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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Help us, O Lord, to run when we can, to walk when we ought, and to wait when we must.

Today, give wisdom to our lawmakers. May they leave undone that for which they are not ready as they open their minds to discern Your will. Lord, help them to not pray for tasks fitted for their strength but for strength which fits them for their tasks. Conform their lives more and more to Your likeness. Continue to lift the light of Your countenance upon them and fill them with Your peace.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY 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. BYRD).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, July 10, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business. Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. There will be no rollcall votes during today's session of the Senate.

### HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, many Americans are fortunate to have health insurance to help them pay for their prescriptions, treatments, or even doctor visits. Like any kind of insurance, we hope we never have to use it, but it is comforting to know it is there. But what happens if the system designed to give us that sense of security and stability is not itself secure or stable? Where does one turn when that certainty is taken away? That is the fear too many middle-class families in America have. They see the jobs around them disappear. For some, one of those jobs may be their own job. They see their paychecks get smaller, or they struggle each week because that paycheck simply does not go far enough. They may have insurance today, but they don't know if they will be able to say the same tomorrow.

Too many families in the greatest country and the largest economy in the world, by far, live just one illness or one accident or one pink slip away from losing that sense of security—their health insurance.

Far too many families have to make a decision when their children get sick:

Do they buy them new school supplies or do they buy them clothes? Do they buy some extra groceries for the family or are they going to be able to take them to the doctor? As I say, do they get them new clothes when they grow out of their old ones or do they get the treatment they need to stay healthy or even to get healthy? Far too many hard-working Americans have to make a choice when their doctor gives them a prescription for chronic illness, or what insurance companies like to call a preexisting condition. Do they get that medicine or do they add that little piece of paper to a top of a mounting pile of bills they cannot afford to pay?

What about small businesses, those entrepreneurs in big cities and small towns that innovate, invent, and fuel our economy? They do have a choice to make. Do they hire new employees? Do they lay off more hard-working Americans or do they just simply cancel their health insurance for their employees because it is too expensive? Businessmen and businesswomen do not have a lack of insurance because they are cheap or they do not care about their employees, they do not have health insurance because they cannot afford it. It is too expensive.

Taking your child to the doctor, filling a prescription, and giving your workers health insurance should not have to be choices. They should not end in question marks. That is exactly why we are working to bring stability and security back to health care. Health care reform means making sure every American can afford access and care. Reform means making sure that if you lose your job, your health care will not go with the job you have lost. It means if you change jobs, your health care stays with you. Reforming health care means that if your mother had breast cancer or you had minor surgery last year or your kid gets allergies every spring, your insurance company cannot say: I am sorry, you are just too much of a risk for us to

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



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