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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

Lord of life beneath the dome of the universe, Your home, gather us who seek Your face to the fold of Your embrace, for You are near.

We see Your divine image in the people around us. Help us to honor You by respecting them. Guide our lawmakers to seek great things for others. Radiate

Your hope through them to our Nation and world, providing them, O God, with Your wisdom to join their plans with Your will. Give them a compassion that will compel them to labor for the eradication of injustice.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

NOTICE

If the 113th Congress, 2nd Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 24, 2014, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 113th Congress, 2nd Session, will be published on Wednesday, December 31, 2014, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT-59 or S-123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Tuesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Wednesday, December 31, 2014, and will be delivered on Monday, January 5, 2015.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

CHARLES E. SCHUMER, *Chairman*.

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.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Repub-

lican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979, postcloture.

At noon today, the time will be controlled between Senators REID, 1 hour; COBURN, 1 hour; MURKOWSKI, 30 minutes; INHOFE, 30 minutes, or their designees.

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



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Upon the use or yielding back of that time, at approximately 3 p.m., the Senate will have rollcall votes in relation to the defense authorization bill and the Saperstein nomination.

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I have indicated, we are going to take up this important government funding bill today. Senator MIKULSKI, the Chair of the Appropriations Committee, has performed an extraordinary service in negotiating this bill. And I think it is fair to give a nod to Senator SHELBY, of course, who has been involved in this. They get along extremely well and set a good standard for everyone in the Senate.

The bill achieves many of our important priorities. It gives the Affordable Care Act the secure financial footing it deserves, gives our military the tools it needs to combat ISIS, it addresses the rape kit backlog, helping police and prosecutors prevent sexual assault, it increases funding for students' loans, ensures that the President's Executive action in protecting families can move forward, and it provides funding to fight the Ebola epidemic.

There are lots of other things in it. I have just hit a few of the highlights from my perspective.

There are things in this bill that I wouldn't have included—the Democrats wouldn't have included had we written the bill alone. I don't support the weakening of Dodd-Frank and the restrictions on the District of Columbia and other things, but I didn't write this bill. Senate Democrats didn't write this bill alone. It is a compromise. That is what legislation is all about.

The Presiding Officer has been a Governor for the State of Maine. He is now a legislator and has been a legislator, and he knows that legislation is the art of compromise. Any chief executive who has to work with a legislature, as Presidents of the United States do, does not get everything he wants. Legislation is a compromise. And that is what this legislation is.

We are going to consider this legislation to keep our government open and funded, and we are going to do it today—I hope. There are Senators who are unhappy with this legislation, and they will have a chance to make their objections heard. I hope we can complete work on this bill as soon as we finish the Defense bill. That depends on everyone's cooperation here. But there isn't a lot of time. The government funding runs out at 12 o'clock midnight on Saturday.

When we started this Congress, the government was running on autopilot. Since 2011, we have lurched from crisis to crisis, with the country constantly under threat of a shutdown or financial catastrophe. It is a very bad habit, and one the American people are very, very tired of, as they should be.

This bill is, I repeat, far from perfect. But when we pass it, we will be able to

end this Congress knowing we put our country on a more secure financial footing than when this Congress started. We can then go home to our States, tell our constituents we passed legislation that keeps America safe, makes college more affordable, spurs the economy, and keeps our government operating.

Talk about a CR for 3 months should scare everyone. So we are not there. We are going to have a bill that funds this government for the next fiscal year. We can be satisfied that we left our priorities better funded and more secure, and our government on a more sound foundation than when this Congress began.

TRIBUTE TO MARK PRYOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am going to take just a minute, because time is running out, to talk about a couple of Senators.

I rise to honor Senator MARK PRYOR of Arkansas upon his departure from this institution. I have been in the Senate 28 years, and there has been a Pryor here for 22 of those years. I first worked with MARK's dad, David Pryor. David Pryor left this institution because he had quite a significant heart attack. What a fine Senator. I have said before, and I will say again, he was the best legislator I ever served with, whether during my experience in the State legislature of Nevada or here: David Pryor. He was very, very good.

Six years after David left, MARK came. What a good legislator he is. He is just such a fine person. But it is no surprise to me that he followed in his dad's footsteps. After all, the Pryor family has worked as public servants in Arkansas for five generations. MARK's great-great-grandfather was a sheriff. MARK's great-grandfather was a sheriff. MARK's grandfather Edgar was a county sheriff also in Arkansas. In fact, just last year, an Arkansan said to MARK: "I'm for MARK PRYOR not because of his dad David but because of Edgar." That is how deep the Pryor roots run in Arkansas.

On MARK's desk is a plaque that reads: "Arkansas Comes First." This was a plaque that was on his dad's desk and that MARK put on his desk. This has been MARK's mission since he has been here—to put Arkansas first. The Senate and the entire country have benefited from the influence of the Pryors in the United States Senate—David and MARK.

MARK was born in Fayetteville, grew up in Little Rock, and attended the University of Arkansas as an undergraduate and later to law school. While working as an attorney in private practice, he began his public service in 1990, when he ran for a seat in the House of Representatives. He was elected and served there for 4 years.

In 1996, MARK was faced with the fight of his life. He had a situation occur near his Achilles tendon on one of his legs. They tried physical ther-

apy, but it didn't seem to get well, and they discovered he had a very rare form of cancer—clear-cell sarcoma—in his left leg. So it is an understatement to say it was a trying experience for MARK. He was faced with the prospect of dying or losing his leg.

MARK was buoyed in this difficult experience that he had by his family, his friends, and the people of Arkansas praying for him. It was quite a spiritual experience for MARK and his family. This experience deepened his compassion for those who suffer physically, financially, and emotionally, and he has translated that into his public service.

In 1998, he was elected attorney general of the State of Arkansas. In his 2002 Senatorial election he bucked the national trend to become the only Democrat to defeat a Republican incumbent. Bucking trends would quickly become one of his hallmarks here on Capitol Hill. As a Senator, he has shown courage in voting according to his conscience.

Key among his legislative accomplishments have been bills to extend tax benefits and improve medical services for men and women to make the products that people buy, especially children, safe. He has also been a strong advocate for honest and transparent business practices in order to preserve our American tradition of responsible free enterprise.

His respect for tradition extends to the Senate itself. I say this for a number of reasons, but once a reporter asked him what he would do if he had absolute power over Congress. In his characteristic fashion, he responded he would instill in his fellow Senators greater respect for each other and for the world's greatest deliberative body. That is what MARK PRYOR said.

While some may have disagreed with MARK, they never ever questioned his sincerity, his integrity. I admire his impeccable dedication to his conscience.

Mark Twain said:

The proper office of a friend is to side with you when you are in the wrong. Nearly anybody will side with you when you are in the right.

With apologies to Mark Twain, if eternal agreement were the price of friendship, we would all have fewer friends. Friendship can transcend policy preferences, as MARK's and mine do. We agree on most everything. There are a few things we don't agree on politically, but that doesn't matter. It doesn't matter because he is my friend.

He is a friend to my wife and me. It is no secret there are many people—the Republican leader and his wife—who reached out to console me and Landra during her terrible accident, and then when the cancer was ravaging her body. But she pulled through that. And one reason she did, I am convinced, is MARK PRYOR. MARK PRYOR, who almost died from cancer, called my wife often—often—texted her often telling her: You are going to be OK; don't be afraid. So my wife loves MARK PRYOR.