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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, in whom we trust, put Your hands upon the Members of this body to guide and strengthen them. Bless them in moments of stress and tension, renewing their strength so that they mount up on wings like eagles. Lord, give them the moral and spiritual stamina to do what is right as You give them the life to understand Your will. May they fulfill their high calling to serve You and this Nation and exemplify to all the oneness of a shared commitment. Make their lives an expression of Your truth, righteousness and justice.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U. S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 24, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator

from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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, the time until 9:55 will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At 9:55, the Senate will proceed to a series of up to two rollcall votes. The first vote will be on the motion to waive the applicable budget points of order with respect to the Reid amendment No. 3310.

If the points of order are waived, we will immediately proceed to vote on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2947, with the Reid substitute amendment.

Following the votes, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

It is my hope we are able to reach an agreement to pass the short-term tax extenders legislation today. The next item of business will be the bipartisan travel promotion legislation.

Following the remarks of the Senator from Kentucky, I would yield 4 minutes to the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

HEALTH CARE SUMMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, the White House unveiled its latest iteration of the Democrat plan for health care reform, and, to put it quite simply, it was a major disappointment.

It was our hope that when the administration called for a health care summit at the White House, it would be an opportunity for both sides to come together and start over. Now it is perfectly clear the administration had something else in mind entirely.

The plan we saw Monday is hardly a starting off point for a bipartisan discussion on commonsense reforms. It is really just more of the same: a massive government scheme with all the flaws of the previous proposals that the American people have already seen and rejected. Changing the name and increasing the cost is not what Americans have been asking for, and it is certainly not reform.

To make matters worse, even as lawmakers head down to the White House for this health care summit tomorrow, Democrats on Capitol Hill are working behind the scenes on a plan aimed at jamming this massive health spending bill through Congress against the clear wishes of an unsuspecting public. What they have in mind is a last ditch legislative sleight of hand called reconciliation that would enable them to impose government-run health care for all on the American people, whether Americans want it or not. And we know that Americans do not, in fact, want it.

Americans have seen these proposals before. They do not want them. So this is the height of legislative arrogance. If you did not like the Cornhusker Kickback, get ready. This is the Cornhusker Kickback on steroids.

In light of all these behind the scenes efforts to get around the will of the people, it is hard to imagine what the purpose of Thursday's summit is. If the White House wants real bipartisanship,

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



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then it needs to drop the proposal it posted Monday, which is no different in its essentials than anything we have seen before, and start over. And they need to take this last-ditch reconciliation effort off the table once and for all.

Then we can work on the kind of reform Americans really want, step by step proposals that will actually get at the problem, which is cost. That is what the American people have been asking us to do for a year. If ever there were a time for the administration to show it is listening, it is now. Reform is too important. We cannot let this opportunity pass.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to H.R. 2847, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A House message to accompany H.R. 2847, an Act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice and Science, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 3310 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 3311 (to amendment No. 3310), to change the enactment date.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 9:55 will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that upon the completion of the remarks from the Senator from New York, I be recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the time will be equally divided, I presume?

Mr. GREGG. Yes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a more bipartisan note than the speech from the minority leader, we are now moving toward some legislation that has two bits of good news for the American people; one, it will help create jobs and employ those who have been out of work for too long a time; second, it is bipartisan. For the first time in a long time, we have a bill that is supported by both Democrats and Republicans. I would like to salute the five Republicans from the other side who

joined us in moving the bill forward. I am very hopeful there will be a large number of those from the other side of the aisle who will join in this bipartisan measure that will show the American people that, at least when it comes to jobs, we can—and must for their good—work together.

First, let me discuss the proposal, the part of the proposal authored by Senator HATCH and myself. It is very simple. It is a holiday from the payroll tax for any employer that hires a worker who has been out of work for 60 days.

Let me discuss why I think it will work. First, it is immediate. Most businesses, particularly small businesses, if you tell them they will get some kind of tax credit if they hire someone, but they will get that credit a year from April, are not very interested. This occurs immediately, the minute the worker is hired.

Second, it is simple. Again, you tell a businessperson, particularly a small businessperson, they have to fill out 30 pages, maybe hire an accountant to get a tax credit for a new worker, that is not life. They are going to tell you to forget it.

But here all the new employee has to show is that he or she was out of work for 60 days. It is very easy to show 60 days of unemployment compensation, and it immediately takes effect.

Third, it goes right to small business. So this is not a large government program. The money goes right to small business and is cost effective, which is the fourth point. If 3 million people are hired by this tax credit, it will cost \$15 billion. That is a lot of money. But compared to the stimulus of \$880 billion, it is much smaller. The money is cost effective. It goes right to where it should.

Finally, my last point is, it is bipartisan. The country is asking us to come and work together. Obviously, there are diverse views, both within the parties and certainly between the parties. But that does not mean, on areas that are getting close to emergencies, we cannot work together.

This proposal, let it be the start. But let this proposal be the start of a coming together on issues we can agree on. There are some job proposals my colleagues on this side of the aisle would support and my colleagues on the other side would not and vice versa. There are some they would support and we would not.

But there are a large number we can all agree on. We ought to endeavor to do them because what the American people want is not us just talking at one another and accomplishing nothing but us getting something done.

Finally, going back to the merits of this proposal, it should not be sold as a panacea. This is not a magic wand that is going to be waved and all our joblessness will decline.

But what it does do is harness the economic growth we have seen in the last quarter, 5.7 percent, and translates

it into the creation of jobs. Let me explain. In the last quarter, there was economic growth, 5.7 percent, but hardly a job was created. You cannot sustain an economy and get an economy moving upward unless jobs are created.

But the growth gives us an opportunity—not every employer but a significant number of employers are getting new orders. They are thinking to themselves: Should I hire that new worker or should I just extend overtime or cut back somewhere else?

This job provision, a payroll tax holiday, says to the employer—to some, not all but to many—I am going to take that gamble and hire that worker and hire them now so it will help jumpstart our economy. It will work for businesses, not those that see declining sales or flat sales but those that are beginning to see sales go up and will translate those increased sales into increased jobs, which will then, hopefully, create the virtuous cycle of more jobs, more money in the economy, more jobs still, more money in the economy still, and we can get out of this awful recession.

In conclusion, I wish to save enough time for my friend from New Hampshire. I traveled around my State this last Presidents week break. In every corner of my State, I sat with the unemployed. It was heartbreaking. Think of those people and those faces, what they had to say late at night.

A woman from Rochester had worked for 20 years for Xerox, lost her position in human services up in Rochester. She has been looking for 2 years, close to 2 years, for a job. She made a very good salary. She did not have a family. Her job was her life. She has turned things inside out to try and find comparable work. She cannot.

I met a man who was a blue-collar worker. He had risen to the top of his craft, tool and die. He thought he had a great life—worked hard, had six children, a good marriage. A year ago he lost his job and is still paying the mortgage. His wife cannot work to support him because of the six kids, one of whom was 2 years old, as I recall.

What is he going to do? You meet people like this again and again. Young college students get out of college, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and cannot find work. How disillusioning at the beginning of their career.

So we have an imperative to do something. We have an imperative not to say: It has to be my way or no way. We have to put those people back to work.

That is what Senator HATCH and I attempted to do with our proposal. To our leader, I wish to pay him a tremendous tribute. He was focused on getting this done. He took brickbats left and right. But the ultimate wisdom of what he did is now being seen as we move this bill on the floor today.

Hopefully, it will go through the House and be on the President's desk shortly. I thank Senator HATCH and all my colleagues who, hopefully, in a few minutes, will come together in a bipartisan way and tell the workers who are