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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of Heaven, You are great, and we come before Your throne with reverence. Lord, look at us and hear our prayers for our Congress, our Nation, and our world. Make our lawmakers so transparently just and fair that falsehood may be banished by the truth that sets us free. Supply the needs of those who are hurting because of this government shutdown as You give our Senators the conviction that with You all things are possible.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The 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 p.m. for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the chair.)

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, Senator SCHUMER yesterday on the floor talked about what the House is doing, and he

described it as “Alice in Wonderland.” I don’t know if that is an apt description. Maybe it is beyond that.

Here is where we are. The House has passed a bill to pay furloughed Federal employees—now, listen to this—once the government opens. Well, why wouldn’t we do that? But the problem is that this uncontroversial legislation is kind of unique, isn’t it?

So now what the Republicans in the House are telling—because they are the ones who set the agenda—they are telling all these Federal workers: What we are going to do for you now—even though we don’t like Federal workers and we haven’t given you a raise in 3 years—what we are going to do now is give you a paid vacation.

That is what it is. These people who want to go to work can’t go to work, but they are going to get paid, they know, when they leave here, and we knew that anyway. We heard today that a number of Federal employees are applying for unemployment benefits. So it is really cruel to tell workers they will receive backpay once the government opens and then refuse to open the government.

Let’s open the government. Hundreds of thousands of furloughed Federal servants want to work. They should be allowed to work. We have, for example, right now in our National Security Agency, 1,000 mathematicians—the numbers may be a little bit wrong but very close—we have 2,500 computer scientists, and 940 Ph.D.s who are home. They cannot work. They cannot get paid. It is not fair to them or our country. Let them work.

We get these little piecemeal bits of legislation from the House—for example, open the Park Service. In Nevada, that is great because we have some national forests there. But 87 percent of the land in the State of Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. The vast majority of that land is Bureau of Land Management. We have some beautiful conservation areas. One is

called Red Rock, which over 1 million people visit every year. It is closed. So opening the Park Service does not help a place 8 or 9 miles out of Las Vegas where 1 million people come to visit. They come there to do that. Some of the best rock climbing in the world is there.

These are ordinary Americans who have not been treated very well during the last several years by the Republicans anyway. No pay raises. They treat Federal employees as if they are a lower class of worker than other people.

Now, remember, Federal workers work really hard. The Presiding Officer works hard. All 8 million Federal employees work hard. There are exceptions, just like anyplace else.

I met two people yesterday. This hurts. Federal employees not being able to work hurts others. Lockheed announced today that they are laying off 3,000 people. They cannot get inspections done. I was with someone yesterday evening from US Air. They cannot take custody of a \$180-million airplane, a brandnew airplane. It is just sitting there. They cannot take custody of that airplane. Why? Because they need a final inspection. This is all throughout America. The Federal Government is involved in aspects of life that everyone has here in America—food inspectors, inspectors for making sure there is safety for a \$180 million airplane. Lockheed has things they are building. Some of them are missiles. They have to make sure they are safe and reliable. One man told me that they must, for the warheads in these nuclear weapons, test them after they have been here in service. They just cannot leave them here, they need to test them. The time is here for them to be tested. The safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons—there is nobody to do it.

Now we are saying to the Federal employees: We are going to pay you when this is all over, but right now you just

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



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