

## SENATE—Tuesday, June 15, 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.

Spirit of God, descend on our hearts, for apart from You, life is sound and fury signifying nothing.

Make our lawmakers great enough for these momentous times. Deliver them from pride and prejudice as they seek to live worthy of Your great Name.

Lord, transform common days into transfiguring and redemptive moments because of the power of Your presence and the wisdom of Your words. Cleanse the fountains of our hearts from all that defiles and make us fit vessels for Your honor.

We pray in Your great 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, June 15, 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.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans will control the next 30 minutes, and the remaining time will be equally divided.

Upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider several district court nominations: Tanya Pratt, of Indiana; Brian Jackson, of Louisiana; and Elizabeth Foote, of Louisiana. There will be up to 20 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between Senators LEAHY and SESSIONS or their designees prior to a series of roll-call votes, which could be as many as three.

Upon disposition of the nominations, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. today for our weekly caucus meetings.

At 2:15 p.m., we will resume consideration of the House message with respect to H.R. 4213, the tax extenders legislation. We currently have six amendments pending. We hope to reach an agreement to dispose of several of the pending amendments today.

As a reminder, cloture was filed on the motion to concur with an amendment with respect to the tax extenders legislation. The only applicable filing deadline in this situation is for second-degree amendments. Under the rule, second-degree amendments must be filed 1 hour prior to the cloture vote tomorrow.

Madam President, I have spoken to the Republican leader on a number of occasions—the latest just a few minutes ago—to see if we can work out an orderly system to not have to have a vote on cloture tomorrow. We are working on that, and hopefully we can conclude that with an agreement sometime in the near future.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

### GULF OILSPILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the President will speak to the American people from the Oval Office tonight about a crisis in the gulf that is now in its ninth week. If early reports are accurate, the President will use his remarks not as an occasion to unite the Nation in a common effort to solve the immediate problem but to make his case for a new national energy tax commonly known as cap and trade. If true, this means the President plans to use this justifiable public outrage over an explosion that killed 11 people and the oilspill that followed as a tool for pushing a divisive new climate change policy even as hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil continue to spill into the gulf each day.

Most Americans are baffled by all this. The crisis, as they see it, is a broken pipe at the bottom of the ocean, miles-long oil slicks, and threatened coastlines. The first thing they want to know is what the administration plans to do to plug the leak, clean up the oil, and mitigate the spill's effects on the livelihoods of those affected. Yet day after day, as the oil continues to flow, what we hear from the administration is how tough they plan to be with BP and now, apparently, how important it is that we institute a new tax which will raise energy costs for every single American but which will do absolutely nothing to plug the leak. Never has a mission statement fit an administration as perfectly as Rahm Emanuel's "never allow a crisis to go to waste." Climate change policy is important, but first things first.

Americans are saying two things at the moment: Stop this spill and clean it up. So with all due respect to the White House, the wetlands of the bayou, the beaches of the coast, and our waters in the gulf are far more important than the status of the Democrats' legislative agenda here in Washington. Americans want us to stop the oilspill first, and until this leak is plugged, they are not in any mood to hand over even more power in the form of a new national energy tax to a government that, so far at least, hasn't lived up to their expectations in its response to this crisis.

Republicans are happy to have an energy debate. Like most Americans, we support an all-of-the-above agenda that seeks to produce more American energy and use less. But while American livelihoods are in immediate danger and we watch oil gush into our waters and wash up on our beaches, now is not the time to push ideology; it is the time to fix the problem.