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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, December 7, 2012, at 11 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2012

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of wonder, beyond all majesty, You alone are worthy of our praise. Stay with us, bringing Your grace and gladness to brighten our lives. Lord, remove our sins from us and cleanse us with Your spirit, emancipating us from fears about what tomorrow may hold.

Continue to direct the steps of our lawmakers, keeping them from eleventh-hour decisions that bring unintended negative consequences. Remind them that the cost of indecision may be much higher than they anticipate.

Purge them of the things that increase discord, that in unity they may serve You with faithfulness. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 6, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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 be in a period of morning business until 11:45 today. During that period of time, Senators will be allowed to speak up to 10 minutes each. It is certainly not mandatory, but we would like that time to be used for speeches of our retiring Senators.

At 11:45 a.m., the Senate will move to executive session to consider the Walker and Berg nominations, both district judges from Florida and Michigan, respectively.

At approximately 12:10 p.m., there will be up to three rollcall votes: first on passage of the Russia trade bill, and

then on confirmation of the Walker and Berg nominations. We expect only two rollcall votes as we hope the Berg nomination will be confirmed by voice.

MIDDLE-CLASS TAX CUT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we Democrats have been saying for more than 4 months it is time for the House to pass a middle-class tax cut, which we approved here in the Senate in July. As the days until the country goes over the fiscal cliff tick by, more and more Republicans have joined our chorus. They realize the Republican leaders' unwillingness to compromise sooner has put them in a real bind. So reasonable Republicans are asking their House leadership to allow a vote on the Senate-passed legislation. What was once a trickle has become more of a flood.

Last week, Republican Representative TOM COLE said it was time to give middle-class families certainty that taxes won't go up by \$2,200, on average, on January 1.

Then TIM SCOTT, Republican, a conservative Republican from South Carolina, admitted the Senate's middle-class tax cut would surely pass the House since it will take only 26 moderate Republican votes to ensure passage.

I don't agree with columnist David Brooks—on occasion I don't agree with him, perhaps most of the time I don't agree with him—but no one can ever dispute the brilliance in writing of this columnist for the New York Times. He is a great journalist. He writes so well

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



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