

SENATE—Wednesday, May 26, 2010

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, we are in Your hands and may we rejoice above all things in being so. Do with us what seems good in Your sight. Only let us love You with all our mind, soul, and strength.

Today, show mercy to the Members of this legislative body. Let Your sovereign hand be over them and Your Holy Spirit ever be with them, directing all their thoughts, words, and works to Your glory. Lord, prosper the works of their hands, enabling them in due season to reap a bountiful harvest if they faint not. In all that they say and do, may they seek Your glory, striving for faithfulness in even the small matters of their labors.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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, May 26, 2010.

To the Senate:

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

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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. Mr. President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4899, the emergency supplemental appropriations bill. There will be no morning business this morning. We will go directly to the bill.

Yesterday evening, I filed cloture on the committee-reported substitute amendment in the underlying bill. As a result, there is a 1 p.m. filing deadline for germane first-degree amendments.

Today, I will continue to work with the Republican leader on an agreement to complete action on the bill without cloture. If an agreement cannot be reached, a cloture vote would occur tomorrow morning. Rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day in relation to amendments on the supplemental appropriations bill.

We have had a number of conversations. Some amendments may have technical points of order against them. I think we are at a point now where we should arrange some votes on a number of these amendments and move forward on this bill. There are Senators on both sides who have amendments to offer. I will do my best over here to talk down the number of amendments. I know the Republican leader will do the same. We have to have some amendments. I am anxious to move to them. I have directed my floor staff to try to work out arrangements so we can vote on some of those this morning.

We may be in a position where we would have to have a 60-vote threshold on all these amendments. A lot of them may require that anyway. I think that would be the appropriate thing to do.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading, is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bills for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3410) to create a fair and efficient system to resolve claims of victims for economic injury caused by the Deepwater Horizon incident, and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to renegotiate the terms of the lease known as "Mississippi Canyon 252" with respect to claims relating to the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill that exceed existing applicable economic liability limitations.

A bill (S. 3421) to provide a temporary extension for certain programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings on these bills at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are waiting today to see the success of the efforts of BP to plug that well that is spilling into the gulf. This morning, it is reported that there is a 70- to 80-percent chance that they can be successful. I certainly hope the odds that favor the stopping the oilspill work.

It is very important that the American people understand, and the world understands, that we have to be ready for the damage this has caused. BP has indicated they will pay for all damages. The people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and other Gulf States are waiting to see when the oil will stop flowing.

We have a number of issues that are concerning to the whole country as to our security. Of course, we have the cybersecurity issue, which, as the Pentagon mentioned, is a very important issue. We are working on that, and committees are doing legislation now to see what can be done to make us more secure in that regard.

The other thing is we will never be a secure nation as long as we are dependent upon foreign oil—or to drop it down a notch, dependent on oil, period. This is an opportunity for the country to move away from fossil fuel and do a better job at looking at the renewable energies that are available to us all over this country, including Sun, wind, geothermal.

I am very supportive of what Secretary Salazar did in approving the wind farm off the coast of Massachusetts. This is an opportunity for us to be independent and not have to depend so much on fossil fuels. It is no longer just the environment; it is also the security of this Nation. So as we wait with bated breath to see what is going to happen today in the gulf, I certainly hope it is successful and that we improve as a result of this terrible degradation of our environment, and improve our ability to use whatever domestic oil supply we have in a safer way.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

EXTENDERS PACKAGE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I will say just a word this morning about the still unfinished extenders package that is about to come over from the House.

The first thing to say is that Republicans are ready and willing right now to extend necessary benefits and to pay for them. We could get this done in literally no time. So any delay in passing this bill is coming from the other side of the aisle. I say this not to point fingers but because we have seen this Democratic playbook.

We know they will try to blame Republicans for their own inability to come to an agreement if we don't go along with their effort to add another \$130 billion to the deficit by the end of the week. Let me say that again. We know they will try to blame Republicans for their own inability to come to an agreement if we don't go along with their effort to add another \$130 billion to the deficit by the end of this week.

So let's be perfectly clear: There is one reason Democrats are having trouble getting an agreement on this bill, and one reason only. That is because it is so blatantly reckless.

