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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, as our lawmakers seek to meet their responsibilities, give them the awareness to look not only to the immediate needs and the concerns of the moment but to be enlightened by the majesty of Your creation and Your eternal spirit. Strengthened by Your spirit, give them the wisdom to refuse to do anything which would bring them regret, remorse or shame. May they never do anything they would have to hide and about which they should be ashamed that others should know.

Lord, today we confess our human inadequacies and our need for You to infuse us with Your strength. May this be a day in which we all sense Your presence and receive Your power.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 5, 2012.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 410, S. 3220.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 410, S. 3220, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are now on the motion to proceed to the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the time until 12:30 will be equally divided. The majority will control the first 30 minutes and the Republicans will control the second 30 minutes.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

I ask unanimous consent the cloture vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 3220 occur at 2:30 p.m. and that the time from 2:15 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders, with the majority controlling the final half.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I indicated, we are on the Paycheck Fairness Act, and we will have that cloture vote at 2:30 p.m. today.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, most Americans believe if they get an education, they work hard and play by the rules, they will have a fair shot at success. But for millions of American women, no amount of talent or dedication will bring pay equality with their male co-workers. In the minds of many employers, they simply are not equal.

American women take home 77 cents for every \$1 their male colleagues earn for doing the exact same work. That stunning fact holds true whether the woman has a college degree, regardless of how many hours she spends in the office each week or on some manufacturing floor and regardless of what job she holds—77 cents applies.

But listen to this. If she is an African-American or Hispanic woman, the disparity is even starker. African-American women make 62 cents on the dollar and Hispanic women 54 cents on the dollar compared to White men working the same hours and doing the same jobs. They are not working at different jobs; these are the exact same jobs. If someone is Hispanic and they are a woman, they get about half as much as a man doing the same job. If they are African American, they get about 62 cents compared to every \$1 a man makes.

While landmark pieces of legislation such as the Equal Pay Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act have narrowed the pay gap, they have not closed the gap, and that is obvious by the numbers I just announced to the Senate. So Congress must do more. This act that is before the Senate would give workers stronger tools to combat wage discrimination.

One of the tools of retaliation employers have is they fire workers if they discuss how much they make with another worker. Our legislation would bar retaliation against workers for discussing salary information. Why do we

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



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