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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BARBARA BOXER, a Senator from the State of California.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, source of strength for stressed-out emotions and strained minds, we don't pray to inform You of things You don't know or to urge You from a reluctance to help us. Lord, we pray to obey Your command, to allow ourselves to action, to mitigate anxiety, to exercise faith, and to embrace Your promises.

Thank You for using our Senators in the early morning hours of this new year to accomplish Your purposes. May the sparks from their bipartisan cooperation ignite flames of unity that will illuminate the inevitable darkness to come. Lord, give our lawmakers the resiliency, resourcefulness, and resolve to accomplish Your will on Earth even as it is done in Heaven.

We pray in Your merciful Name.
Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BARBARA BOXER 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. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 1, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BARBARA BOXER, a Senator from the State of California, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. REID. It is so good to see the Presiding Officer presiding.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. After leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

We are awaiting the House to do something on the cliff, we hope. We have Sandy to deal with, and we are waiting on that. We have a series of executive nominations that we need to clear today.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 459

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am told H.R. 459 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 459) to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under

the provisions of rule XIV, I object to any further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. Madam President, what is the business of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 3:30 p.m., for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask to speak in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was after 2 a.m. this morning when the Senate finally passed this historic measure which puts the fiscal cliff behind us, if—if—the House of Representatives follows through and passes it as well. I hope they take it up today or as quickly as possible and pass it with the same bipartisan spirit and vote we saw on the floor of the Senate last night. If

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



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