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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, hear our prayer and answer us when we call. Lord, You forgive our sins and heal our sickness, for Your mercy is great toward those who esteem Your Name. Thank You for Your promises to never forsake us and to render ineffectual the weapons we face.

Strengthen our Senators in their efforts to do good, sustaining them in their labors. Give them more than human wisdom to solve the problems of these momentous times. Keep them calm in the quiet center of their lives so that they may be serene in the swirling stresses of their work.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

REPEALING SECTION 403 OF THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 298.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 298, S. 1963, a bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 1963.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 3590 AND H.R. 3964

Mr. REID. I am told there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3590) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 3964) to address certain water-related concerns in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to these two bills.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

RESTORING RETIREMENT PAY TO U.S. ARMED FORCES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will consider new legislation that would restore earned retirement pay to the men and women of our Armed Forces. The measure restores cost-of-living adjustments for all military retirees regardless of age, disability or employment status. Congress should protect veterans who put their lives on the line to protect our country.

I appreciate very much Senators PRYOR, SHAHEEN, HAGAN, and BEGICH for their leadership on this issue. Although the provision reversed by this measure doesn't take effect until the end of next year, there is no reason to delay, and we should move forward with it. I hope Republicans will join Democrats to pass this bill without their usual partisan games.

Unfortunately, the type of obstruction and delay I just referred to was on full display here last week. On Thurs-

day, the Senate fell one vote short of restoring unemployment insurance for 1.7 million Americans who lost their jobs through absolutely no fault of their own. Every single Democratic Senator voted for this bill. A few reasonable Republicans—four, to be exact—voted with us to restore benefits that would boost our economy and provide a lifeline for out-of-work Americans. But we are still one Republican vote shy before we are able to do this for these people.

It is so unfair. If someone loses their job today, they can apply for unemployment benefits and get them immediately. But if a person has been out of work for a long time at 57 years old and can't find a job, that person needs this, but they can't because of what the Republicans have done.

When 1.7 million struggling Americans fall short of the rent, skip meals to save cash or turn down the thermostat on freezing days, they will know who to blame—41 Republican Senators. We only need one more Republican—a total of 5 out of 45—to step up and do what is right for these desperate people.

We are not going to stop pushing to restore emergency unemployment insurance. In the weeks to come, we will vote again on this important issue and again if we need to. In the meantime I hope my colleagues across the aisle will think long and hard about their unsustainable position on this issue, a position that hurts middle-class families.

MINIMUM WAGE

In the weeks ahead the Senate will also consider legislation to give 17 million minimum wage workers a much needed raise and our economy a much needed boost. No American working full time should live below the poverty line, but many of them do. So we are going to push to make the minimum wage a living wage and raise it to \$10.10 an hour.

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



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