Europe is in the midst of what German Chancellor Angela Merkel describes as an existential crisis, all brought about by governments that spend money they don't have. Americans are watching this crisis play out, and they see Democrats doing the same thing here day after day. This extenders package is just the latest example, the latest evidence of a majority that simply is out of control.

As early as today, we will reach a dubious milestone in America: a \$13 trillion national debt—the first time in history we have crossed this frightening threshold.

This extenders bill would add another \$130 billion on top of that—more debt in one vote than the administration claimed their health care bill would save over 10 years. The majority would have us add \$130 billion to the \$13 trillion debt in 1 week that would eat up all the alleged savings from the health care bill over 10 years. This is fiscal recklessness, and that is why even some Democrats are starting to revolt.

The time is long since past to reverse this dangerous trend, the way Europe has been forced to reverse the trend. But far from doing anything about our own looming debt crisis, Democrats only seem interested in making it worse.

The true emergency here—if we are looking for one—is our national debt. That is the emergency. A line must be drawn somewhere. Americans are simply running out of patience.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4899, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4899) making emergency supplemental appropriations for disaster relief and summer jobs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 4174, to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions.

Sessions/McCaskill amendment No. 4173, to establish 3-year discretionary spending caps.

Wyden/Grassley amendment No. 4183, to establish as a standing order of the Senate that a Senator publicly disclose a notice of intent to objecting to any measure or matter.

Feingold amendment No. 4204, to require a plan for safe, orderly, and expeditious redeployment of the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan.

McCain amendment No. 4214, to provide for the National Guard support to secure the southern land border of the United States.

Cornyn modified amendment No. 4202, to make appropriations to improve border security, with an offset from unobligated appropriations under division A of Public Law 111-5.

Lautenberg modified amendment No. 4175, to provide that parties responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oilspill in the Gulf of Mexico shall reimburse the general fund of the Treasury for costs incurred in responding to that oilspill.

Cardin amendment No. 4191, to prohibit the use of funds for leasing activities in certain areas of the Outer Continental Shelf.

Kyl/McCain amendment No. 4228 (to amendment No. 4202), to appropriate \$200,000,000 for a law enforcement initiative to address illegal crossings of the Southwest border, with an offset.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 4232, to pay for the costs of supplemental spending by reducing Congress's own budget and disposing of unneeded Federal property and uncommitted Federal funds.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 4231, to pay for the costs of supplemental spending by reducing waste, inefficiency, and unnecessary spending within the Federal Government.

Landrieu/Cochran amendment No. 4179, to allow the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to create or save jobs by providing interest relief on certain outstanding disaster loans relating to damage caused by the 2005 gulf coast hurricanes or the 2008 gulf coast hurricanes.

Landrieu amendment No. 4180, to defer payments of principal and interest on disaster loans relating to the Deepwater Horizon oilspill.

Landrieu modified amendment No. 4184, to require the Secretary of the Army to maximize the placement of dredged material

available from maintenance dredging of existing navigation channels to mitigate the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oilspill in the Gulf of Mexico at full Federal expense.

Landrieu amendment No. 4213, to provide authority to the Secretary of the Interior to immediately fund projects under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program on an emergency basis.

Landrieu amendment No. 4182, to require the Secretary of the Army to use certain funds for the construction of authorized restoration projects in the Louisiana coastal area ecosystem restoration program.

Landrieu amendment No. 4234, to establish a program, and to make available funds, to provide technical assistance grants for use by organizations in assisting individuals and businesses affected by the Deepwater Horizon oilspill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, as I have done each week for over a month now, to give a doctor's second opinion about the health care bill that has now been signed into law. I do this as somebody who has practiced medicine, taken care of families in Wyoming since 1983. During that time, I was medical director of something called the Wyoming Health Fairs, offering low-cost blood screening for people all around the Cowboy State, giving them an opportunity to take more personal responsibility for their own health, to learn about their health, to help get their blood pressure under control, get their cholesterol down, and get their blood sugar under control, and diagnose cancers early. All of this is aimed at early prevention, meaning better care, better survivability, which is what we need to do in this country—work on patient-centered health care.

Today, I bring to the floor of the Senate my second opinion because I think the bill that was passed into law has failed. It has failed and gotten the diagnosis and the treatment wrong.

The goal of health care reform should be to lower costs, increase quality, and increase access. I continue to believe the new health care law is bad for patients; it is bad for payers, the American taxpayers who are going to be