

pressure. I appreciate the work which allowed us to get this done.

I appreciate what Secretary Hagel, Ash Carter at the Pentagon, the Assistant Secretary of the Senate, Sheila Dwyer, and her entire staff in the Secretary's Office have done to make this whole situation as pleasant as it has been.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I now ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of the farm bill this morning, the time until 10 a.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

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

Mr. REID. Following the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 953, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 11:45 a.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, that I be recognized at 11:45 a.m. today.

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

REMEMBERING FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate will pay its final respects to a friend and a respected colleague—and that is an understatement—Frank Lautenberg. Frank will lie in repose in the Chamber where he spent three decades of his professional life.

Senator Lautenberg was one of the most effective and productive Senators to serve in the Senate and, as we learned yesterday, one of the most humorous. His leadership as well as his laughter and kindness will be missed.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I talked a little bit about the farm bill, but in a few minutes we will consider whether to end debate on the agriculture jobs bill.

I commend Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN on their excellent work. We were able to get some votes, but we ran into a problem, and we were unable to reach an agreement to consider a finite number of amendments, as they have been trying to do for several days. I am optimistic and hopeful we will advance the measure and be able to pass the bill with a strong bipartisan vote as we did last year.

Unfortunately, last year the House of Representative failed to even consider the Senate passed bipartisan farm bill. I hope this year the bipartisan legislation—which will create jobs, cut taxpayer subsidies, and reduce the debt by some \$23 billion—will be voted on in the House.

America's farms and ranches are the most productive in the world, but to keep America's farms and America's economy strong, Congress must pass a strong farm bill and do it quickly.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. REID. On one final subject, to ensure this Nation's continued economic recovery and long-term success, it is crucial that America invest in our educated workforce, and we need to continue to have an educated workforce. In this country a college education is the surest path to a better life. But higher education has never been more expensive or further out of reach for middle-class families. So it is crucial Congress act before July 1 to keep the interest rates low for 7 million college students who can't afford to pile on more debt.

Democrats have a commonsense plan to prevent loan rates from doubling for 2 years without adding a single penny to the deficit. We will consider that legislation, as I have just indicated, later this morning.

The Republican alternative proposal, by contrast, would be worse than doing nothing at all. It would be worse than letting the rates double, which would happen if we do nothing. The Republican proposal will saddle students with even more debt—about \$6,500 more debt—than they have today. That is a serious blow, considering that Americans have more than \$1 trillion in student loan debt.

Keeping college affordable is the best investment we can make in our country. Congress should remove the obstacles from keeping young people from getting an education and not put more barriers in their way. I hope our Republican colleagues will work to invest in America's future instead of, once again, sticking it to the students.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Earlier this week, I came to the floor and asked Senate Democrats to work with us on permanent student loan reform. This is an issue ripe for bipartisan cooperation.

Both the President and Republicans want to prevent rates from going up in July, and the ideas Republicans have put forward on the issue are actually very similar to what the President has already proposed. This actually should be a slam dunk.

Instead, Senate Democrats have put forward a bill that fails the very benchmarks that the President himself set—a bill that is nothing more than a short-term political patch funded by permanent tax hikes. The bill would

cost taxpayers more than \$8 billion, yet only save students about \$6 a month. Worse still, it is a bill Senate Democrats know will fail. In fact, they actually seem to be indicating they want it to fail.

Why would that be? Undoubtedly so they could keep this issue alive for the permanent campaign that never seems to end. Top Senate Democrats have stated themselves that they are "not looking for compromise" and that they are determined to show "the difference between the two parties on a key issue," even when there isn't one.

Two of the most senior Democrats said those things. Those are direct quotes, so basically they are determined to force a partisan fight regardless of the costs to students. By the way they set up this morning's votes, it is pretty clear those votes are intentionally designed to fail.

So when the Senate Democrats get their wish and the bill fails this evening, I hope the President will step in to work with us on a serious permanent solution because, as I said, our ideas for reform are not all that different from his on this issue. Students should not be made to suffer just because some in this town seem to see them as rooks and pawns in a political chess match.

Look, this isn't a fight young Americans need, and they especially don't need this fight right now. Young men and women are already having a rough enough go in the Obama economy. Those who make it through college face a highly uncertain future once they get out in the real world, as their parents like to call it. They are having a real tough time finding a job.

Once ObamaCare comes online, experts predict their health care premiums are set to skyrocket. Young men in their mid-20s to mid-30s could see rate increases of 50 percent or more, depending on which study we look at.

Here is the thing: Even if premiums end up going up by just a small fraction of that amount, it is still going to create an enormous headache for the next generation. While the administration's allies promised subsidies, studies indicate those payments from taxpayers may not make up for the higher costs.

Many young folks seem to be living largely from paycheck to paycheck these days, often because they literally have no other choice. These men and women are just getting by as it is. Do we expect these Americans to be able to afford to pay even more?

Apparently Washington Democrats do. Because if young folks don't cough up money for health insurance, they are going to get hit with a penalty tax. So one way or the other, many are going to start paying more. That is just one more reason why Senate Democrats need to get serious about the student loan issue.

