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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O divine Master, incline the hearts of our lawmakers to follow in Your way. May they seek to stay within the circle of Your providential plan for their lives, striving to please You as they live for Your glory. Lord, deliver them from crooked thoughts, careless words, and selfish hearts. Forgive them for the things undone that ought to have been done and the things done that ought not to have been done. Spirit of purity and grace, guide our Senators with Your power.

We pray in Your strong 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter.

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARKEY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

MINIMUM WAGE FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 354, the minimum-wage legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 354, S. 2223, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in morning business until 10:30 a.m. this morning. The Republicans will control the first half and the majority will control the final half. Following morning business, the time until noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the minimum-wage bill at 12 p.m. today. At 4 p.m. there will be additional rollcall votes in relation to nominations.

Mr. President, later today, as I have announced, we are going to have, we hope, the beginning of a debate on the increase of the Federal minimum wage. Millions of American workers will be watching how each Senator votes today. To them it is a matter of survival.

They will be observing to see if we ensure that a full-time worker in America receives a livable wage.

For Republicans, this vote will demonstrate whether they truly care about our economy. Republicans have fashioned themselves over the years as defenders of the economy. Congressional Republicans have told the American people they are the party of jobs and financial prosperity. How illogical then that the Senate Republicans today will not be supportive of legislation to increase the minimum wage.

What is preventing my Republican colleagues from giving the American workers a livable wage—a fair shot—knowing that 75 percent of the American people support increasing the minimum wage? If Americans are searching for an answer as to why they would refuse to raise the minimum wage, they should look no farther than the Republicans' billionaire benefactors—I repeat, billionaire benefactors—the Koch brothers. Absolutely no one was surprised yesterday when Americans for Prosperity, which is only one of the Koch-funded political organizations, instructed Republicans in Congress to vote against a minimum-wage increase. They said: We are going to score this vote.

What does that mean? It means if you vote yes, you are not going to get any help from Charlie and David. They want a “no” vote so they can make Charlie and Dave happy.

In case any of their followers in the Senate were to experience a change of heart and be inclined to vote for an increase, the organizations have warned that they will really go after these people. Again, I repeat, score the vote.

In other words, when it comes time for the Koch brothers to play the role of Santa Claus, Republicans should know that Charles and David are making a list and checking it twice—probably more than that. Even though 75 percent of Americans support this legislation—and our economy stands to profit from a wage increase—the will of the Koch brothers seems to be the top priority for my Republican colleagues.

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



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