

water, without this legislation the Tax Code would shove them back underwater once more. I don't think that is where our country wants to go.

I don't think our country wants to give a back of the hand to millions of students already up to their eyeballs in debt. Without this legislation, they would have to go even deeper into debt.

Producing clean energy will become more expensive, risking the kind of high-tech jobs the Congress wants and is working in a bipartisan way to protect.

So with the EXPIRE Act we can address all these issues, bring greater certainty to our economy, put an expiration date on the broken tax system, and lay the foundation for working on tax reform and moving away from what has been a long run of stop-and-go tax extender policies. We ought to get away from that, and the point of this legislation is, between now and the end of 2015, to work on comprehensive bipartisan tax reform.

A number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have talked about their interest in this and that they wish we were doing comprehensive reform. I think colleagues have heard me say on the floor of the Senate I'd much prefer to be doing comprehensive tax reform, but when Chairman Baucus went to China, it became clear to me it wasn't going to be possible to get comprehensive tax reform done in this session.

What I sought to do is to make sure we wouldn't do further harm to middle-class families, and small businesses, and those who are creating the innovative jobs. That is why we need this legislation and need to use the legislation when it passes as a bridge to tax reform.

The bill is called the EXPIRE Act. People have often said: What does that mean? It is not just what it means—the bill actually does expire. I have indicated to my colleagues on the Finance Committee that this will be the last extenders bill on my watch. We are not going to have any more of them on my watch. We are going to move to create a stronger, better, more pro-growth, fair tax system, which allows us to be more competitive in a tough global economy and create good-paying jobs. The tax reform process is not going to be a walk in the park, but it is only going to grow harder if the Senate fails to pass the EXPIRE Act first.

We have had bipartisan proposals in the past. Our former colleague Senator GREGG worked with me for 2 years, and we sat together on a sofa almost every week for 2 years to create what is the first bipartisan Federal income tax reform bill in three decades. With his retirement, thankfully Senator COATS and Senator BEGICH stepped in. So we know it can be done, but that task will simply be harder if the Senate fails to pass the EXPIRE Act.

The first thing people are going to say is: If the Senate couldn't deal with these extenders on a temporary basis,

how in the world will the Senate be able to take up comprehensive tax reform?

Fortunately, at a time when many think Washington is utterly broken, the distinguished senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, was willing to work with me and meet me halfway in terms of producing a comprehensive, bipartisan effort to move forward on these extenders. It wasn't easy, but it got done, and it got out of the Finance Committee with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote. The bill may not be perfect, but the committee got it done with the kind of bipartisan approach Americans want to see more of. I hope the Senate will want to do the same thing. I was encouraged by the procedural vote we had earlier this week.

So with tonight's developments, I simply underscore the importance of passing the EXPIRE Act. I hope Senators on a bipartisan basis will join me in supporting the legislation. It is going to meet urgent needs of our people now, and if we can get it passed and signed into law quickly, it will allow us to turn our attention exclusively to the kind of tax overhaul that is long overdue. That can bring Democrats and Republicans together, as we saw several decades ago when progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans joined together for tax reform. We can go to that agenda as soon as we address the immediate needs behind the urgent requirement of enacting the extenders bill quickly.

I hope we will see the Senate do that in the next few days ahead.

I thank my colleagues, particularly on the Finance Committee—Democrats and Republicans—for the good and cooperative bipartisan work.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, on Thursday, May 15, 2014, at 11:15 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar Nos. 667, 668, 669, and then proceed to consideration and vote on confirmation of Calendar No. 693 and Calendar No. 541; further, that if cloture is invoked on Calendar Nos. 667, 668, or 669, at 1:45 p.m. all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of Calendar No. 669, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 732; and that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be expired and the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the substitute amendment No. 3060 to H.R.

3474; further, that on Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to vote on the confirmation of Calendar No. 732; further, that there will be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, equally divided in the usual form; that any rollcall votes following the first in each series be 10 minutes in length; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD and that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with this agreement, on Thursday there will be as many as five rollcall votes starting at 11:15 a.m. and as many as five rollcall votes beginning at 1:45 p.m. That could change a little bit. We will see how the day goes.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FRATERNITY OF THE DESERT BIGHORN 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn in Southern Nevada.

The Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn was established in 1964, and in partnering with local, State, and Federal wildlife organizations and agencies, they have played a vital role in the restoration of the iconic desert bighorn sheep in Nevada. These incredible animals are a symbol of our State's unique wildlife habitat, geography, and climate. In the Sloan Canyon and Gold Butte areas of Southern Nevada, ancient petroglyphs and rock art dating back thousands of years depict the bighorn sheep and tell the story of its important contributions to our State's history and culture. The desert bighorn is a noteworthy part of Nevada's mountainous landscapes and was officially named the State animal in 1973.

Following westward expansion in the 1800s, bighorn sheep populations struggled to survive against the spread of disease from domestic livestock and the loss of water resources and habitat. By the 1960s, desert bighorn sheep populations, once in the tens of thousands in the United States, dropped to an estimated 6,700 to 8,100. However, the commitment of organizations like the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn to species restoration has helped to more than double the bighorn sheep population throughout the United States.