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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.

Master of our hopes and dreams, who constantly works for the good of those who love You, teach us to strive to be faithful. As we anticipate a long and challenging day, remind us that You call us not to success but to faithfulness.

Give our Senators and the members of their staffs the wisdom to make the commitment to be true to You and to serve Your purposes. Let not discordant notes destroy the melody of their labors as they seek Your counsel and wisdom.

Lord, guide our great Nation. Help it to be a lighthouse to a dark and turbulent world. Prosper the works of our hands until the kingdoms of this world become the springboard for Your eternal reign.

We pray in Your Holy 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. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for years, the Democrat-led Senate refused to pass a balanced budget. It usually

failed to produce any budget at all. Maybe this made the special interests happy, but it was infuriating for many in the middle class. These Americans called for change.

Today, a Senate under new management is delivering that change. The new Senate is prepared to pass a balanced budget with ideas that could boost jobs, raise annual wages by as much as \$5,000 per family, and drive economic growth for hard-working Americans. That is what the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office tells us, and it is no wonder.

This balanced budget would embrace the energy revolution and allow for more environmentally responsible innovations. It would repeal unfair taxes such as those in ObamaCare and set the table for more comprehensive replacement of the outdated Tax Code with one that is simpler and more effective. And it would provide tools finally to repeal and replace ObamaCare itself, leaving the law's higher costs and broken promises where they belong—in the past—in favor of a fresh start and the opportunity for real health reform.

So while this balanced budget might upset special interests, that is OK, because it is focused on the middle class instead. It is focused on helping the most vulnerable too.

Here is what we know about important programs such as Medicare. We can make commonsense improvements to save these programs today or we can allow draconian cuts to fall on the most vulnerable in the years ahead. These are essentially our only two options. We can't tax the problem away. Denying the facts won't help either.

So we invite all of our friends to join us as positive reformers, not insensitive deniers. Let's work together to improve Medicaid as this balanced budget proposes. While our balanced budget cannot solve every challenge, it will move us further down the path of positive reform. It will make government more efficient, more effective, and more accountable to the middle class.

The budget also contains a good-faith compromise to begin the legislative process for the Defense authorization bill we will consider later this year, when additional OCO funds can be prudently reallocated against the actual procurement and modernization needs of our military, if only for the coming fiscal year. This is the best strategy, short of revising the BCA, for keeping faith with our armed services, and it is the best option we currently have for leaving the next President in a better position to face global challenges.

So I wish to thank Chairman ENZI for all of his good work in putting this balanced budget together. It certainly wasn't easy. It is a good balanced budget that everyone should want to support.

That is especially true when we compare it to the other alternatives here. It is the only alternative, actually, since our friends still don't seem to be in the habit of producing a budget of their own.

The alternative on offer was the budget we voted on Tuesday from President Obama. Someone called it the left's dream budget. But that dream ended up being so unserious and embarrassing that not more than a single Democrat could muster the courage to vote for it. In a way, it is hard to blame our friends. It would be pretty embarrassing and insensitive to support a budget that contains trillions more in overspending, almost \$2 trillion more in taxes, and hardly any serious ideas to save the programs for the most vulnerable.

No wonder this budget went down in flames 98 to 1—98 to 1. That was the vote on the President's budget. That 98, by the way, was against the President's budget.

So only one budget remains. It is a balanced budget that will focus on growth, common sense, and the middle class. It isn't perfect, but it does represent honest compromise and the promise of a better tomorrow.

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



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