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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Shepherd of our souls, You enable us to lie down in green pastures, as You restore our hopes. Let Your love fill and rule our Senators as they seek to serve You by serving this land we love. May they be willing to pray for one another with the awareness that they are wrapped in a blanket of mutuality and are the heirs of a common destiny. Lord, empower them to live such exemplary lives that people will see their good works and glorify Your name. Relieve their necessities, lighten their burdens, as they cheerfully submit to Your gracious will.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND 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. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 25, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E.

GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND 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 any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for an hour, with the majority controlling the first half, Republicans controlling the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House message to accompany S. 990, which is the legislative vehicle for the PATRIOT Act extension.

I filed cloture on the motion to concur with respect to the PATRIOT Act extension last night. Under the rule, the cloture vote will occur 1 hour after we convene tomorrow. Additionally, we are working to reach an agreement to vote on the House Republican budget. We will notify Senators when an agreement is reached and votes are scheduled.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1057

Mr. REID. Madam President, S. 1057 is at the desk. It is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1057) to repeal the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit.

Mr. REID. I would object to any further proceedings with regard to this bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

MEDICARE

Mr. REID. Madam President, for weeks Americans old and young have been speaking out against the Republican plan to kill Medicare. It is not just Democrats. Republicans have been speaking out against it too.

Newt Gingrich called it a radical plan and "right-wing social engineering." Several Republican Senators have similarly spoken out, calling it what it really is, a plan that would shatter a cornerstone of our society and break our promise to the elderly and to the sick.

Last night, though, the most important voices were heard. American voters had their first chance to do something about it. They went to the polls and resoundingly rejected that plan and the candidate who ran on that plan's promise to dismantle Medicare.

In a special congressional election in upstate New York, the Republican plan to kill Medicare was the No. 1 issue. It was the No. 2 issue. It was the No. 3 issue. It is what the voters most cared about and were most scared about, as well they should be.

Here is what it would do: It would turn over seniors' health to profit-hungry insurance companies. It would let bureaucrats decide what tests and treatments seniors get. It would ask seniors to pay more for their health care in exchange for fewer benefits. That is a bad deal all around.

What is telling is not just that the voters rejected this plan, it is that the Republican candidate pushing the Republican plan to kill Medicare was rejected in a very Republican district.

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



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The district, which stretches from Buffalo to Rochester, has been in Republican hands for four decades. It produced influential Republicans such as Jack Kemp, whom I served in Congress with. He served in the Cabinet. He ran on the Presidential ticket as a vice presidential candidate.

Last night's special election was held to replace a Republican Congressman who won that seat by a 3-to-1 margin. JOHN MCCAIN won the district in 2008. George W. Bush won the district 4 years earlier. Last year's Republican candidate for Governor in New York lost in a landslide. But he won big in that district. That is how conservative it is.

Democrats in Congress and even some candid Republicans know the Republican plan to kill Medicare is irresponsible and indefensible. Last night voters showed the country and the Congress that they know it too.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

LACK OF A BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, sometime today or tomorrow, Senate Democrats will have an opportunity to show what kind of future they believe in. They can vote for one of the Republican plans to get our Nation's finances under control, each of which involves the kind of tough choices we will need to make to bring down our deficits and debt, or they can vote on the President's plan, which continues the unsustainable status quo. A vote to preserve our very way of life or throw it in jeopardy.

It is interesting; when the President first announced his budget, most people panned it as tepid and irresponsible. The Washington Post summed it up pretty well by saying the President punted. Yet Senate Democrats embraced it.

The senior Senator from New York said the President's budget should have bipartisan support.

The chairman of the Budget Committee gave the President, "good grades for a beginning."

Other Democrat Senators called the President's budget "a step in the right direction" . . . "an important step forward" . . . "a good start" . . . and "a credible blueprint."

One even described it as "wise."

