

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, if any, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the New START treaty. Roll-call votes are expected to occur throughout the day in relation to amendments to the treaty. The managers of this bill, Senator KERRY and Senator LUGAR, are two of our most experienced Members, and they will do an outstanding job of managing this legislation.

The current continuing resolution expires Saturday at midnight, so we need to take action to consider a funding resolution sometime in the next few days.

Just an update on the schedule: The tax package which we passed yesterday is now in the House. They are going to consider that very likely today. We have the omnibus or the continuing resolution we have to deal with in the near future because, as I have indicated, the funding expires at midnight on Saturday.

The DREAM Act is something we need to work on. It is an extremely important piece of legislation allowing young men and women to join the military. If they serve 2 years in the military, they would be eligible to get their green cards. It also allows them to continue their education. It is an extremely important piece of legislation.

We have the 9/11 health matter; we need to reconsider that. We hope we can move forward on that matter. There are thousands of people who are desperately ill who need to be helped as a result of the terrorist attack that took place on 9/11.

Yesterday the House passed don't ask, don't tell, and we are going to have to deal with that in some way.

We have nominations, including that of Jim Cole, the Deputy Attorney General, we have been trying for several months now to get cleared—that second ranking person in the entire Justice Department. It seems to me we are having trouble getting even a vote on this individual. So that is going to have to be resolved before we leave. It is extremely important we do that.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

TREATY WITH RUSSIA ON MEASURES FOR FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following treaty which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Treaty Calendar No. 7, Treaty with Russia on measures for further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I want the American people to see something. This is the bill the majority would have us pass, this Omnibus appropriations bill. It is 2,000 pages long. I think the American people should think back to this time a year ago—last December—when the Democrats did the very same thing. At that point, it was a 2,700-page health care bill because, frankly, they didn't want us to see what was in it. Only afterwards did we find out about the "Cornhusker kickback," the "Louisiana purchase," and all the rest.

This is eerily familiar to anyone who remembers the health care debate. We even have snow in the forecast, which is reminiscent of last year. Last year we voted on health care in a blizzard—the 2,700-page health care bill in the middle of a blizzard.

This bill is so enormous it took the Government Printing Office 2 days to print it. It spends more than \$½ billion a page. Let's take a look at it again.

Here is the bill. It spends—right at 2,000 pages in this bill—it spends \$½ billion a page. It has more than \$½ billion in it for the Democratic health care bill we passed last year, the 2,700-page bill that looked pretty much like this. It has \$½ billion in it for that health care bill we passed last year.

An ever-growing number of Americans looking at that health care bill would like for us to repeal it, not fund it. This is exactly the kind of thing the American people voted against last November—just this kind of thing. We had a referendum on November 2 on how the American people felt about what we have been doing for the last 2 years, and right at the top of the list was the 2,700-page health care bill.

Frankly, it is just unbelievable. Just a few weeks after the voters told us they don't want us rushing major pieces of complicated, costly, far-reaching legislation through Congress, we get this 2,000-page bill. They want to ram this gigantic, trillion-dollar bill through Congress, and they are using, once again, the Christmas break as an inducement to vote for it.

Look, we all know this is not the way to legislate. Americans expect more

from Congress and they demanded more on election day. That is why today I am introducing this clean, one-page continuing resolution that would operate the government through February 18. So we have a choice. We can pass this 2,000-page bill spending \$½ billion a page, or we can do this one-page, clean continuing resolution through February 18 of next year. That is the choice we have.

Once the new Congress is sworn in, we will have a chance to pass a less expensive bill, free of this kind of wasteful spending. Until then, we need to take a step back and respect the will of the voters.

I think the message was pretty clear last November. One pundit referred to it as a restraining order. In other words: Quit doing what you have been doing. Here we are 1 month after the election attempting to pass this 2,000-page bill when we could pass a one-pager that would simply continue the government through February 18.

So we are going to have an opportunity to do this. I hope it makes sense on a bipartisan basis, this one-page continuing resolution until February 18, as an alternative to this 2,000-page monstrosity that spends \$½ billion a page. I don't think there is any question it is the right thing to do, and I hope my colleagues decide in the end that is the direction we ought to take. I am going to introduce this, and I just wanted to highlight it for my colleagues.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

JIM BUNNING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I know there are others on the Senate floor seeking to speak, but I wish to bid farewell to one of our colleagues. Few people can say they have had the same range of experience and successes in life as Senator JIM BUNNING. In fact, there isn't even another Major Leaguer who can say he struck out Ted Williams three times in one game. JIM accomplished that notable feat in just his second year in the majors.

Thirty-nine years after that, he had become the only member of the Baseball Hall of Fame to serve in Congress. For the past 12 years, I have been honored to work alongside this remarkable American in the Senate. We followed different paths in life, but we sure have deep love for Kentucky and its people. It has been my honor over the years to work closely with JIM to advance our common goals.

So today I wish to say a few words about my good friend as we honor his remarkable life and his remarkable service.

JIM was born and raised in Southgate, KY, and it wouldn't surprise anybody to learn he excelled in school and in sports growing up. He played baseball as a teenager at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, but it was for his skills as a basketball player that would earn him an athletic scholarship to Xavier University.

Baseball interrupted his college education, but at his father's insistence,