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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.

Eternal God, the source of our joy, thank You for this opportunity to call on Your Name. You have sustained this Nation through the seasons of its existence, and we are depending on You, Lord, to guard our future with Your might.

As our Senators seek to do the work of freedom, deepen their love for those on life's margins. Give our lawmakers this day the gift of Your spirit as they give thanks to You in all things.

Lord, we believe You will lead us through all our tomorrows as You have led us through our yesterdays.

We pray in Your merciful 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, November 27, 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.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 419, S. 3254, the Defense authorization bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the bill (S. 3254) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to recess, as we normally do on Tuesdays, from 12:30 to 2:15 to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

We are going to begin consideration of the disabilities treaty this afternoon whether with a vote or with permission. It is a simple majority vote to move to this most important piece of legislation.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 3637

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told that S. 3637 is due for its second reading and is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3637) to temporarily extend the transaction account guarantee program, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is one of the must-do pieces of legislation we have to do before this calendar year ends.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Mr. REID. Mr. President, too often it is a challenge to find common ground here in Washington. But as we negotiate a path back from the fiscal cliff, we should also recognize when Democrats and Republicans agree. We agree taxes should not go up for anyone making less than \$250,000 a year. Now, 97 percent of small businesses and 98 percent of middle-class families would benefit from that.

With common ground in sight, we should be able to act today to avert the fiscal cliff for millions of families and businesses. Even if we disagree on whether to extend tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans, we should agree to hold the middle class harmless and do it today, do it now. A single vote in the House of Representatives would get the job done now. Unfortunately, there is one obstacle standing between Congress and compromise: Grover Norquist. For years Norquist has bullied lawmakers willing to put their oath of office or their promise to serve constituents ahead of their pledge to this antitax zealot. His brand of ideological extremism has been bad for Congress and even worse for the country. So I was pleased to see Republicans in Congress distance themselves from Norquist this week. I appreciate that very much. So do the American people. I am sure their constituents do. Several Republican lawmakers have said revenue should be on

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



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