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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. 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.

Eternal Spirit, today teach our lawmakers to do things Your way, embracing Your precepts and walking in Your path. Remind them that the narrow and difficult road less traveled leads to life and few find it. As our Senators receive guidance from You and follow Your leading, replace anxiety with calm, confusion with clarity, and despair with hope. May Your peace become the hallmark of their labors as You keep them focused on the priorities that reflect Your kingdom. 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.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 266.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 266, S. 1846, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we will have further discussion on this matter today; that is, the matter I moved to. On our side, we have cleared the bill. We could complete it quickly. We are waiting to hear from the Republicans. This is one of the bills where, if we need to do some amendments on it, we can do some amendments on it.

The point is, I think we should try to get this done. We have been waiting for a long time to get this done. This is truly a bipartisan bill. As I explained to the Republican leader yesterday, I have had a number of Republicans come to me to see if there is a way this bill could be moved quickly. It has become a desperate situation, with so many problems. Construction has been, in some areas, brought to a halt. So hopefully we can work something out on this in the immediate future.

SCHEDULE

Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the unemployment insurance extension. The time until 12:30 will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans the second 30 minutes. The Senate will then recess from 12:30 until 2:15, as we do every Tuesday, for our caucus meetings. At 2:30, there will be up to two rollcall votes; first, a cloture vote on the Reed of Rhode Island substitute amendment. If cloture is not invoked, there will be a second cloture vote on the underlying bill.

We have had some good discussions, and I am going to—as I know the Republican leader will—discuss if there is a way to move forward on unemployment insurance. I hope there is. At 2:30 today, after our caucuses, we will come out and see if there is a consent agreement we can present to the Senate to move forward with the legislation. I hope that is possible, and we are certainly trying.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. President, each day Bloomberg releases a list of the 300 richest individuals in the world—the Bloomberg Billionaires index. The list includes 67 fortunate and really fabulously wealthy Americans. More than any other country in the world, we have 67 of the 300. Last year, the members of the billionaire index added \$524 billion in new wealth to their net worth.

Listen to that, Mr. President: Last year, the billionaire's index—these 67 people—added \$524 billion of new wealth. Not million but billion—\$2 billion per person last year.

These are 300 fortunate individuals, flooded with their already flush coffers, with another \$2 billion each, while millions of American families struggle to pay their rent. I don't begrudge these people at their making a lot of money. Their good fortune is something that speaks well of our country. We are truly a land of opportunity. But I do believe it is time for average Americans to share in that prosperity, particularly as the economy recovers.

If this were just a quirk in the indexes of how rich people are, that would be one thing, but in the last 30 years this same top 1 percent have seen their wealth increase—their incomes triple—while the middle class has gone down 10 percent in the same 30 years. It is time for average Americans—and I believe this so sincerely—to share in that prosperity in some way, especially as the economy is now recovering.

For most Americans, hard work isn't paying off the way it does for the top 1 percent. For many it has been impossible to even find steady full-time work since the recession began. That is why we must not abandon the 1.4 million Americans who are out there struggling—unemployed people who have been cut off from these crucial benefits now for the last 2 weeks, and they are looking forward to maybe being cut off forever.

This small stipend—an average of \$300 per week—is helping them keep

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



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