



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2011

No. 44

## 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, as we begin today's session, we ask that Your spirit would guide the deliberations of our lawmakers. Move in their hearts, directing their thoughts and intentions to noble ends. May our Senators hear Your voice and embrace Your wisdom as they seek to keep our Nation strong and lead the world into a new era of freedom.

Lord, help our Nation's leaders stand tall for righteousness. Embue them with stamina for the long days ahead. Bind them together as prayer partners as they deal with the diversity of ideas. And, Lord, bless all who labor for liberty on Capitol Hill, and their families.

We pray in Your sacred 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 30, 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, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 493, the small business jobs bill. Rollcall votes in relation to amendments to the small business jobs bill are possible today. We hope our friends on the Republican side who are blocking will allow us to move forward on this bill. There are a number of nongermane and really nonappropriate amendments on this bill. We have agreed to go ahead and work on those. Two that are the most glaring are the 1099, which we need to resolve, and the EPA controversy we have. We are being blocked on the other side from even getting votes on these amendments.

We were told earlier in the session that what the Republicans wanted was an open amendment process. That is great, except we have an open amendment process and they will not let us vote on the bills. I hope that changes. They will not let us vote on the amendments or the bills. Anyway, if the logjam is broken, we will schedule them as soon as we can.

There will be a Senators-only briefing today regarding Libya with Secretary Clinton, Secretary Gates, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen. That will be at 5 p.m. in the new Visitor Center.

### BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, as the country watches, we continue to work toward a bipartisan, bicameral agreement to keep the country running. Let me update the Senate on where we stand.

I want everyone to know how things looked from the beginning, but also let's talk about how they look right now from the negotiating table. Much of the criticism in this process has come from people who are not even sitting at the negotiating table. I am, and so is Speaker BOEHNER. I am glad he has returned to the conversation. It is obvious he has a difficult situation on his hands, and I do not envy him in that regard. He is getting a lot of pressure from the tea party folks to dig in his heels even if it hurts and destroys the recovery we have going now.

What is worse, the country does not care much about the tea party. There is a new CNN poll out today that says this very directly. Let's put it this way: The people who care about the tea party are a very small number—who care about them positively. Those who think about them negatively is very high, more than 50 percent. And that does not mean 50 percent favor the tea party. It does not. Fifty percent of the American people do not want anything to do with the tea party. Only a small percentage identify with the tea party. The interesting thing and I think the important thing to the country is that the tea party's unpopularity continues to grow because the American people see how unreasonable they are.

Let me reiterate my hope that the Republican leadership recognizes they cannot continue to be pulled to the

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



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