This summer alone more than 9 million college students will take out

nearly \$7,000 worth of loans and about \$25,000 in total by the time they earn their degrees. That is a smart investment, but it is also a lot of money. We owe them certainty and stability and permanent reform along the lines Republicans and President Obama have called for, and those two proposals, as I said, are not that far apart and actually accomplish that result. It is time for the Democrats in Washington to put the campaigning aside and work with us to enact that kind of reform.

UPHOLDING A COMMITMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have said repeatedly—and I will say again today—the Senate needs to know whether the majority leader intends to uphold a commitment he has now twice made, and this commitment was that he would not break the rules of the Senate to change the rules.

Specifically, both at the beginning of the last Congress and at the beginning of this Congress, he committed to the Senate and to the American people that he would not use what is referred to as the “nuclear option.” These were very clear commitments. They were not contingent commitments or commitments made with caveats. They were not contingent commitments or commitments made with caveats.

Here we have the exact words of the majority leader on this chart. At the beginning of the previous Congress, on January 27, 2011, the majority leader said:

I agree that the proper way to change Senate rules is through the procedures established in those rules, and I will oppose any effort in this Congress or the next—

and listen to this, I say to the Presiding Officer and my colleagues—

or the next, meaning the Congress we are in now—

to change the Senate’s rules other than through the regular order.

No contingencies, no caveats, no saying unless I decide I don’t like certain behavior.

In this Congress there was an exchange between myself and the majority leader. Here is what I said on January 24 of 2013, this year:

Finally, I would confirm with the majority leader that the Senate would not consider other resolutions relating to any standing order or rules this Congress unless they went through the regular order process?

At the beginning of this session, we passed a couple of rules changes, a couple of standing orders. We made some changes and we made those changes in return for the majority leader’s commitment, which follows. The majority leader said:

That is correct. Any other resolutions related to Senate procedure would be subject to a regular order process including consideration by the Rules Committee.

In other words, an unequivocal, non-contingent commitment, so that everyone knew the rules of the Senate for

the entire Congress. There was no sort of hanging a sword of Damocles over our heads and saying, if Members don’t behave as I wish, I will break my word. Now the suggestion apparently is, Members have to behave in a certain way to satisfy me or my word doesn’t mean anything.

This is a serious matter. We are only one-half of 1 year through a 2-year Congress, and the Senate and the American people deserve to know whether the word of the majority leader will be kept.

SIXTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY AND THE HONOR FLIGHT PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today is the 69th anniversary of the D-day invasion. On June 6, 1944, 160,000 allied troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of heavily fortified French coastline in a surprise attack against the forces of Nazi Germany. The cost was exceedingly high—more than 9,000 allied soldiers were killed or wounded that day—but the Normandy invasion was the beginning of a successful conclusion of the war.

I am also honored to recognize the distinguished group of World War II veterans from my home State of Kentucky who have made the trip to our Nation’s Capital today—appropriately enough on D-day—to visit the National World War II Memorial on the Mall. This memorial celebrates their service, as well as the service of the brave warriors who landed on Normandy Beach, and every man and woman in uniform who fought to defend freedom in World War II.

This group includes 26 veterans who were able to make the trip to see their memorial thanks to the Honor Flight Program. The Bluegrass Chapter of Honor Flight has brought over 1,000 veterans, most of them from Kentucky, to Washington, DC for this purpose. This program provides transportation, lodging, and food for the veterans. Without Honor Flight many of these veterans would never be able to visit the Capitol or see the World War II Memorial.

As have many of my colleagues, I have been privileged to visit with groups of Honor Flight veterans on several occasions before, and I am pleased to report that I will be meeting with today’s group at the Memorial as well. My father served in World War II. He got there after D-day and after the Battle of the Bulge. He was there from March of 1945 through the end of war when we were pushing the Germans back into their own country. I wish he had lived long enough to have had an opportunity to visit the World War II Memorial. I know it would have meant a lot to him, as it does to today’s surviving veterans.

As World War II recedes further into the past, sadly, we are losing more of these living legends. We have just had to say goodbye to our friend Senator

Frank Lautenberg, the last World War II veteran to serve in this body. The passage of time makes it all the more important to thank these heroes for their service before it is too late.

Today is a perfect occasion to do just that, and I look forward to meeting this group of courageous Kentucky veterans from towns such as Owensboro, Hartford, Louisville, Covington, Berksville, Lexington, Springfield, Mount Washington, and Taylorsville.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954 which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agriculture programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for Leahy) amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

STUDENT LOANS

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, there are only 3 weeks left until interest rates on new subsidized student loans will double. If we fail to act, the cost of college will increase for millions of students. There are strong proposals on the table that would keep interest rates low while Congress has time to work out a permanent solution. Yet Congress fails to act. Why? Two issues: Money and values.

First, money. Some have argued we can’t afford to keep interest rates low, but let’s be clear. Right now, the Federal Government is making a profit from our students. Last month the Congressional Budget Office calculated the government will make \$51 billion this year off student loans. Think about that: \$51 billion—and that is \$16 billion higher than the earlier estimate. We have the money to cut interest rates if we are willing to reduce the profits we make from our students.

Unfortunately, Republicans see it differently. Two weeks ago House Republicans passed a plan that would produce higher profits off the backs of our college students. And here in the Senate, Senator COBURN has introduced a similar bill that makes student loans more profitable—all at the expense of our college students. This is wrong. We should reject Republican plans to make more profits off our students.

Senator COBURN talks about how his plan is similar to the low-interest rate