



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

No. 24

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of grace and God of glory, send Your power on Capitol Hill. May the might of Your presence provide our lawmakers with the courage and discipline to follow where You lead. Lord, guide them through their challenging decisions to the desired destination of Your purposes. As they walk on Your path, make them exemplary models of Your love and peace. Fortify their desire to live with sincerity and self-effacement for the glory of Your Kingdom.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U. S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

MEETING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we all know the inconvenience of a few potholes as we drive down the street. It is an inconvenience. But for companies that ship \$10 trillion worth of goods across the country every year, these disintegrating roads are more than an inconvenience or more than a nuisance.

A crowded train ride to an office or a broken escalator at a station where someone is trying to pick up a subway—or what we call here Metro—may be a hassle, but for 51 million Americans who have disabilities, most of whom rely on some type of public transportation to get around, outdated stations and overcrowded trains are more than a minor inconvenience.

Mr. President, this country's deteriorating infrastructure is something we should be very concerned about. This great Nation of ours has an infrastructure that is falling apart. Our highways, our roadways, our bridges, our dams, and railways are more than an inconvenience; they are a drain on our economy. Twenty percent of America's roads don't meet safety standards.

As the Chair heard me say yesterday when I talked about some of these issues, 70,000 bridges need to be replaced or overhauled. We have bridges in America, I am told, where schoolbuses stop when they get to the bridge, have the kids walk across the bridge, then the bus comes across without the kids in it, and then off they go. They do this because they are afraid the bridge will collapse.

Our public transportation system simply can't keep up with the pace of growing ridership. Nine out of ten Americans say rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges is important—90 percent. Democrats in the Senate agree. Modernizing our transit system—rebuilding the roads American families and businesses depend upon—will help fuel our economy.

The legislation now before the Senate is too important to be bogged down with unrelated ideological amendments. Senate Republicans should not divert this bill to try to take away women's access to health care services such as contraception—something we have been dealing with over the last week—or mammograms and other cancer screenings.

Late last night we were told one of the Republican Senators wants to offer an amendment that deals with something totally unrelated to this bill, dealing with the country of Egypt. A debate on Egypt may be the right thing to do, but shouldn't we maybe start in the Foreign Relations Committee? Maybe we should start there. TV cameras can be there, and then it would not hold up this Transportation bill that is so important.

This bill will create or save 2 million jobs. It has broad bipartisan support. I have said here before, and I say it again, I so admire and respect and appreciate the work done by Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE on this bipartisan bill. Unfortunately, our Republican House colleagues have gone in the direct opposite direction. They

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S585