

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, Republicans in both the House and Senate, led by Senator HUTCHISON, introduced a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to repeal the so-called net neutrality regulations recently adopted by the Federal Communications Commission.

We believe, as most Americans do, that the Internet has transformed our society precisely because people have been free to create and innovate free from government intrusion. As Americans become more aware of what is happening here, I suspect many will be as alarmed as I am at the government's growing involvement in this area of our lives. They will wonder if this is a Trojan horse for further meddling by the government. We intend to use the tools available to us to push back against this meddling, and I want to thank Senator HUTCHISON for taking the first step in our effort.

STIMULUS TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, two years ago today, at a moment of deep economic uncertainty, the President signed a bill that he said would put us back on track. It was a plan, he said, that would "save or create" up to 4 million jobs over 2 years—a figure that he called his bottom line for success, a plan that was supposed to drive unemployment below 7 percent by now. And it was predicated on the notion that government spending—spending borrowed money on government programs—was the recipe for a rebound; a plan that said if we "invest" in government, we will get out of this mess.

We were told the bill included record investments. And then we learned what the administration means by "investment": a plant database project; a multimillion dollar facelift for the Sunset Strip; a study of the mating decisions of female cactus bugs; hundreds of millions of dollars to a solar panel company that was supposed to double its workforce but ended up cutting jobs instead; massive bailouts to the States; turtle tunnels. Senators get the drift.

Within a year of its passage, the so-called stimulus bill had become a national punchline.

Nearly a trillion dollars was added to the debt as a result of this bill in the name of investing in our future. And in the 2 years since it was signed, we have lost millions of jobs.

And now they want to do it again. They are back for more.

Just as amazing is the fact that the same people who touted this bill now refuse to cut government spending. We learn about another wasteful stimulus project just about every day, and they say they can't find a dime's worth of government spending to cut?

It defies common sense.

I mean, if we can't cut a turtle tunnel when the country is \$14 trillion in the hole, we have problems. It is time to turn over the credit card.

The bottom line here is that 2 years after the President told us he was investing in our future, here is what we have to show for it: higher unemployment than they predicted and trillions more in debt.

The fact is, dangerously high debt has actually slowed the recovery, making it harder to create private sector jobs.

So in my view this second debate was over before it started.

Massive government investment of borrowed taxpayer money as a tool for economic growth has been a failure.

TRIBUTE TO PADUCAH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the people of Paducah, KY, for all of the efforts they have made to make their city one of our country's best places in which to work, visit or live. Now that hard work has paid off. Paducah has been recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of their Dozen Distinctive Destinations in America in 2011.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation seeks to recognize cities and towns that offer an authentic cultural and recreational experience. They take into account a community's commitment to the historic preservation and revitalization of its downtown, its rich cultural history, attractive architecture and a town's core character. Obviously, I think Paducah ranks highly in all of these criteria, and I am glad the National Trust for Historic Preservation, after considering thousands of communities across the Nation, agrees.

The history of Paducah is a history of life on the river. Paducah was originally settled because of its strategic position on the Ohio River, and traffic on the Ohio and the Tennessee River drove its economic development. As rivers were America's original highways, Paducah was founded on vital arteries of trade and commerce.

That history is still alive in Paducah because of the hard work of many to preserve their city's heritage. For years I have worked along with local leaders to enhance some of the city's greatest attributes; namely, Paducah's downtown and riverfront. Paducah is

now a vibrant river town. I would encourage my colleagues, the next time they are planning a vacation, to keep Paducah in mind.

The National Quilt Museum of the United States, the River Discovery Center, the Lower Town Arts District, the Upper Town Heritage Walking Tour, and much more await them there. I will point out that the National Trust for Historic Preservation also recently named Paducah as having one of the most romantic main streets in America.

The Paducah Sun recently published an article about this high honor received by the city.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From paducahsun.com, Feb. 15, 2011]

CITY NAMED DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

(By Will Pinkston)

Paducah keeps adding awards to its trophy shelf, as the city was named one of the 2011 Dozen Distinctive Destinations in America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Since 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation annually selects communities across America that offer cultural and recreational experiences setting them apart from typical vacation destinations. Consideration for this honor comes with communities exhibiting a commitment to historic preservation and revitalization of their downtown centers, displaying their diverse cultural history and architecture, and showing efforts to implement sustainable "green" concepts.

"This is an incredible honor to be named by the national trust," said Rosemarie Steele, marketing director for the Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau. "There's strong criteria for qualifications and we've met all of them."

Steele said several factors helped to put Paducah in the running for the trust's honor.

"Paducah's history is really rich in the diversity and the prosperity of being a river town," Steele said. "The spirit of the people who decided to save and preserve downtown, which started years ago, and kept the moment alive, have made us a vibrant river town."

The trust considered Paducah attractions, such as the National Quilt Museum of the United States, the annual Quilt Show, the River Discovery Center, the Lower Town Arts District and Upper Town Heritage Walking Tour.

"(The National Trust for Historic Preservation) wants to know what the hidden gems are, like all the creative experiences we have," Steele said. "More than 5,000 people learn their craft in Paducah, not just quilting, but the arts, throughout lower town."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation also considered the city's "walkability," according to Steele, with many of Paducah's historic and cultural attractions centered within only a few blocks of one another.

