



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

No. 142

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.

Lord, through all the generations, You have been our refuge. We live our lives sheltered by Your love.

Enable our Senators to find hope in the knowledge that You are indeed in such control of our world that no weapon formed against us will prosper. Deliver our lawmakers from judgmental attitudes that prompt them to think about others in any way contrary to Your love.

Lord, transform us all by the power of Your Grace. We praise You and give You thanks because nothing can separate us from Your love.

We pray in Your compassionate 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.

TRIBUTE TO ED WHITFIELD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday Representative ED WHITFIELD announced that he will retire at the end of this term. ED has served the First District of Kentucky for more than 20 years. He will be missed in the Capitol when he retires. It is clear that

his leadership will be missed in Kentucky too. Our troops at Fort Campbell will miss it. The workers at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant will miss it. Kentucky's countless coal families—hard-working Kentuckians he never failed to stand up for—will certainly miss it as well.

ED was rightly considered a western Kentucky trailblazer. He became the first Republican elected to represent that district in 1994. Our party, the Republican Party, never held that district going back to the Civil War. It was an enormous breakthrough. ED has worked hard and delivered for the Commonwealth in the two decades since. He will leave behind a record of service and accomplishment.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate will complete its work on the continuing resolution today.

We remember watching our Democratic colleagues swerve from crisis to crisis when they ran the Senate. Perhaps that is just all Democrats have known, but it is not right for them to again force America into another short-term funding situation such as this.

We are working to change the culture around here. Our determination remains to get the Senate back to normal, with a functional appropriations process. That is why for the first time in 6 years the Senate actually passed a budget. That is why for the first time in 6 years the Senate actually passed through committee the dozen appropriations bills necessary to properly fund the government.

Now that the CR appears to be on track, we can turn back to the last step in the Senate's normal appropriations process; that is, getting the funding bills passed on the floor. Democrats have blocked them all this year as part of some arbitrary strategy to force our Nation to the brink. They certainly

succeeded in doing that, but I think the American people are ready for our colleagues to finally get serious and get back to work. Americans are ready to see Democrats start supporting, not blocking, the very bipartisan funding legislation Democrats previously voted for and bragged about in press releases. Our colleagues will have that opportunity this week when we turn back to the regular appropriations process.

It is true that moving forward will require Democrats to definitively turn the page on years of bad habits and dysfunction, but it is the right thing to do for our country. We will see if they are ready to do so later this week.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GRIDLOCK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader is reciting facts that are not real. Everyone knows what has happened in this body and in the House of Representatives the last few years—gridlock. Republicans in the House cannot agree with Republicans in the Senate, and it appears Republicans in the Senate cannot agree among themselves. So for my friend to talk about how great things are going is not reality.

We need to start working together, not apart. And, working with Republicans, we find it is very difficult to develop any kind of partnerships, as we always did in the past until Republican leaders took over the Congress.

I would hope my friends the Republicans would understand we have to start doing things to help the country. We are in the situation we are in. It is September 30. The country will be out of money in just a few hours. Why do we wait until the last minute and then only provide enough money to get us to the first part of December?

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



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We have received word that the House Speaker is going to resign. Why? He is resigning because everyone knows he cannot deal with the people he has to deal with in the House. He has tried very hard, and it hasn't worked.

I would hope my friend the Republican leader would start talking reality, not come in and boast about how great the country is doing under Republican leadership. We have gotten nothing done under the Republican leadership.

I am reminded of what Albert Einstein said when he defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. That is what we have been doing here. We have votes on everything, everyone knowing what the results are going to be. The latest episode was—what a waste of our time—we had a vote here to defund Planned Parenthood. It didn't even get a majority of the Republicans—well, it got a majority of the Republicans; it certainly didn't get a majority of the Senate. It didn't get a majority of the Senate and certainly didn't get 60 votes, which they were trying to do—revoting on things, always knowing the results are going to be the same. It appears that Albert Einstein had a few organizations in mind when he gave this definition of “insanity,” and one of them, as he looked forward, would be this Republican Senate we have.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the original Hall of Representatives, which is now called National Statuary Hall, there is a beautiful clock that stands over the Chamber's doorway. The clock and its adjoining sculpture depict Clio, the Greek muse of history, watching over the House of Representatives. The meaning of the clock and statue are clear: History will bear witness to all we do in Congress.

For the last 28 years—almost three decades—James Billington has served as the Librarian of Congress. He has been our Clio, ensuring that the annals of American history are complete and available to everyone.

