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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.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.

Active and intervening God, we trust in You. Nothing can stop Your plan and Your purposes will prevail. Bless our lawmakers. Guide them on the right path so that they will be instruments of Your peace. Use them as salt and light to strengthen our Nation and world. Forgive them when they forget that You are still on Your throne and that the hearts of humanity are in Your hands. Help them to remember that Your power is far above any conceivable command, authority or control.

Lord, as our lawmakers strive to contribute to building a better world, bless those who support them in their work. Help us all to trust You without wavering.

We pray in Your great 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 (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1881 AND H.J. RES. 61

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill and a joint resolution due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the measures by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1881) to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the measures on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the measures will be placed on the calendar.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, late nights, vigorous legislating, and sometimes unpredictable outcomes may make some reach for the aspirin, but these are the hallmarks of a functioning Congress.

The push-and-pull between different parties, different Members, and different Chambers is all part of the democratic rhythm. That is especially true when you are talking about a measure as complicated and consequential as a multiyear highway bill.

I am pleased to see Republicans and Democrats continuing to hold together to pass the Senate's bipartisan highway legislation. We are on the verge of scoring another important victory for the American people.

Once the Senate completes its work on the bill, the House of Representatives will begin its work on a multiyear measure as well. A multiyear bill is now our joint goal. That is important for our country. We know it represents the best way to provide State and local governments with

the kind of certainty they need to focus on longer term road and bridge projects.

Here is how Kentucky's main transportation advocacy group, Kentuckians for Better Transportation, put it: A longer term bill would "provide an opportunity to plan for and implement projects that are important to Kentucky's citizens and Kentucky's economy—and to every other state in the nation."

We will conference the legislation we pass with what the House passes and then send a unified bill to President Obama. In the meantime, we will work with our friends in the House to pass a measure that will give them the space they need to develop a multiyear highway bill. It is also a measure that would deliver some important relief to our veterans by covering unfunded requirements the administration failed to budget for. It would also extend a helping hand to heroes who need it.

I can't see a reason any Senator would vote against it. We will take up that bill once the House sends it to us. We will continue working in the interim to finish our own bipartisan, multiyear highway bill—a bill that is fiscally responsible and will not raise taxes by a penny.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, the ongoing revelations about Planned Parenthood are more than just disturbing. They literally shock the conscience. A Democratic colleague called them "very troubling," "extremely troubling," and "highly troubling."

Next week, every Member of his party will have a chance to join us in reaffirming the Senate's commitment to genuine compassion and to women's health. We introduced legislation last night that would ensure taxpayer dollars for women's health are spent on women's health, not a scandal-plagued political lobbying giant.

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



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It is a simple choice: Senators can either vote to protect women's health or they can vote to protect subsidies for a political group mired in scandal.

I know Planned Parenthood's entrenched lobbyists have been close allies of Democrats in recent years, but this moment calls for Senators to rise higher and to think bigger.

Let's not filibuster women's health in order to protect special subsidies for one scandal-plagued political organization. Why don't we join together instead to bring something positive to the American people from a terrible situation.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican legislation to attack women's health is disguised as a way to help women. We have to look long and hard to find those people who are being taken care of across the country today because of programs that allow them to go to someone who knows what they are talking about when they are concerned about their fertility, they are concerned about birth control, and a myriad of other problems that happen as women go through life.

The Republican bill pretends to be for women's health, but it would prohibit Federal funds to go to an organization that is the health care backbone for American women during their lives. In fact, it is the only health care that a significant number of women get. For about 30 percent of women, that is their health care. You can disguise this by giving fancy titles to the legislation any way you want. This is an attack on women's health.

It is stunning to me that the 16 people who are running for President are out there going after immigration. They are going after not only immigration generally but specifically. These young men and women who came to America—and the face of this picture in Nevada is a woman by the name of Astrid Silva, who came here as a little girl with her mother in a boat across the Rio Grande River with her little doll and her rosary beads that she didn't understand—a little, little girl. She knew no other country. What do the Republicans want to do? They want to deport Astrid Silva, a woman who finally because of the courageous action of President Obama—because Republicans refused to do anything on immigration—was allowed to get her driver's license, to fly in an airplane for the first time, to be able to go to the airport without fear of being arrested, and they want to do away with that. But that is not enough.

