



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2014

No. 7

## 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:

Eternal God, receive our prayers as incense of thanksgiving for Your goodness to the children of humanity. Lord, thank You for strengthening our Nation, protecting it from evil and guiding its citizens by the unfolding of Your powerful providence. Bless our Senators. Show them solutions to their problems and give them the courage to press on. Protect them from the traps of evil and the snares of transgression. Keep them from even desiring to do wrong as You guide them on the path that leads to life.

We pray in Your wonderful 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.

### HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 266, S. 1846, the flood insurance bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 266, S. 1846, a bill to delay the implementation of

certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1845, which is the unemployment insurance extension.

The filing deadline for all first-degree amendments to the bill is 3 p.m. today, and the deadline for all second-degree amendments to the Reed substitute is 4:30 p.m. today.

There have been some discussions going on. The Republican leader and I have spoken. I have spoken with Republican Senators and Democratic Senators, which I am sure my friend the Republican leader has done. We have one vote scheduled this afternoon at 5:30, and that is on Robert Wilkins to be a circuit court judge. We will see if we are going to go forward with the two additional votes on cloture tonight or put them over to tomorrow. We are not in a position today, neither the Republican leader nor myself, to do anything other than to proceed. If we get something worked out before we have the first vote, then we will maybe set this over for a reasonable period of time. If we can't, we will just have these two votes.

### CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is often said that actions have consequences, and that is an understatement, but in

the Senate inaction also has consequences. My Republican colleagues are very effective at creating gridlock in this body—at preventing the Senate from doing its job. While this type of obstruction may serve Republicans' political purposes, it does not serve this country's purposes generally; that is for sure. It may serve the Republicans' political purposes, but it does not in any way lead to something that is good for the country's purposes.

On Friday I received a letter, as did the Republican leader, from Secretary of State John Kerry. John Kerry is someone who understands the Senate, having served here for a quarter of a century. After a year at the State Department, more than a third of Secretary Kerry's leadership team remains vacant—1 year and it remains vacant. Four of his six under secretaries have yet to be confirmed, and 58 State Department nominees are pending before the Senate. In just that one department, that one cabinet slot, we have 64 spots that are left floating around out there someplace. This is unacceptable. At a time when our Nation needs a robust presence abroad, the Senate is stuck. The State Department cannot afford for a third of its leadership positions to be vacant. It is not good for the State Department, it is not good for our country, and it is not good internationally.

This is what Secretary Kerry said, among other things, in the letter he wrote to us:

It is not an overstatement that today so many critical national security positions are still awaiting confirmation that it is now affecting our ability to do the nonpartisan work of American foreign policy; defend the security of our Nation, promote our values, protect our interests and help our businesses compete overseas, which creates jobs for Americans. Simply stated, the backlog in confirmation of State Department nominees is impacting our national security and weakening America's role in the world.

Mr. President, the Senate's inaction, its failure to carry out its duty to advise and consent, has consequences.

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



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S267