



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 27, 2015

No. 119

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.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.

Eternal God, incline Your ear and hear our prayer, for without Your presence and power, our striving is in vain. Preserve us with Your loving providence, guiding us through each season of life's sojourn.

Lord, teach our lawmakers Your way, illuminating their path with the lamp and light of Your truth. Remind them that true greatness comes through service, as they remember to esteem others as better than themselves.

You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion. You are gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth.

We praise Your matchless 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. JOHNSON). The majority leader is recognized.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, "there is no such thing as a Republican road or a Democrat road." That is what Chairman INHOFE said a few days ago, and he is absolutely right. No wonder

Republicans and Democrats continue to rally around a bipartisan, multiyear highway measure that is fiscally responsible and will not raise taxes.

The bill before us would streamline regulations, advance research and innovation in transportation, modernize infrastructure and transportation systems, and inject new accountability measures so Americans can get a better handle on how their tax money is actually being spent.

This multiyear bill also reverses the trend of short-term temporary patches, giving State and local Governments the certainty and the stability they need to better plan road and bridge projects. On top of that, the bill would also provide State and local Governments with more flexible options for stretching those transportation dollars.

So this is a good bill for our country. Substantial numbers of Republicans and Democrats continue to support it. But time is running out to get this bill through Congress. We are up against a deadline at the end of the week. Jobs are on the line. Important infrastructure projects are too. So we have to get the job done—and we are.

We have had to navigate some especially difficult political terrain to get this far already. It hasn't always been easy, but we are now nearing completion of the Senate's work on this bill.

If the bipartisan coalition supporting this fiscally responsible, multiyear bill continues to cooperate and work hard, I know we can get there.

I want to thank every colleague who has worked so hard already on this bill, particularly Chairman INHOFE and Senator BOXER, who have really done magnificent work to get us to this point. Let's hope we can all get it across the finish line.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I choose not to speak today. So I would ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 22, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell modified amendment No. 2266, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Kirk) amendment No. 2327 (to amendment No. 2266), to reauthorize and reform the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

McConnell amendment No. 2328 (to amendment No. 2327), to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

McConnell amendment No. 2329 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2266), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2330 (to amendment No. 2329), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there are no ideas more central to America's democracy and identity than liberty

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



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