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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord God of the nations, Your word declares: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." May our lawmakers and the citizens of this great land strive to please You through right living and submission to Your will. Help us to flee from the dead end path of transgression that leads to national ruin. Enable us to turn from thoughts, words, and deeds that violate Your precepts and commands.

Lord, fill our Senators with a hunger for holiness and a hatred of evil. Enlarge their influence and use them for Your glory. Reinforce them by the constant assurance of Your presence.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND 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. Madam President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 11 a.m. today. During that time, Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes, the majority will control the next 30 minutes, and the remaining time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the final half.

At 11 a.m., the Senate will proceed to vote on passage of the 2-week continuing resolution. Upon disposition of that matter, the Senate will resume consideration of the America Invents Act. Additional rollcall votes in relation to amendments to the America Invents Act are expected to occur throughout the day.

BUDGETING AND JOBS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have worked for weeks now in moving forward on this funding measure for the country. What Democrats have said for weeks now is that we are committed to working with all sides to find a middle ground that helps us move forward and move toward a fiscally responsible budget for the rest of the year.

Yesterday the House acted and soon the Senate will act as well. Our priorities are twofold: One, keeping the country running so essential services do not get interrupted—and certainly they should not be interrupted—at a time we can least afford it.

We have 2 more weeks to do this. We have heard today in the news that JOHN MCCAIN's economic adviser said if the Republicans continue going on the route they have talked about, it will eliminate 700,000 jobs in this struggling economy. Goldman Sachs issued a study yesterday indicating it would hurt the gross national product by up to 2 percent, and that is devastating.

So our priorities are twofold: One, keeping the country running so essential services do not get interrupted at a time we can least afford it; and, two, equally as important, we need to lay the groundwork with a budget that invests in what works and cuts what doesn't. We have to begin to bring down the deficit without forfeiting our future.

This has not been an easy process. But we need to set aside partisan motivations and remember we work for the American people, not our political parties. I am pleased the Republicans have agreed with the President's suggested cuts and dropped all those riders—provisions meant only to send messages, only to create unnecessary hurdles, and kill progress.

We are going to keep working toward a solution. This time around, it may not include everything Democrats want or everything Republicans want. But we need to have a compromise which will be part of an ongoing conversation. Just like our overarching priority when we budget—that we must live within our means—this next step recognizes that we must do the best with what we have.

Today we will also work toward finishing the patent reform bill. It is called the America Invents Act, a jobs bill. It is a priority. We have to finish

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



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