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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord, Your Holy Word and our own good sense tell us that all we are and all we call our own belong to You. Help us to find ways of living and sharing with others that will reflect this truth.

Today, shower our lawmakers with Your blessings. Enable them to see and experience evidences of Your love. Give them the wisdom to walk humbly and to see everything with faith's eyes. Let them live with true thanksgiving, remembering Your love and presence which can turn deserts into paradise. Give them boldness to take stands for what You have revealed is the application of Your principles and justice for our Nation. We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY 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. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 20, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY 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. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at 10 o'clock this morning, the Senate will resume debate on H.R. 3590, the health

care bill. The debate will be controlled in alternating, hour-long blocks until 10 p.m., from 10 until 10, with the majority controlling the first hour. The majority will control the time from 10 until 10:30 and the Republicans will control the time from 10:30 until 11 p.m.

There will be no rollcall votes during today's session of the Senate. The next vote will occur tomorrow night at 8 p.m., Saturday, November 21. That vote will be on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the health care legislation.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, our good friends on the other side of the aisle have spent 6 weeks behind closed doors putting together this trillion-dollar experiment in health care that raises premiums, raises taxes, and makes drastic cuts to Medicare. We have now had less than 48 hours to look through this 2,074-page bill, but there are 10 things we know for sure that every American should begin to understand. There are 10 things about this bill we can begin to convey to the American people with certainty, starting this morning.

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



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The Democratic bill includes nearly \$½ trillion in new taxes that hit virtually every single American, including, most importantly, middle-class families who make less than \$250,000 a year—almost \$½ trillion dollars in new taxes, a substantial part of it hitting middle-class families who make under \$250,000 a year.

The second thing we know about this massive 2074-page bill is it will raise insurance premiums for the 85 percent of Americans who already have health insurance in our country. So we know buried in this 2,074-page bill are higher insurance premiums for all Americans.

The third thing we know about this massive 2,074-page bill is there will be huge cuts in Medicare, \$½ trillion in cuts in Medicare over 10 years, and it will limit many of the choices seniors now have.

Additionally, this monstrous 2,074-page bill, according to the Congressional Budget Office, will not lower health care costs. My recollection was that the principal reason we went down this path in the first place was to do something about the cost increases that are hitting American businesses and individuals. So we go through passing, presumably—I hope we don't, but if we pass this 2,074-page bill, we will actually increase costs. The true cost of this bill, which was not stated by the majority at the announcement of the bill—if you look at the 10-year period when everything is implemented, the true cost of the bill is \$2.5 trillion. Certain gimmicks were employed to try to make the bill look like it actually was deficit neutral or even raised money for the Government over 10 years. The way that was done was to delay the implementation of parts of the bill. But once everything kicks in, if you look at a 10-year window after everything kicks in, in this monstrous 2,074-page bill, it would actually cost \$2.5 trillion, a massive expansion of the Federal Government.

The sixth thing we know about this bill for sure is, if you like the health insurance you have, you may not be able to keep it. Buried in this 2,074-page bill are provisions that clearly indicate that if you like the health insurance you currently have, you may not be able to keep it. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Democratic bill would force millions of Americans off the health insurance they currently have.

The seventh thing we know about this bill is it would let government bureaucrats dictate what kind of health plans Americans can buy. No longer would they have the option to buy whatever health care plan might make sense for their family. The Government will prescribe what kind of insurance plans Americans can buy and, thereby, of course, what benefits they can receive. Some bureaucrat in Washington is going to dictate the plans that are available for the American people. I suspect people who are young and healthy and have high deductibles may

not have that option anymore. Those are the kinds of Americans for whom the cost of insurance is going to go up dramatically.

What else do we know about this 2,074-page bill? It creates a government plan that the Congressional Budget Office has said would bring about higher premiums. The majority has said the whole point of the government plan, having the government, in effect, get into the insurance business, is to offer a lower cost alternative, but the only way to do that is to subsidize costs, ration care, and undermine private insurance, which could lead to a government takeover of health care.

In the Democratic plan, the Congressional Budget Office actually says the government insurance company would have higher premiums. So, clearly, the only way it could have a positive impact on the cost of insurance would be to subsidize costs, ration care, and undercut private insurers. Of course, that would be the first step toward what some of the more candid liberals in the House have said is a single-payer system. They are actually disappointed this bill doesn't go far enough to create a government insurance company, which then leads to a single-payer, European-type system.

What else do we know about this bill? The Democratic bill, for the first time in history, would allow Federal programs to pay for elective abortions. How do people out in America who feel strongly about that issue—what do they say about it? According to an AP story just this morning, a direct quote from the person with the Catholic bishops who work with this legislative issue here on the Hill—here is what he had to say. This is a quote from this individual who works for the Catholic bishops on legislative issues. "This is the worst bill we have seen so far on the life issue." That is from a spokesman for the Catholic bishops on what is buried in this 2,074-page bill on the issue of whether the government will, for the first time, allow Federal programs to pay for elective abortions.

Another observation he made about it—and this is a direct quote, two words by the spokesman for the Catholic bishops: "Completely unacceptable." Completely unacceptable, the abortion language in this 2,074-page bill. That is how the Catholic bishops apparently feel about this.

Finally, Americans should know this bill does not have the commonsense reforms they have been asking for all along. There is nothing in this massive bill about getting rid of junk lawsuits against doctors and hospitals that CBO said costs us \$54 billion over a period of time. There is nothing in the bill about leveling the playing field when it comes to health care taxes. What the American people would like for us to do is to, step by step, address the cost issue—to them. This bill doesn't do that in any way.

Americans would like to have health care reform, but higher premiums,

higher taxes, and cuts to Medicare that produce more government is not reform. Yet that is precisely what we would get were we to pass this 2,074-page bill sitting here beside my desk.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

SERVICE MEMBERS HOME OWNER-SHIP TAX ACT OF 2009—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 3590, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to Proceed to H.R. 3590, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be debate until 10 p.m., the time controlled in alternating 1-hour blocks, the majority controlling the first hour.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak for a few minutes about the health care legislation that has now been proposed by the majority leader and that we will be hopefully proceeding to for serious discussion, deliberation, and opportunity for amendment. Let me talk first about where we are today without health care legislation.

What are the circumstances faced by the average American family without enactment of health care legislation? The cost of medical care is rising. In fact, it is unaffordable for many individuals and businesses. In addition, there are 46 million who are uninsured in the country. That number continues to grow. I have been in the Senate and continued to watch that number grow for the last decade at least. Those most in need of health insurance often are denied coverage. Many others worry about whether they are one diagnosis away from financial ruin because of their lack of adequate coverage and their lack of ability to afford adequate coverage.

We are working in the Senate to craft a national health reform proposal that would remedy the situation and would do so by reducing the growth in the cost of health care. Let me be clear. We are not saying the cost of health care is going down substantially. We are talking about the growth in the cost of health care. That is what we are trying to moderate as part of this legislation.

We are also providing insurance to everyone in the country, regardless of