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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Because of You, God most high, we have strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Your presence sustains us, even in the midst of storms. Because of You, O God, we face the future confident that You will guide us with the same love with which You sustained us in the past.

Bless our Senators. May Your spirit be with them and may Your love follow them and their families this day and always.

Today we also thank You for our pages and the good work they do. As their graduation date approaches, bless them with the satisfaction that comes from work well done.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDING OFFICER 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, June 4, 2013.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN 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 my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, we will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the farm bill.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

THANKING THE PRESIDING OFFICER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for giving the prayer and doing a wonderful job. Our pastor, who was supposed to give the prayer, was not here. We are all very proud of the Senator, and today we are especially proud of Gov. Deval Patrick for appointing Senator COWAN, as he has done a remarkably good job.

As we all know, there will be an election in 2 or 3 weeks to fill the seat, but Senator COWAN will be known as one of the nicest and most competent people I have served with in my many years in Congress.

Again, I thank the Senator very much.

GOODBYE TO SENATOR LAUTENBERG

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week the Senate will say goodbye to a valued friend and colleague, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. The funeral for FRANK will be in New York. He is a great American success story and the Senate's last World War II veteran.

As I indicated, we will recognize his passing and celebration of his life. It has been made pretty clear that he will be buried in Arlington Friday afternoon.

Senator LAUTENBERG loved this institution, where he spent more than three decades. He would understand that its work must go on, despite our sorrow.

WORK TO BE DONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week work continues on the farm bill, which will create jobs, cut taxpayer subsidies, and reduce the deficit. Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN have worked very hard to come up with a finite list of amendments. They are still trying to do that. I hope they can complete that today. I will give the managers as much time as we can to reach an agreement to consider a finite number of amendments to the farm bill.

I will not file cloture unless I have spoken more than once, before the day is out, to Senator STABENOW and Senator COCHRAN. I hope I don't have to file cloture on this legislation tonight, but we need to move forward. It is important to have ample time for debate on the immigration bill reported just a few weeks ago by the Judiciary Committee.

The Senate must move forward before the end of June to protect students from the rising cost of education by keeping the loan rates low. If we don't do something about that before the end of this month, it is going to more than double the rates. If we do nothing, it will double the rates. If we

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



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do what the House wants, it will triple the rates, so we cannot do that. College is already unaffordable for too many young people, and if Congress fails to take action this month, as I have indicated—and I have certainly underlined and underscored the fact—the pricetag will go up significantly for them.

What is suggested by the House and the legislation they passed, it will add about \$6,500 to the average student's loan bill. Their proposal would be worse than doing nothing at all—worse than letting rates double next month.

I hope my Senate Republican colleagues will instead support our efforts to give middle-class families security by freezing interest rates at current levels for 2 years without adding a penny to the deficit. This is exactly the kind of commonsense proposal we need to keep our economy growing, and I will do everything I can to have a vote on the student loan bill this week.

If the Republicans in the Senate want to put forward what they think should be done, I will be happy to have a vote on theirs, and then we will vote on ours.

Even if we have not completed action on the farm bill or student loan proposals, we will bring immigration to the floor next week. The immigration system is broken and it needs to be fixed.

I am grateful Senator MCCONNELL said he would not oppose moving to the bill—at least that is the way I read it in the press. He doesn't believe we will need to have cloture on the bill. I hope we do not need to do that, but if we need to do it in order to get on the bill, I will do that.

I know the Republican leader cannot control virtually every Republican, but I hope we can move forward and start the debate on this bill.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

During the recess I had the opportunity to appear at a number of events in Nevada, and the topic at each one of those events was immigration.

I appeared at an event in Las Vegas, where we had between 1,000 and 2,000 people on the street. It was a very moving event. This has always been a personal issue for me. As I have said many times, my father-in-law emigrated from Russia.

I have seen firsthand a huge increase in the number of people coming to Nevada over the last 15 to 20 years. These people have been devastated by our broken immigration system. I have personally devoted more time to immigration reform than any other issue over my career in Congress. Each time I meet with my constituents, they are desperate for commonsense reform. Each time I meet with them, my passion for fixing our broken immigration system is renewed.

