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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Eternal God, who calls us to a life rooted in faith, immerse our lawmakers in the wisdom of Your Spirit. Guide them with Your insights, enabling them to be salt and light in the world, living with humility and integrity. As they strive to be a force for good, direct them around the pitfalls that prevent them from fulfilling Your purposes. Inspire them to rely on Your love as they seek to faithfully serve You and country.

Lord, nurture within us all a godly sincerity and a daily reliance upon Your strength, wisdom, and love.

We pray in Your strong 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. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, 77 Senators voted to advance legislation that would keep the government funded through the fall at the bipartisan level agreed to by both parties. The bill hardly represents my preferred method for funding the government, but it is now the most viable

way forward after Democrats' extreme action forced our country into this situation.

Let's remember how we got here. Democrats knew the American people were unlikely to buy their desire for more bureaucracy and more debt, but they figured they might in a crisis. So Democrats pursued a deliberate strategy of blocking government funding all year in order to force our Nation to the brink. Democrats said they would block government funding legislation they had even voted for in committee. Some of these bills came out of committee overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis. Democrats said they would block government funding of legislation they had actually praised in their press releases when these bills emerged from the Appropriations Committee with large majorities. Democrats even voted repeatedly to block the bill that funds our military, to repeatedly block the bill that funds medical care and pay raises for our troops. That is how far Democrats are willing to go—at a time of daunting international threats—in order to tear down the normal government funding process and force our country into this situation that we now face.

Well, I am not prepared to let the Democrats lead us over the cliff. The bill before us would keep the government open; it would allow time for cooler heads to prevail. That is why I joined 76 other Senators and voted to advance it yesterday.

But, look, obviously the best way to fund the government is by first passing a budget and then passing appropriations bills. The Senate also passed a budget. The Senate is prepared to pass appropriations legislation too. All that is needed is for Democrats to drop these endless filibusters.

We know that nearly all these funding bills are bipartisan. We know that Democrats and have supported and praised them. And with the CR behind us, we can turn back to the work of

trying to pass these appropriations bills.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2089

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2089) to provide for investment in clean energy, to empower and protect consumers, to modernize energy infrastructure, to cut pollution and waste, to invest in research and development, and for other purposes.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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



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S6983

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I am reminded of that famous line from "Cool Hand Luke": "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

What we have here in Congress is a failure to legislate, a failure to exert congressional authority. What we have here is a failure to use our leverage. What we have here is a failure to use the power of the purse.

Conservatives across America are happy, and rightly so. We were told that when we took over Congress, when Republicans were elected to Congress, that things would be different: that if voters put us in charge, we would right the ship, we would stop the deficits. And here we are with another continuing resolution.

What is a continuing resolution? It is a continuation of the deficit spending of the past. It is a continuation of the waste. It is a continuation of the duplication. What is a continuing resolution? It is a steaming pile of the same old, same old.

Let me be clear: A continuing resolution is not a good thing. It is more of the status quo. It is a warmed-over version of yesterday's failures. It is an abdication of congressional authority. It is an abdication of congressional power.

Let's at least be honest. With a continuing resolution, no waste will be cut, no spending will be cut, no regulations will be stopped, and the debt will continue to mount.

We are told that we cannot win, that we need 60 votes to defund anything, but perhaps there is an alternate future where courage steps up and saves the day.

All spending is set to expire automatically. This is the perfect time to turn the tables, to tell the other side that they will need 60 votes to affirmatively spend any money. See, it doesn't have to be 60 votes to stop things. All spending will expire, and only those programs for which we can get 60 votes should go forward.

What would that mean? That would mean an elimination of waste, an elimination of duplication, an elimination of bad things that we spend money on.

If we had the courage, we could use the Senate's supermajority rules to stop wasteful spending. If we had the courage, we could force the other side to come up with 60 votes to fund things like Planned Parenthood. The budget is loaded with nonsense and waste.

Some will say our job is to govern, to preside. But to preside over what? To preside over a mountain of new debt? To be the same as the other side—to continue to add debt after debt? Our debt will consume us if we continue to preside over the status quo. It is as if we are on the Titanic and just simply reshuffling the chairs. A continuing resolution continues the wasteful spending of money.

I can go on and on about what we are wasting money on. I will tell of a few.

We spent \$300,000 last year studying whether Japanese quail are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. I think we could poll the audience and save money. These things should never have had money spent on them, but if we do a continuing resolution, it will continue.

We spent several hundred thousand dollars studying whether we can relieve stress in Vietnamese villagers by having them watch American television reruns. I don't know about you, but I don't want one penny of taxpayer dollars going to this ridiculous stuff. If we continue, if we pass a continuing resolution, no reform will occur.

We spent \$800,000 in the last couple of years developing a televised cricket league for Afghanistan—\$800,000. Do you know how many people have a television in Afghanistan? One in 10,000 people. And I don't care if they all have TVs, it is ridiculous that our money, which we don't even have—we have to borrow it from China to send it to Afghanistan. If we pass a continuing resolution, we are agreeing to continue this nonsense.

We spent \$150,000 last year on yoga classes for Federal employees. So not only do we pay them nearly 1.5 times as much as private-sector employees, we give them yoga classes. If we pass a continuing resolution, this goes on and on. Nothing will change. The status quo will continue, and we will continue to spend ourselves into oblivion.

We spent \$250,000 last year inviting 24 kids from Pakistan to go to space camp in Alabama. We borrow money from China to send it to Pakistan.

It is crazy, it is ridiculous, and it should stop. We have the power to stop

it. Congress has the power to spend money or not spend money, and yet we roll over and we say: It must continue; we don't have the votes to stop it. Nonsense. The other side doesn't have the votes to continue the spending if we would stand up and challenge them.

We spent \$500,000 last year or the year before developing a menu for when we colonize Mars. We sent a bunch of college students to Hawaii to study this. We paid \$5,000 apiece. They got 2 weeks all expenses paid in Hawaii. And do you know what a bunch of college kids came up with? Pizza. This is where your money is going.

I could go on, hundreds and hundreds of programs. If we do not exert the power of the purse, this continues.

We should attach to all 12 individual spending bills—not glommed together—we should attach hundreds of instructions, thousands of instructions. Now, some of the media have said: Well, those would be riders on appropriations bills. Exactly. That is the power of the purse. If you object to the President writing regulations without our authority, Congress should defund the regulations. Congress should instruct him on ObamaCare, on what we object to. Congress should instruct him that we don't want money spent on Planned Parenthood. Hundreds and hundreds of instructions should be written into every bill and passed and sent to him.

Would we win all of these battles? Do we have the power to win every battle and defund everything we want? No. But do you know what we start out with? Our negotiating position right now is, we start out with defunding nothing. Why don't we start out with a negotiating position that we defund everything that is objectionable? All the wasteful spending, all the duplicative spending, let's defund it all. If there has to be a negotiation, let's start from defunding it all and see where we get, but it would take courage because we would have to let spending expire. If we are not willing to let the spending expire and start anew, we have no leverage. The power of the purse is there only if you have courage. We must have the courage of convictions to say enough is enough, that the debt is a greater threat to us than letting spending expire.

Now, several will report on this speech and say: Oh, he wants to shut down government. No, I don't. I just want to exert the power of the purse, and that means spending must expire. I am all for renewing the spending, but let's renew only the spending that makes sense. We have the power of the purse if we choose to exert it. Look at the mountain of debt. Look at the debt that continues to be added up. We have not been doing our job.

The way we are supposed to spend money in Congress is 12 individual appropriations bills. They have passed out of committee. Why aren't they presented on the floor? The Democrats have filibustered the only one presented. Let's present every one of