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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Mighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, thank You for the honor of being made in Your image, personally formed by You for Your glory.

Today, shower Your grace upon our lawmakers, making them sufficient for these grand and challenging times. Lord, inspire them to walk humbly with You as You bless and strengthen them. Please don't remove the mountains in their lives, but give them the strength to climb them. May they not forget that in everything You are working for the good of those who love You and are called according to Your purposes. Give our Senators the insight, wisdom, and courage to serve Your purpose for their lives in this generation.

And, Lord, we ask that You would comfort the families of the victims of the plane crash in the French Alps.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week, the Senate will pass a balanced

budget. It is an important moment for our country. I know a lot of Americans are excited to see it finally happen.

Our friends across the aisle don't seem to be sharing in the enthusiasm, however. Instead, we seem to hear demands for more taxes, more regulations, more overspending—basically, more failed policies of the past.

These are odd demands, but in the spirit of budget week, we figured: Why not give our friends what they are asking for? So last night we offered them a chance to support President Obama's budget. It drops tax after tax on the American people to the tune of almost \$2 trillion. It piles on the regulations. It overspends by trillions and trillions, never balancing, ever—never balancing, ever.

No wonder a DC newspaper implied it was a manifestation of the left's "dream version of Obama."

One would think our friends would have supported this dream budget overwhelmingly but, actually, hardly any were brave enough to do so. Apparently, the President's budget is just so unserious and embarrassing that only a single Member of his party could be seen supporting it in public.

What a contrast to the balanced budget before us today. It balances without raising taxes. It acknowledges the obvious truth that Washington has a spending problem and takes responsible action to get spending under control.

It also recognizes the undeniable fact that government programs cannot meet their mandate to the vulnerable if left unreformed, and it proposes improvements to programs such as Medicaid.

This balanced budget aims to make government more efficient, more effective, and more accountable. It will go a long way toward getting our fiscal house in order.

But that is not all this balanced budget is about. It is also about growing the economy. It is also about rais-

ing incomes. It is also about creating jobs. In short, it is about promoting an economy that works better for the middle class of today and that leaves a more prosperous future for the middle class of tomorrow.

One way to do that is by embracing the energy revolution by lifting barriers to responsible energy development, just as this budget proposes. Another way is by replacing our outdated and ineffective Tax Code with one that is simple and effective. So this budget proposes to repeal unfair taxes, such as those in ObamaCare, and then sets the table for comprehensive tax reform instead.

Ideas such as these are just common sense. No wonder the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says that our balanced budget would accelerate economic growth.

The truth is middle-class Americans have seen a lot of unfairness out of Washington during the Obama years. The middle class has had to play by one set of rules and make tough choices while a big-spending Obama administration got to play by its own rules.

It is time for that inequality to come to an end. It is time for Washington to make tough choices and balance its own budget just as the middle class has to.

Now is the time for Washington to move beyond failed ideas of the past, as we saw in the White House's leftwing dream budget, and support a balanced budget instead—one that is focused on boosting the economy, creating jobs, and raising wages.

That balanced budget is before us right now. I am calling on every Senator to support it, including our friends on the other side. We know they don't have a budget proposal of their own. We know they are too embarrassed to support the President's budget. So why not show their support for the middle class by voting for this balanced budget proposal.

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



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