Dr. Billington came to the Library of Congress in 1987. What a remarkable résumé—vaedictorian at Princeton University, a Rhodes Scholar, and he earned his doctorate from Oxford College. Following his graduation from Oxford, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After his service in the Army, he taught history—first at Harvard and then at Princeton—for 16 years. During that time Dr. Billington became one of the foremost scholars of Russia.

I had the good fortune of being able to travel with Dr. Billington to the Soviet Union. It was like having an encyclopedia with you. It was wonderful to travel to this country with which we had been involved in a Cold War for so many years and to have a scholar with us to give us insight everywhere we

went and on everybody we talked to. He has written a number of important scholarly works on Russian history, culture, and politics.

In 1973 James Billington came to Washington, DC, to lead the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a prestigious organization. As director, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. He served as their director for 14 years before coming over here to become the director of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Billington has done extraordinary work during his tenure at the Library of Congress. He has brought the Library into the 21st century. Dr. Billington doubled the size of the Library's analog collections from 85 million to 160 million. He oversaw the creation of the Library of Congress's online portal, making hundreds of millions of documents, books, and material available to the American public.

Using his relationship with Russian scholars, Dr. Billington founded the Open World Leadership Forum. This important forum creates dialogue and cultural exchanges between U.S. and Russian leaders. James Billington has accompanied 10 congressional delegations to Russia. I was fortunate to be on one of them, as I just said. In June 1988, he accompanied the President and Mrs. Reagan to the Soviet summit in Moscow, and I am confident President Reagan and his staff depended on James Billington's outstanding mind.

Dr. Billington helped establish the congressionally mandated Veterans History Project, which collects and preserves first-person accounts from U.S. veterans dating back to World War I. Dr. Billington helped create the National Book Festival, which brings thousands of authors and readers to the National Mall every year.

In every way imaginable, Dr. James Billington has made the Library of Congress and, by extension, the United States better—a better library, a better country. As he embarks on a well-deserved retirement after 28 years of exemplary service, I wish him the very best. I have no doubt Dr. Billington will enjoy time with his wife Marjorie—a lovely woman I have come to know and admire greatly—and their 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

James Billington, thank you for a job well done. We will all miss you.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have never been a sentimental person—I have never tried to be one—but today I can't help but think back to a time when keeping the government open and funded wasn't a last-minute exercise. Looking at the clock now, we are almost 14 hours away from what could have been another Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. This kind of brinkmanship is totally unnecessary. Although we will likely avert a shutdown tonight, Republicans brought us dangerously close to a shutdown.

This continuing resolution only funds our government through December 11, as I said earlier. That means that within the coming weeks, we need to negotiate with Republicans to keep our government open.

Yesterday Senator McCONNELL finally took Democrats up on our call to begin budget negotiations. I welcome that, and I welcome Senator McCONNELL to the table. We should have started this process months ago, but better late than never, so I am pleased he has come around.

Lifting the sequester has been one of my top priorities for years, and I am hopeful that we can finally achieve this key Democratic goal. Just take what it has done in the past—just take one entity. The National Institutes of Health lost almost \$2 billion and they have never gotten it back. It has been devastating to the most prestigious, important medical research facility in the world. That is what sequestration did.

This time around, we have to do better than just keeping the Federal Government operating by a continuing resolution. We have to stop devastating sequester cuts from hitting our military and our middle class. Even the Republican leader agrees, it appears, because a week or 10 days ago he said: “We are inevitably going to end up in negotiations that will crack the Budget Control Act once again.” And I say hallelujah.

Here we are, ready to negotiate months before the December 11 deadline. After all, that was the original intent of sequestration—to force Democrats and Republicans to the negotiating table. That should be easy to do. We hate sequestration, and I know there are a significant number of Republicans who don't like it. I have heard Senator GRAHAM, and I have heard Senator MCCAIN give speeches in committees and publicly about how terrible it is. So let's get rid of it for the good of the country. This is a so-called no-brainer.

Let's work together—not in December—to repeal the sequester caps, but let's work now to repeal the caps and build a long-term, bipartisan funding bill. Then we can turn our attention to the other matters that deserve our immediate attention, such as the debt ceiling.

We can't put off the debt ceiling much longer. I don't know the exact date when we are going to run out of money, but I am sure it is going to be sometime before Thanksgiving. We all know that in a matter of weeks, unless we act, the United States will lose its ability to pay its bills. And if you think shutting the government down is bad, which I do, that pales in comparison to the government of the United States defaulting on all of our debts. The consequences would be dire and the fallout would be felt around the world.