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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of light and glory, bend Your ears to hear our prayers. Lord, deep inside we long to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Give our lawmakers the wisdom to discover Your purposes and the courage to obey Your commands. Lord, teach them to promptly make right decisions and to resist the temptation to waste the currency of the faith and trust of the American people. As they follow Your providential leading, may our Senators strive to be instruments of Your glory. Use them, Lord, to do Your will on Earth even as it is done in Heaven. Into each dark and trying hour, send the illumination of Your mercy and grace.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 4, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS 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. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the disabilities treaty. The time until noon will be equally divided and controlled between Senators KERRY and LUGAR, the managers of this treaty, or their designees.

At noon there will be a rollcall vote on the Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I have a number of requests. We don't do treaties often, and our requests from Senators on both sides of the aisle have suggested, and I think they are right, that because this is a treaty, the votes will take place from our desk today. Everyone should be on notice, they should be here, and we will vote from our desks.

Following the vote, the Senate will recess to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

Additional votes on the National Defense Authorization Act are expected during today's session.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6429

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told there is a bill, H.R. 6429, due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6429) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to promote innovation, investment, and research in the United States, to eliminate the diversity immigrant program, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection is heard.

The bill will be placed in the calendar.

FISCAL CLIFF

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it has been almost 3 weeks since we all met with the President to avert that fiscal cliff we hear so much about. Yesterday, after weeks of delay, and as the days dwindle and taxes are set to go up for millions of families and businesses, Republicans in the House finally showed up at the negotiating table.

Now we know why they have been holding their cards so close to their vests. Their proposal would raise taxes on millions of middle-class families. Their plan is to raise \$800 billion in revenue by eliminating popular tax deductions and credits that would reach deep into the pockets of middle-class families. Republicans are so intent on protecting low tax rates for millionaires and billionaires, they are willing to sacrifice middle-class families' economic security to do so.

In the first year, unless we do something, middle-class families; that is, people making less than \$250,000 a year, will get an average of \$2,200 in additional tax, taxes they will have to pay.

Their proposal that we received yesterday was short on specifics, but we do know from independent analysis that it is impossible to raise enough revenue to make a dent in the deficit

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



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