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Senate

The Senate met at 3:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, our lips sing Your praises and our souls rejoice in You. We pause now in prayer to enter Your throne room and seek Your face. Thank You for the opportunity You give our lawmakers to protect our freedoms and to share with others the hope that is ours as a free people. Use them to increase joy and peace in our world and to bring hope to the hearts of the dispossessed. Help our Senators to see more clearly the spiritual values that are the heritage and guide for this land we love. Let their thoughts, words, and actions be acceptable to You today and always, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 26, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS 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 Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. At that time the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House message to accompany H.R. 2608, the continuing resolution. The filing deadline for second-degree amendments to the House message is 5 p.m. At 5:30 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the House message with the Reid of Nevada amendment.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago the Senate passed a bipartisan bill to fund the Federal Emergency Management Agency, known as FEMA. For 2 weeks House Republicans have been sitting on that bill and taking no action. The House of Representatives has refused to act on a bipartisan bill to fund FEMA for the next year. Not only have they not moved that bill in any way but they left town. The House of Representatives, as we speak, on the eve of the government shutting down next Saturday, just a few days from now, and with FEMA on the verge of having no money, left. They are gone. They are not in Washington. It is hard to negotiate with people who are not here. It is hard to do legislation when one part of our bicameral legislature is not here.

Democrats are not giving up on funding FEMA and keeping our government open. We are here. The Senate is in session. The House Republican bill that would have killed 45,000 American jobs did not have the votes last week to pass the Senate. It was not even close. There were 36 votes, but that does not mean we have to shut down the government or abandon Americans in need. Democrats have made a good-faith effort to compromise.

Today the Senate will consider compromise legislation to fund FEMA and keep the government open without killing jobs. Our compromise includes a clean continuing resolution, a bill to fund the government for the next few weeks. Republicans in both Chambers have already agreed to and voted for the funding levels in this continuing resolution, so this should not be a controversial vote for them; they have already voted for it.

The legislation also includes \$3.65 billion in funding for FEMA, which will give American communities ravaged by floods, wildfires, tornadoes, and other disasters the help they need. We know House Republicans support that funding level as well since they voted for it last week. Democrats would have given FEMA more, as we did with our vote last week.

It is interesting; President Obama has declared disasters in 48 of the 50 States this year. Unfortunately, though, this bill will force us to revisit this issue in a few weeks when FEMA funds will be depleted again. But this compromise legislation will cure FEMA's immediate needs. I urge my colleagues to do what is right and support this good-faith compromise to help disaster victims now. In effect, we are waiting for the House to take action on the bill that funds everything for a year, which they should do. But in the meantime, we have the opportunity here to vote today on legislation that takes the level that has already passed the House. I do not know how much

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



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