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# Congressional Record

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# Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, You know all the roads by which each of us has come to serve in our government's legislative branch. You know the pathway our feet now are treading and what the future holds, for You are the architect of our destinies.

Give our Senators strength sufficient for this day. Remind them that their times are in Your hands. Infuse them with the blessed assurance that You are the love that never forgets, the light that never fails, and the life that never ends. Keep them close to You and open to each other as they do the tasks that preserve our freedoms. We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND 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, December 3, 2009.*

*To the Senate:*

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
*President pro tempore.*

Mrs. GILLIBRAND 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. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3590, the health reform legislation. There will be up to 10 minutes, equally divided, between the managers of the bill. The remaining time until 11:45 a.m. will be divided and controlled equally between Senator MIKULSKI and the minority leader or their designees.

At 11:45 a.m., this morning, the Senate will proceed to a series of two rollcall votes. The first vote will be in relation to the Mikulski amendment, No. 2791, as modified, to be followed by a vote on the Murkowski amendment, No. 2836.

Following those votes, the time until 2:45 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between Senators BAUCUS and MCCAIN or their designees. At 2:45 p.m., the Senate will proceed to vote in relation to the Bennet of Colorado amendment, No. 2826, to be followed by a vote in relation to the McCain motion to commit.

All four votes today will be subject to a 60-vote affirmative threshold for adoption.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Would my friend yield for a question before making his opening remarks?

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I would say to my friend, since it is Thursday, my Members are prepared to be here Saturday and Sunday, but many would like to know whether there will be an opportunity to go to church Sunday morning.

Mr. REID. Of course. I think it very likely we wouldn't come in until noon, or somewhere around noon on Sunday.

I would indicate to my friend it appears that the next opportunity for amendment will be when we complete this. It is my understanding Senator BEN NELSON is ready, he has an amendment, and I think we have given it to your staff. This may be one where it is sponsored by people on your side also, and then we will wait to see what your next amendment will be.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I would say to my friend, obviously, I assume we are going to continue to proceed with your side offering one and my side offering one.

Mr. REID. We will show those to each other before that happens.

Mr. MCCONNELL. All right.

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Madam President, we in this Chamber, a lot of times, talk as if no one is listening to what we are saying, as though we are talking to ourselves. But that is not true. The American people are listening and they are watching. That is good. But this morning I have good news and I have some bad news. The good news is, Senate Republicans finally—finally, at long last—have put a detailed plan down on paper. The bad news is, it is not as we had hoped—a plan to make health insurance more affordable, it is not one that makes health insurance companies more accountable, and it is certainly not a plan to reverse rapidly rising health care costs and draw down our deficit, such as the plan that has been submitted to the Senate and is now before the Senate by the Democrats.

Again, the plan we had hoped to receive from the Republicans would be 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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