Most of them want to privatize Social Security; they want to change it in some significant way. It is led by one

President's son, one President's brother who basically said we have to change Medicare, as he was speaking to the Koch brothers.

We are working, trying to get the Ex-Im Bank that affects the lives of 165,000 working Americans. Most of the Republicans want to get rid of that. Now the program is out of sync. It has expired.

The environment. Don't worry about it; it is fine. The icecaps are melting in the Arctic. Don't worry about it. We have the worst fires in the history of Alaska because of climate change. Don't worry about it; it is only 5 million acres that burned this summer so far. The droughts are affecting all of America but especially the West. It is so bad in the West that in the Sierras there are bears that don't even hibernate anymore. It is not cold enough. In New Hampshire, moose are dying. About one-third of them are dead because of fleas and ticks. Why? Because it is not cold enough to kill them anymore. These little pests are ravaging these huge animals.

I could go on, but I am going to stop, other than to say, in addition to all of that, now they are after women's health.

I hope they understand the pretty posters and the fancy words—no matter how you package it—are an attack on women. Indirectly, it is an attack on my daughter, my wife, and my grandchildren directly. I should say my granddaughters directly. I have a few of them.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Constitution is very clear. It says the Government cannot spend a penny without an appropriations law—a law dealing with appropriations.

I am so fortunate, when I came to the Senate, I became a member of the Appropriations Committee. I loved working on the Appropriations Committee. Under John Stennis from Mississippi, Robert Byrd from West Virginia, and Dan Inouye from Hawaii, it was a wonderful process.

I have this job. I got off the committee, which was very hard for me to do because I loved that committee. We worked very hard every year to fund every one of those 12 appropriations bills. We did it because we were legislators. We compromised. We worked together to fund this government, but all of that is gone.

Republicans do not work with us on appropriations bills. We don't do them anymore. This season of Republicanism is more than I can hardly understand. I certainly don't appreciate it. No job is more important in the Constitution than exercising the power of the purse. That is our responsibility, but that has been taken away from us by convoluted methods.

I know my Republican colleagues will get up and say we have to do something about this terrible debt. Seated

next to me in this august Chamber of the Senate is a man who is the senior Senator from Illinois. I have said this before, and I will say it again. The reason I mention his name is because I knew we needed to do something about the debt. I arranged a long trip—my first job as leader—to Central and South America, and I took Judd Gregg, a Republican from New Hampshire, who is an expert on the finances of this government, and a Democratic counterpart, Kent Conrad, who is just as good. They worked on that airplane side by side for 14 hours and worked up a plan. What they came up with was so brilliant. They said: What we are going to do is have a plan just like the base closings.

The base closing commissions that were set up—we did two rounds of them—got rid of military bases in the country that we were trying to get rid of prior to World War II. We were able to do that, and as a result, we saved the country billions and billions of dollars.

They introduced legislation that said that we are going to have a commission appointed. There will be legislators, and there will be people the President appoints and people from the outside. They will report to us, and there will be no filibusters, no amendments, and we will have an up-or-down vote. It was a great piece of legislation.

When I brought that legislation to the floor, seven Republican Senators who cosponsored the legislation refused to vote for it, and we weren't able to move forward on it. Now I get to my friend from Illinois. I had the ability to appoint three Members of my caucus to be on the Bowles-Simpson Commission. The President did that because what Judd Gregg and Kent Conrad tried to do failed. To his credit, he did that. I needed a liberal. My friend and I are not afraid to use that term—a progressive, if that makes people feel better. He didn't want to do that. He did it because it was the best thing for this institution. He sat through days and days of hearings and became a believer that we had to do something about the debt. He voted for something that Republicans didn't vote for—to do something about the debt.

I say to the Presiding Officer and to everybody within the sound of my voice: We have done something since then. We have reduced the debt of this country by \$4 trillion. That doesn't mean we don't have a lot more to do. But what virtually all economists tell us is that we are at a point now where we have to start spending some money.

My friend from California has worked hard on this highway bill. It was hard for her to do that because the Republicans weren't allowing her to come up with any new revenue.

Anyway, my point is this: The Republicans are failing their most important job, and that is helping us come up with some spending programs. We called on the Republicans to get serious about budgeting. They have refused. We have pleaded with them to