That was then. How about today? Well, if we are to believe the news reports, every single Democrat in the Senate now plans to vote against the President's budget. They do not even want to use it as a starting point. Why? We got the answer earlier this week from Senator SCHUMER, when he indicated that Democrats now believe avoiding this debate altogether helps them in the next election.

In other words, they think it is better not to keep track of our Nation's finances at all than to support any plan that does. So much so that they are about to reject a budget that even they embraced a few months ago. They will vote against every budget that comes to the floor, including the President's.

Six weeks after the Democrat co-chairman of the President's own debt commission told us that our Nation's deficits and debt are like a cancer that threatens to destroy America from within, Democrats are ready to call it a work period without supporting any of the proposals that have been made, without producing anything of their own.

Nothing. That is their answer to this crisis.

Their focus is on an election that is still almost 2 years away.

I think it is a mistake. At a moment when our debts and deficits threaten the very future of our Nation, Democrats have no excuse for proposing no vision of their own. There is no defense.

Washington is currently on pace to spend about \$1.6 trillion more than it takes in this year, three times the biggest deficit we ever had before President Obama took office.

Members of the President's own Cabinet admitted last week that Medicare is in need of urgent reform if we want to preserve it for future generations.

Congressman RYAN has shown courage by proposing a budget that would tackle these problems.

Democrats are showing none by ignoring our problems altogether. This is the contrast Americans will see in the Senate this week. More than 2 years have passed since Democrats have produced a budget of their own. This is a complete and total abdication of their responsibilities. And there is no excuse for it. We have an obligation to come up with a plan. Democrats are officially abdicating that responsibility this week.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half hour and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

REMEMBERING EDWARD LAWRENCE O'BRIEN

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, in the course of our lives, one of the most

difficult moments we face is to say goodbye to a parent. No matter how old we are or how old they are or even how long they've struggled with illness and infirmity, when you lose your mother or father, you are reminded again what it means to be someone's child, and it hits you right in the gut just how much you depend on your mother and father. It is difficult, and it has been particularly difficult for the O'Brien family of Marshfield Hills, MA, which just this month lost their patriarch, Edward Lawrence O'Brien, who was an extraordinary blessing to his family, and his friends, but also to the country he loved, which he served in the U.S. Navy. And his passing is a profound loss to us all.

Ed leaves behind his loving wife Marge, his brother Gene, 6 devoted children and 17 adoring grandchildren. His son Drew has served the people of Massachusetts as my State director for almost a decade, living the spirit of public service that Ed instilled and inspired in all of his family. Ed was, to borrow a phrase Tip O'Neill liked so much, "a beautiful person," and I enjoyed meeting him on several occasions. Our last meeting will be with me forever, when I had the privilege of presenting him with his World War II medals for his service in the Pacific. He was so content and had such a great smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye which never deserted him even as he bravely battled and accepted the illness that would take him from his family after 86 years extraordinarily well-lived.

Ed served proudly in the Navy during World War II, including the invasion of Okinawa. He embodied what we now know as "The Greatest Generation" of Americans who defended America and saved democracy for the world. He earned numerous decorations, including the Combat Action Ribbon, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with a silver star and a bronze star, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal.

Ed was a patriot who stood by his country and his family with equal measures of devotion. Indeed, the mass lovingly put together by his family told the story of a man who loved his friends, who loved his family, who loved his God—the God who, in the words of the old Irish hymn he enjoyed so, was his vision, his battle shield, his sword for the fight, his dignity and his delight. In his eulogy for his father, Drew O'Brien offered great comfort to all who mourned with him, especially Ed and Marge's 17 grandchildren. "For the rest of your life," Drew told them, "carry him with you in your heart—never forget the love he offered, the lessons he taught, the stories he told or the fun that you had with him."

Drew's eulogy is a wonderful tribute to a father's legacy and a son's enduring love and today I would like to share it with my colleagues in the U.S. Senate by having it printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. And with that request, I would also like to—on behalf of