



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2014

No. 98

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIMOTHY M. KAINE, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who spreads the lightning against the dark clouds, Your Name is holy. Your blessings continue to sustain this Nation and all who labor for liberty. May our Senators never take for granted their privilege to serve both You and country. Give them such gratitude that their actions will reinforce their thanksgiving. Lord, provide them with wisdom to become Your hands, feet, and voice in these challenging times.

Lord, be with those who support our lawmakers, particularly the family members who routinely sacrifice for America's good. May these often unsung heroes and heroines know that You are aware of their faithfulness and will reward their efforts.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 23, 2014.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable TIMOTHY M. KAINE, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KAINE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

BIPARTISAN SPORTSMEN'S ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. 2363, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2014.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. 2363, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5:30 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will proceed to executive session and proceed to a series of four cloture votes on three U.S. district court judges from Florida and one from Vermont.

60-VOTE THRESHOLD

We tried all last week—I am sorry to say unsuccessfully—to consider three very important appropriations bills. These bills are very significant because they provide this great government of ours with the resources it needs to serve the American people.

I think we have had enough sequestrations and government shutdowns, and I hope my Republican colleagues aren't headed in that direction again.

Given the importance of the appropriations legislation and the need to keep our government operating, I had hoped we could have a cooperative amendment process and participation from all Senators.

Our vote last Tuesday on the motion to proceed was promising, as 95 Senators voted to move forward on these three important bills. However, it is a shame we had to file cloture. If we had not had to file cloture, which resulted in 95 Senators voting to move forward on very important bills, we could have saved 3 days' worth of downtime and doing nothing. But that has happened for many years now with Republicans blocking, obstructing, and misdirecting basically everything we do here.

On the bill we had before the Senate last week, unfortunately, the Republican leader stalled the Senate's progress on these appropriations bills with his recent conversion to the idea of insisting on simple majority votes. He now insists on majority votes or nothing.

Over the past 5 years, virtually everything we have done here in the Senate has been subject to a 60-vote threshold. Why? Because the Republican leader has insisted on that.

Almost 50 times since President Obama took office, the Republican leader has employed the 60-vote threshold in order to block legislation—and good legislation. Bills pertaining to the treatment of 9/11 responders, funding our military, disclosure of campaign contributions, and small business jobs bills all received majority votes but were blocked at one time or another by the new McConnell rule. Under the McConnell rule, everything that comes before the Senate has to have 60 votes.

He has called himself "the proud guardian of gridlock." He has even gone to great lengths in defending the use of the 60-vote threshold.

Allow me to share, as I did last week—and I will do it again because I

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S3887