republican leader should abandon this policy and stop dragging our country from one crisis to another crisis. Republicans can get started today by bringing up reauthorization of the Ex-Im Bank for a vote before the charter expires in just a few days. It will pass. Certainly he could focus on long-term, bipartisan reauthorization of the Federal highway program, which, as I have indicated, expires in a few weeks.

The American people should not be forced to endure manufactured crises at the hands of Republican leadership. I urge the Republican leadership to change course and govern with the well-being of the American people in mind.

Madam President, will the Chair announce the business of the day.

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 until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Utah.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator from Florida be given 5 minutes and that I immediately follow him with my remarks.