

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY  
LEADER

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

SENATOR CHRIS DODD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the good priest has a wonderful person as one of his parishioners, someone we all look up to, someone we will miss dearly. For me, it is a personal loss. He is very proud of his religion. Obviously, the guest Chaplain is one reason.

Mr. McCONNELL. Will the majority leader allow me to make an observation?

Mr. REID. Of course.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I had the opportunity to meet the father in the hall. I expressed to him my admiration for Senator DODD. In fact, I said he was my favorite Democrat. We are indeed going to miss Senator DODD in the Senate in the coming years. I thank him for being with us this morning.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, after any leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the food safety bill. There will be 2 minutes for debate prior a series of three rollcall votes. We will have the Coburn motion to suspend rule XXII for the purpose of proposing and considering Coburn amendment No. 4697, a Coburn motion to suspend rule XXII for purposes of proposing and considering Coburn amendment No. 4694, and then passage of this most important bill, the food safety bill.

Upon disposition of the food safety legislation, there will be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 4 p.m. to allow for party caucus meetings. They are a little longer today than normal because of organizational things we are working through.

At 4 p.m. today, Senator DODD will be recognized to give his farewell speech to us and the country.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE  
CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, S. 3985 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3985) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY  
LEADER

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

WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, congressional leaders of both parties will meet with the President at the White House today to talk about the work we have to do before the end of the year and, hopefully, about the things we can do together to foster the right conditions for businesses to start investing again and creating jobs.

Americans are watching the economic drama that is playing out in Europe. They expect us to read the signs of the times and work together to make sure that we avoid a similar crisis here, that we don't walk right into the same problems through a lack of will or political courage.

The American people expect us to put the national interest ahead of party interest. And, frankly, that is why it has been so distressing for many of us to watch our Democrat friends grope for a clear and unified position on whether or not to raise taxes in the middle of a recession.

One would think that this issue would be simple and straightforward.

Economists say that preventing a tax increase is one of the most important things Congress can do to help the economy. And the voters ratified that view earlier this month by sending candidates from both parties to Washington who vowed not to raise taxes once they got here.

But our Democrat friends are apparently still reluctant to draw any clear lessons from the election. With millions of American households staring at the imminent prospect of smaller paychecks in just a few short weeks unless Congress does something, Democrats are still searching for a solution that enables them to benefit politically—regardless of what it does to the economy or to families.

Just take the latest proposal.

Some Democrats now say they only want to raise taxes on businesses that make more than \$1 million a year. Where did that number come from? Well, it turns out this figure has no economic justification whatsoever. Nowhere will we find a study or survey which indicates that raising taxes on small businesses with over \$1 million in income will create jobs or help spur the economy.

In fact, the author of this proposal freely admits it isn't an economic policy proposal at all, but rather one that was designed to provide better political messaging—an astonishing admission.

Let us get something straight. Millions of out-of-work Americans don't want a message. They want a job. Millions of struggling families trying to make ends meet don't need the Democrat messaging to improve; they need the economy to improve.

Selling bad economic policy to the American people is not an acceptable alternative to creating an environment that will put people back to work and help spur the economy.

We have heard a lot of chatter here in Washington lately about the negotiations that are expected to take place on this looming tax hike in the weeks ahead—on how to prevent it. How about we start with this: the beginning and end of any negotiation shouldn't be what is good for any political party. It should be what is good for the economy and for the American people. An if we leave the politics aside, if we look at the facts, the answer here is simple: no tax hikes on anybody—period.

So the question isn't what is best for the economy and jobs—the answer to that is obvious. The question is when will our friends on the other side get serious about either one.

It has been reported that the author of the \$1 million proposal ran it through a focus group to see how it polled. This is precisely the kind of thing Americans are telling us to put aside. The election was a month ago. It is time to move on. It is time to work together on the priorities Americans want us to address.

Republicans have heard the voters loud and clear. They want us to focus on preventing a tax hike on every taxpayer, on reining in Washington spending and on making it easier for employers to start hiring again. That is why Republican leaders are reiterating our offer to work with anyone, from either party, who is ready to focus on priorities like these.

The day after the election, the President acknowledged that “the overwhelming message” of the voters “[was] that . . . we want you to focus completely on jobs and the economy.”

That is the same message Republicans will bring to the White House today.

And that is why there is no reason we shouldn't be able to reach an agreement on taxes soon.

It is unclear how long our friends across the aisle will continue to resist the message of the election and cling to the liberal wish list that got us a job-killing healthcare law, a “cap-and-trade” national energy tax, an out-of-control spending spree, million more jobs lost, trillions more in debt, but not a single appropriations bill to fund the government or a bill to prevent the coming tax hikes.

With just a few weeks left before the end of the year, they are still clinging to the wrong priorities—instead of preventing a tax hike, they want to focus on immigration and don't ask, don't tell—and, maybe, if there is time left, see what they can do about jobs and the economy.

Indeed, their entire legislative plan for the rest of the lame duck session appears to be to focus on anything except jobs, which is astonishing when we consider the election we have just had.