"Paducah celebrates its past in a wide variety of ways, from protecting and restoring landmark buildings to commissioning artists to create life-sized historic murals," said Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

While being included on the Dozen Distinctive Destinations list is an honor in itself,

the National Trust for Historic Preservation asks the public to vote for the 2011 fan favorite on its website. Voters may cast ballots once daily through March 15. The winner will be announced March 16. Last year's fan favorite community was Marquette, Mich.

"We're really excited about the voting and we think we can win this one," Steele said. "We're hoping to get a whole lot of help from the community to help us become the distinctive destination and fan favorite."

Paducah's appearance on the trust's Dozen Distinctive Destinations list comes on the heels of it being named as having one of the most romantic main streets in America just this past week, Steele said. Towns from across the country submitted five photographs that best illustrated why their main street and downtown districts should be considered among the most romantic in the country; Paducah was included in the top five, alongside towns in Louisiana, Tennessee, Connecticut and Indiana.

"The beautiful thing about all of this is it really puts us in front of so many people through the national trust," Steele said. "These honors will resonate with so many people who are considering on moving here."

To vote for the Dozen Distinctive Destinations fan favorite, visit www.preservationnation.org/ddd/.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

FAA AIR TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 223, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 223) to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide for modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Rockefeller (for Wyden) amendment No. 27, to increase the number of test sites in the National Airspace System used for unmanned aerial vehicles and to require one of those test sites to include a significant portion of public lands.

Inhofe modified amendment No. 7, to provide for an increase in the number of slots available at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Rockefeller (for Ensign) amendment No. 32, to improve provisions relating to certification and flight standards for military re-

motely piloted aerial systems in the National Airspace System.

McCain amendment No. 4, to repeal the Essential Air Service Program.

Rockefeller (for Leahy) amendment No. 50, to amend title 1 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include nonprofit and volunteer ground and air ambulance crew members and first responders for certain benefits, and to clarify the liability protection for volunteer pilots that fly for public benefit.

Reid amendment No. 54, to allow airports that receive airport improvement grants for the purchase of land to lease the land and develop the land in a manner compatible with noise buffering purposes.

Udall (NM) modified amendment No. 49, to authorize Dona Ana County, NM, to exchange certain land conveyed to the county for airport purposes.

Udall (NM) modified amendment No. 51, to require that all advanced imaging technology used as a primary screening method for passengers be equipped with automatic target recognition software.

Paul amendment No. 18, to strike the provisions relating to clarifying a memorandum of understanding between the Federal Aviation Administration and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Hutchison further modified amendment No. 93 (to modified amendment No. 7), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided in the quorum.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for second-degree amendments be extended up until the cloture vote.

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

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I came to the floor to briefly voice my very strong support for this FAA reauthorization bill and to thank my chairman, JAY ROCKEFELLER, for his leadership.

Many people have said this, but it is worth repeating. This is a jobs bill. The FAA reauthorization act is going to

modernize our air transport system. As many have said far more eloquently than I could ever say, we are looking at a system that has its roots in the 1940s and the 1950s, and we need to move beyond this and get a 21st century system. That is what NextGen is going to do—give us a much better way to handle all of those flights, all of that congestion. It is going to be, in addition to a jobs bill—280,000 jobs nationwide—it is also going to be a bill that focuses on safety. The growth that will be spurred on by this bill is crucial, because this industry also accounts for nearly 11 million jobs and more than 5 percent of U.S. GDP.

I want to talk about two issues I have a great stake in for the people of California and, frankly, for the people of this country. The first issue is the passengers' bill of rights. I am so grateful to our leader on the committee, Senator ROCKEFELLER, and his ranking member, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, for ensuring that this bipartisan legislation—I wrote it with Senator SNOWE—is included in the FAA bill.

We have all heard the horror stories of travelers trapped for hours without adequate food or water, some not even able to access their medicines; planes filled with screaming kids; upset passengers and unsanitary conditions from overflowing toilets.

In fact, it is a situation that, if anyone has ever been in it, makes an indelible mark, and, frankly, it makes you less likely to want to fly in the American skies because you have a chance at being one of those unfortunate people to get trapped in such a situation.

I thank Kate Hanni, a constituent of mine who was trapped in one of these aircraft for hours on the tarmac and got off the plane and said: I need to do something about this. She is the one who lobbied very hard, a citizen's lobby, to get a passengers' bill of rights.

I am grateful the Department of Transportation, under President Obama, took the first step by adopting key elements of our passengers' bill of rights through regulation last year. Secretary LaHood, who heads the Department of Transportation, sent a strong message and basically said airlines must give passengers the option of deplaning if they have been stranded on the tarmac for more than 3 hours.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, there have only been 12 tarmac delays of more than 3 hours from May to October of 2010, after the Department of Transportation instituted this rule, compared to 500-plus in the same period a year earlier. So by putting in a regulation that tells the airlines they cannot keep people on planes past 3 hours and, if they do, they have to give them an option to get off, we have turned things around. We have seen 12 tarmac delays compared to 500. We want to codify these consumer protections. We want a law. We don't know what the next President