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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father, far from the world, we come to You in prayer, boldly entering Your throne room to be blessed by Your sweet presence. Thank You for the calm retreat of fellowship with You.

Thank You for our lawmakers. Continue to inspire and sustain them, as Your wisdom illuminates their path. May they be faithful in their service to this Nation and to you. Lord, dwell in this Chamber and in their minds so that they will think Your thoughts and discover Your solutions.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in morning business until 5:30 p.m.

Today at 5:30 p.m. the Senate will resume consideration of S. 743, the Marketplace Fairness Act. There will be two rollcall votes in order to complete action on that bill. The filing deadline for all second-degree amendments to S. 743 is 4 p.m. today.

I have been told, and staff has indicated to me, that we believe there will

be an agreement that we will not have to have the vote this evening on the water resources bill; that we can just move to it sometime tomorrow. Otherwise, if we can't work that out, there will be a third rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Water Resources Development Act.

THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for 38 straight months private sector companies have added new jobs and put Americans back to work, 7 million Americans in all. They have done it in spite of economic policies that hampered growth—harsh austerity policies Republicans have forced on the economy for the last 2 years. Yet the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the other indicators hit an all-time high last week and the manufacturing sector remains strong.

While the economy isn't back to full strength, and that certainly is the truth, last week's job report shows we have made remarkable progress in 3 years. But just imagine how strong job growth could have been if Republicans had not insisted on round after round of meat axe budget cuts that undercut economic expansion.

Every expert, every respected economist says the best way to encourage a recovery, the best way to create jobs is with targeted investments and balanced deficit reduction. The most responsible way to reduce our deficit is to get away from short-term fixes, last-minute negotiations and, instead, pursue a responsible budget process. We can't begin to find common ground if we never get to the negotiating table. That is why again today I will ask unanimous consent to go to conference with the House on the budget, the budget that we passed.

For 2 years my Republican colleagues have complained the Senate had not passed a budget resolution, even

though we had enacted a budget with the force of law and signed by President Obama. Remember, a budget resolution is just an inter-Congress matter. It doesn't have anything to do with the President. He doesn't have to sign that, but we enacted a budget with the force of law and signed by President Obama.

The Republicans complained and complained: Why didn't we do a budget resolution? We had something much better than a budget resolution, but for 2 years Republicans longed for the days of regular order. We know because they told us so. They wanted amendments; we gave them amendments. They wanted bills to go through committee; they got bills reported out of committees. Republicans were desperate for the Senate to vote on a budget resolution that would set spending priorities for the fiscal year. They got them. We passed a budget resolution under regular order, complete with a late-night budget vote-arama that lasted until 5 a.m. that included more than 100 individual votes. Still, the House has refused to go to conference with us. Since they got what they claimed they wanted, their interest in regular order has not just waned, it disappeared.

They don't want to go to conference as we would under the regular order—that they said they wanted. They don't even want to name conferees. We tried to get that out of this body.

The ranking Republican on the Senate Budget Committee admitted these stall tactics were an effort to provide political cover for his colleagues in the House. This is what he said:

There are difficulties in the fact that we haven't been able to have any understanding on how this conference might work and what prospects we have for success might be. I think it's possible that we could succeed, but at this point we're not close enough to anticipate a successful conference and that presents complications for the House.

Can you imagine? They don't have any understanding how this conference might work. Well, probably one of 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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