

SENATE—Tuesday, June 8, 2010

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, today strengthen our Senators to do Your will on Earth, even as it is done in heaven. Give them the wisdom to put their trust in You, expecting You to shield them from danger and to lead them to a desired destination. May they find joy in obeying Your word.

Lord, let Your glorious Name be duly honored and loved by all who labor for liberty. Give us the humility to know that none of us has a monopoly on Your truth and that we all need one another to discover Your guidance together. You are the judge of all humanity. Look with favor upon us today and always.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN 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. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 8, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will turn to the consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 4213, the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act. The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus luncheons. Rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day in relation to amendments to the tax extenders bill.

Chairman BAUCUS is here. As soon as the leader remarks are finished, he will lay down the amendment that is the substitute for the House message. I hope people will study this legislation and determine what, if any, amendments they wish to offer. We are going to have to work hard on this legislation. We will not be able to work late today because of some events that are taking place away from the Capitol tonight that involve both Democratic and Republican Senators.

On Thursday, we will deal with the Murkowski resolution. That is under a previous order that has been entered.

I hope that today and tomorrow, people will offer their amendments because we are going to have to wind this down as quickly as we can. I want to make sure people have the opportunity to offer amendments. It is pretty clear what is in it. There are relatively few changes from what has been done in the House. The main change is the fact that we are adding to this money—I think most of us have received calls from our Governors—dealing with Medicare. That is a matter that is going to be laid down by the chairman of the Finance Committee.

GULF OILSPILL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I had the good fortune of having been put on the Environment and Public Works Committee from the first day I came to the Senate. It has been a great experience to serve on that committee. I have served under Chairman Chafee, Chairman Moynihan, and Chairman BAUCUS. Some remember I gave up my chairmanship for Jim Jeffords from Vermont. The committee is terrific. I love the jurisdictional swing that committee has.

As a result of this background, I have watched the oilspill in the gulf very closely. But I say to everyone within the sound of my voice, you do not have to have longstanding experience on the Environment and Public Works Committee to understand how terrible this has been to the environment. We do not know the outcome of the degrada-

tion to our environment as a result of this tragedy, and that is what it is. The Coast Guard admiral who is in charge has indicated there is no longer a plume. There is oil going in different places. Remember, the oil well is a mile below the surface of the ocean. So there are tar balls, sheets of oil for hundreds and hundreds of miles. Sadly, the worst is probably yet to come.

The one thing we tend not to focus on very much is the loss of life. Of course, we see the dead animals, and that is tragic. It is so sad. A pelican is an animal. It is not on the endangered species list. We took it off that list in the last year or so. Now these animals are dying by the dozens every day.

What we do not focus on as a result of the negligence—gross negligence—perhaps criminal acts of BP is that 11 people are dead; 11 people were killed. That seems to be overshadowed a lot of times. Eleven people are dead. Brothers, fathers, and sons were killed on the night of that terrific explosion. I hope we do not, in spite of the horrible conditions that have been caused to our environment, lose track of the fact that this is a personal tragedy for lots of people. Eleven people were killed and many others were injured. The American people are going to have to not forget the personal tragedies of these people who were lost. I am sure they will not.

I thought it important this morning to remind everyone that this is certainly an environmental disaster. But for the persons involved as a result of the cutting of corners that BP did—it is not just me talking. We see it on TV shows and the evidence is coming in. I talked with one oil executive over the weekend, and he is flabbergasted. He is flabbergasted as to what had taken place. There was no redundancy. This company simply did not follow rules that are in place to prevent things like this from happening.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, amid all the various crises Americans face at the moment, one of the most exasperating has to be the increasingly high cost of health care. The American people do not understand how an administration that devoted more than a year talking about health care could