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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 and everlasting God, who governs all things in Heaven and Earth, mercifully hear our supplications and give us Your peace.

Lord, give our lawmakers this day the grace and wisdom to measure personal convictions in the light of truth and courage. Empower them to act consistent with enlightened conscience, however costly to personal ambition. Give them such a sense of duty that they may leave nothing they ought to do undone. Infuse them with a sense of gratitude that they may offer thanks to You by striving to do Your will.

We pray in Your holy 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, November 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 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 674. At approximately 5:30 p.m., the Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to that matter.

VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, every man and woman who puts on the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces takes a solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies. With that oath comes an obligation: to defend the freedoms for which this noble Nation stands and upon which it was founded, without regard to personal price.

For this service, the United States makes a promise to our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen in return. That promise isn't about flag waving or yellow ribbons. It lasts long after the parades and holidays are over, through every day and every year of their lives. It is a guarantee that the American dream, for which every servicemember fights—and for which many of their comrades have died—will be waiting for them when they return.

Since September 11, 2001, this country has allowed that promise to lapse. Today, there are 240,000 unemployed veterans. These are veterans in the fight against global terrorism. Among veterans who have served since September 11, unemployment is more than 12 percent—more than 3 percentage points higher than among the general population. Among the youngest veterans—those under age 25—the unemployment rate is 22 percent.

These young men and women volunteered to fight terrorism abroad, but their struggles didn't end when they came home. Despite their service and experience, one-quarter of a million post-9/11 veterans can't find employment in today's dismal economy and rapidly changing workforce.

It is time for this country to make good on its promise. As we pay tribute this week to the millions of American veterans who have faithfully served our flag, Democrats want to introduce legislation to put those men and women back to work. VOW to Hire Heroes is the name of the legislation. This will offer tax credits to companies that hire unemployed veterans or veterans who were discharged in the last 5 years. The legislation will give an additional tax credit to the firms that hire unemployed veterans with service-related disabilities. Disabled veterans will also be eligible for an additional year of vocational rehab and employment benefits under this legislation.

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



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