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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, source of all life, give our lawmakers this day Your grace and wisdom. Because of Your grace, may they find such inner peace that it will prompt them to reach out to one another and accomplish great things for Your glory. Because of Your wisdom, may they face today's challenges with confidence, knowing that You order the steps of good people.

Lord, give all who labor on Capitol Hill a special discernment to know and to do Your will. Remove their strain and stress and let their ordered lives confess the beauty of Your peace. We pray in Your sacred Name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN 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 as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a

Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam 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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday, I came to the floor to call on Democrats in Washington to wake up, to open their eyes to the signs we see all around us that the policies of the past 2 years are making our economy worse.

Home values are still falling. Manufacturers are showing the weakest growth in nearly 2 years. Nearly 14 million Americans are looking for jobs and can't find them. For many, there is a nagging feeling that things will actually get worse before they get better. And who can blame them?

Over the past 2 months, two ratings agencies have come out with dire warnings over the status of America's stellar credit ratings out of fear that we don't get our fiscal house in order.

One has already put our rating under review and the other has threatened to do so if we don't do something in a matter of weeks—weeks. Yet Democrats here in Washington are doing nothing.

The President is patting himself on the back for an auto bailout that is expected to cost the taxpayers billions. And Democrats in Congress would rather talk about an election that is a year and a half away.

For 2½ years, Democrats in Washington have paid lip service to the idea of job creation—even as they have relentlessly pursued an agenda that is radically opposed to it. And the results speak for themselves: an annual deficit three times bigger than the biggest deficit we ever ran during the last administration, a national debt that we now know will this year be greater than our Nation's entire economy, and chronic unemployment.

But here is the other problem: Democrats don't want to admit that the government-driven policies of the past 2½ years are part of the problem. And until they do, nothing will change. Unless Democrats change their priorities and their policies, the threats of a downgrade will not go away. The debt will not get any smaller. Businesses will not create the kinds of jobs we need to build prosperity.

We need to change course. And a good place to start is with trade.

The President himself has explicitly acknowledged in front of the cameras that free trade agreements will create tens of thousands of jobs for American families who need them. Yet now, the President's advisers say that the White House plans to hold off on this bipartisan job-creating initiative unless it can spend more money on a government benefits program first.

At a time when 14 million Americans are looking for work, they actually want to hold off on these known job-creating agreements in exchange for a green light to spend more money.

It is astonishing. I mean, how do you explain to an American manufacturer or farmer that they have to lose business to France because some Members of Congress want a better benefits package for their allies in organized labor?

You cannot. The White House is free to advocate on behalf of unions. That is its prerogative. But this time it has gone too far. When the White House is

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



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