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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, in whom we trust, put Your hands upon the Members of this body to guide and strengthen them. Bless them in moments of stress and tension, renewing their strength so that they mount up on wings like eagles. Lord, give them the moral and spiritual stamina to do what is right as You give them the life to understand Your will. May they fulfill their high calling to serve You and this Nation and exemplify to all the oneness of a shared commitment. Make their lives an expression of Your truth, righteousness and justice.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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, February 24, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator

from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the time until 9:55 will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At 9:55, the Senate will proceed to a series of up to two rollcall votes. The first vote will be on the motion to waive the applicable budget points of order with respect to the Reid amendment No. 3310.

If the points of order are waived, we will immediately proceed to vote on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2947, with the Reid substitute amendment.

Following the votes, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

It is my hope we are able to reach an agreement to pass the short-term tax extenders legislation today. The next item of business will be the bipartisan travel promotion legislation.

Following the remarks of the Senator from Kentucky, I would yield 4 minutes to the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

HEALTH CARE SUMMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, the White House unveiled its latest iteration of the Democrat plan for health care reform, and, to put it quite simply, it was a major disappointment.

It was our hope that when the administration called for a health care summit at the White House, it would be an opportunity for both sides to come together and start over. Now it is perfectly clear the administration had something else in mind entirely.

The plan we saw Monday is hardly a starting off point for a bipartisan discussion on commonsense reforms. It is really just more of the same: a massive government scheme with all the flaws of the previous proposals that the American people have already seen and rejected. Changing the name and increasing the cost is not what Americans have been asking for, and it is certainly not reform.

To make matters worse, even as lawmakers head down to the White House for this health care summit tomorrow, Democrats on Capitol Hill are working behind the scenes on a plan aimed at jamming this massive health spending bill through Congress against the clear wishes of an unsuspecting public. What they have in mind is a last ditch legislative sleight of hand called reconciliation that would enable them to impose government-run health care for all on the American people, whether Americans want it or not. And we know that Americans do not, in fact, want it.

Americans have seen these proposals before. They do not want them. So this is the height of legislative arrogance. If you did not like the Cornhusker Kickback, get ready. This is the Cornhusker Kickback on steroids.

In light of all these behind the scenes efforts to get around the will of the people, it is hard to imagine what the purpose of Thursday's summit is. If the White House wants real bipartisanship,

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



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