This is personal for a lot of reasons. I will always remember when there was a lot of anti-immigration stuff going on in Congress, I went home—to my Washington home—and my wife said: Remember who I am; remember why I am here. My dad came from Russia.

Her words were to that effect. As a result of that brief conversation with Landra, I got the message and I became an advocate for fixing our broken immigration system.

My father-in-law contributed a lot to this country, but the one most important contribution was his only child who is now the mother of my 5 children and the grandmother of 16 grandchildren. So this issue is something that is important to me.

I admire and respect the work of the eight Senators—four Republicans and four Democrats. We need to move forward on this legislation. It is so very important.

I appeared not only at that huge event in Las Vegas, where there were thousands of people, I appeared in a Catholic Church last week in Reno. There were 1,500 people who filled the church and people were standing outside. The 1,500 didn't count toward the people who were outside.

This was organized by faith leaders, not just Catholics. All faiths that believe immigration reform is not a political issue but a moral issue were there. They don't believe it is an economic issue or political issue. I repeat, they believe it is a moral issue, and I agree. A Catholic priest from Carson City shared the story of his grandparents who emigrated from Italy.

As I have already indicated, my wife's parents emigrated from Russia—my father-in-law at least. My mother-in-law barely made it here; she almost was an immigrant, but she was a little baby born someplace in Canada.

Families who come here from other countries need to understand what the law is, and we are trying to determine that as that is our job. Today immigrant families come seeking the same as generations before them. My father-in-law Israel Goldfarb came here and changed his name. He became Earl Gould, and that was the only person I ever knew. He died as a young man. He didn't get to enjoy his grandchildren.

So there are lots of reasons why we have to fix our broken immigration system and help the many people who are undocumented here get right with the law. It is time for reform that helps them contribute fully to their communities by learning English, paying taxes, and starting down the pathway to earn their citizenship.

The bill we have from the Judiciary Committee is not a perfect bill, but we don't have that here. In my more than three decades in Congress, there has never been a perfect bill. The Founding Fathers could envision nonperfect bills. They knew that is how we would get things done, by compromise. Legislation is the art of compromise. It is up to us to ensure America remains the land of opportunity for people born within our borders as well as those who seek a better future on our shores.

Finally, on another subject, ads have been run on TV, the radio, and in the newspaper about how the Democrats need to follow regular order in the Sen-

ate, and we have done that. But now my Republican colleagues are silent. We have been waiting for months now to allow them to allow us to go to conference for regular order. They are refusing to go to conference so we can come up with a budget that we can negotiate with the House as to what we should do.

It is obvious why we are not able to go to conference. It is so obvious. The Speaker does not want us to go to conference and the Republicans in the Senate are trying to protect him and the unwieldy job he has over there. He is trying to protect his job, and the tea party people are wreaking havoc with our country.

We should be able to go to conference. Republican Senators have said: Let's go to conference. What is stopping us from going to conference? I just talked about what is stopping us from going to conference, and it is truly detrimental to our country.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

REGULAR ORDER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the majority leader with regard to our late colleague FRANK LAUTENBERG. He was, indeed, a member of the greatest generation, having fought in World War II and also has had distinguished service in the Senate.

I would also like to mention to my friend the majority leader, before he leaves the floor, I indicated to him before the recess that I intended to bring up each day going forward a commitment he made to the Senate back in January of 2011 and again in January of 2013—the beginning of the last two Congresses—with regard to using the nuclear option to change the rules of the Senate.

The most important currency of the realm in the Senate is one's word, and my good friend the majority leader said in January of 2011: "I will oppose any effort in this Congress, or the next, to change the Senate's rules other than through the regular order." It was not a contingent commitment, it was not a contingent based on my judgment of good behavior, it was a commitment.

Then again in January of 2013, in an exchange the majority leader and I had on the floor, I said I would confirm with the majority leader that the Senate would not consider other resolutions relating to any standing order or rules of this Congress unless they went through the regular order process. That was my question to my friend the majority leader to which he replied, "That is correct." Any other resolutions related to Senate procedure would be subject to a regular order process, including consideration by the Rules Committee.