



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 23, 2011

No. 71

## Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, source of enabling strength, sustain our Senators not only in the great moments but also in the repetitive and common tasks of life. Establish their work, strengthening them to honor You by serving others. Lord, make them agents of healing and hope as they help people live in greater justice and peace. Empower them to daily develop greater respect and submission to Your commands. Fill them with Your life-giving spirit so that they will feel greater compassion for those on life's margins. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL 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. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, May 23, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of

Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL 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, if any, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. today. During that period of time, Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

At 3 p.m. the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1039, the PATRIOT Act extension, and the time until 5 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled. At 5 p.m. there be a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the PATRIOT Act.

Mr. President, this will be a busy week in the Senate. We have to renew the PATRIOT Act. It is not a perfect law, but it plays an important role in keeping our country safe. We also have to reauthorize the FAA bill, the Federal Aviation Administration bill.

We all know what will be the focus of this week's biggest debate and biggest headlines. The primary conversation this week will be about the Republican plan to kill Medicare. People are talking a lot about that plan because there is a lot of people have to fear.

The Republican plan would shatter a cornerstone of our society and break our promise to the elderly and to the sick. It would turn our seniors' health care over to profit-hungry insurance companies. It would let bureaucrats decide what tests and treatment seniors

get. It would also ask seniors to pay more for their health care in exchange for fewer benefits.

That is a bad deal all around. So it is easy to understand why the American people do not support it. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents do not support the plan to kill Medicare or to change it as we know it. I will not support it, and though the Republican House passed the Medicare-killing plan almost unanimously, sometimes it is difficult to tell where the Republican Party stands generally.

We all saw how quickly one prominent Republican Presidential candidate spun himself in circles last week. First, he called the plan for what it was—radical. He said it was “right-wing social engineering.”

Hours later, after Republicans jumped all over him, he reversed course and said he would support the plan to kill Medicare. Remember, he said it is “radical”; it is “right-wing social engineering.” And now suddenly he said it is OK. That is some real interesting gymnastics.

Another prominent Republican, one who serves in this body, has been all over the map as well. First, he said—in his words:

Thank God for the Republican plan to kill Medicare.

Then he said he was “undecided.” Now he says he opposes it. Well, tune in tomorrow or maybe this evening to see if he changes his mind again. Our Republican colleagues cannot seem to believe the same thing today they said yesterday.

But when Democrats talk about Medicare, we still believe today the same thing we believed years ago, decades ago, generations ago. We believe in our responsibility to each other and especially those in their golden years. Forty-six years ago this summer, President Lyndon Johnson, a former majority leader of this body, signed Medicare into law. As he did so, he said the following:

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S3205