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Senate

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.

Gracious God, whose glory has been revealed through the generations, renew within our Senators a true understanding of Your purpose for this Nation and world. Illuminate their minds with the light of Your wisdom so that they will know how to meet the complex challenges of our time. Lord, use them to lift the spirits of the American people, to encourage the hearts of those on life's margins, and to bring peace to those troubled by the problems in our world. May their trust in Your Word fill them with confidence in Your providential leading.

We pray in Your sovereign 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. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 28, 2011.

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.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
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 be in executive session to consider the Cole, Monaco, and Seitz nominations. These are all for the Justice Department. The first vote today will be at noon on the confirmation of James Cole to be Deputy Attorney General. We are hopeful that the Monaco and Seitz nominations can be confirmed by voice vote. Following that first vote, the Senate will be in recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly caucus meetings. At 2:15, the Senate will resume consideration of the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act. We are working on an agreement to complete action on that bill and the Rules Committee resolution which will follow. Additional rollcall votes are expected today.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1249

Mr. REID. Madam President, H.R. 1249 is due for a second reading. I ask the clerk to report.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1249) to amend title 35, United States Code, to provide for patent reform.

Mr. REID. I now object to any further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV.

THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. REID. Madam President, yesterday I sat down with the President to talk about how to avoid a default crisis that would be a black mark on this country's reputation for generations to come. If we fail to avert this crisis, it would be the first time in our great Nation's history that we have defaulted on our financial obligations and would send shock waves through the global economy. But I am not the only one saying that. The most respected voices in the business and financial community are saying the same thing: Default would be awful. Business leaders, economists, bank executives, credit rating agencies, and even a Republican adviser to Presidents Reagan and George Bush—the same adviser to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush—have used some very serious words to describe the kind of crisis defaulting on our debt would cause. The word many have used is it would be a "catastrophe." The legendary Warren Buffett said a few days ago that allowing the United States to default on its debt would be Congress's "most asinine act" ever. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said a failure to avert default would have "catastrophic economic consequences that would last for decades."

Failure to avert this crisis would have dire consequences and would result in the most serious financial crisis this country has ever faced. Millions of Americans could lose their jobs, Federal prisons would have to be changed dramatically with their personnel, border security would have to change, and our court systems would likely no

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



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longer be able to have trials. Security checks could stop, and so could paychecks to our troops. That is how desperate it would be.

What could be so important that my Republican colleagues are willing to put our economy at such dire risk? What could be worth walking away from the negotiating table, as they have done? Tax breaks for wealthy oil companies and corporate jets? Republicans have gone to the mat for Big Oil, fighting again and again to preserve wasteful, taxpayer-funded giveaways to companies that made tens of billions of dollars in profits in the first quarter of this year alone. Republicans walked away from the negotiating table to save tax breaks for corporate jets. So which big industries and special interests will they fight for next? Oil companies? To ship jobs overseas? Companies that ship jobs overseas? Corporate jets?

If they were truly serious about reducing the deficit, they would admit this kind of waste must end. Yet some top Republicans say eliminating these subsidies shouldn't even be part of the discussion as we find a way to reduce the deficit and avoid a catastrophic default. Several rank-and-file Republicans have said handouts to oil and gas companies and other wasteful tax breaks should be on the table as we negotiate. These are Republicans. And 34 Republicans endorsed the view that any taxpayer giveaways should be part of the solution when they voted to eliminate subsidies for ethanol. It seems Republicans can't even agree among themselves whether subsidies and giveaways are sacrosanct.

One thing they can agree on, it seems: They are willing to balance the budget on the backs of seniors instead. They are willing to end Medicare as we know it. They are willing to slash Medicaid, jeopardizing coverage for 80 percent of American seniors in nursing homes. Medicaid is for the poorest of the poor, but about 70 percent of Medicaid money goes to people who are in rest homes, nursing homes. Republican priorities, then, are very clear. They are dead wrong, though.

Democrats know we need to make difficult spending cuts to reduce our deficit, but to dig ourselves out of this financial hole, we must also create jobs to spur our economy, and we must break the cycle of wasteful giveaways, not break our promise to seniors.

The junior Senator from South Carolina, a Republican, threatened that any Republican who votes to avert a default crisis will be "gone"—those are his words—voted out in a wave of tea party anger. This kind of inflammatory language is irresponsible. There is simply too much at stake.

Also, this same Senator did not mention that 235 Republicans in the House and 40 in the Senate, including my friend from South Carolina whom I have just talked about, have already voted to increase our debt this year. Their ideological budget—it came from

the House—that they wanted to support here and did vote for it, would have increased the debt by more than 60 percent over the next 10 years. The so-called Ryan budget would increase the debt by more than 60 percent over the next 10 years. That is about \$9 trillion in a decade.

What did Republicans get for their so-called \$9 trillion? What would we get? A plan that ends Medicare; a plan that would slash Medicaid, jeopardizing coverage, as I indicated, for 80 percent of American seniors in nursing homes; a plan that protects tax breaks for billionaires and oil companies while putting millions of seniors at risk. That is the choice. The psychologist Alfred Adler once said, "It is easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them." Republicans shouted loudly and repeatedly about reducing debt. Then they gave us 9 trillion reasons not to trust this rhetoric.

The time for empty rhetoric is over. Now it is time for my Republican colleagues to put the good of our economy ahead of their own politics.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JAMES MICHAEL COLE TO BE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

NOMINATION OF VIRGINIA A. SEITZ TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

NOMINATION OF LISA O. MONACO TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of James Michael Cole, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Attorney General;

Virginia A. Seitz, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General; and

Lisa O. Monaco, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate concurrently on the nominations, equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask that the time of all the quorum calls during the debate on these important nominations be equally charged to both sides.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the final 15 minutes for debate on these nominations be set aside for the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, PATRICK LEAHY.

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

Mr. REID. 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. SCHUMER. 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.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the last thing we need when we are trying to get back on track is a default crisis that would grind our economy to a halt and bury us under even more debt. Yet the latest round of Republican politicians threatening to default on our debt has made their priorities clear: They would rather stop paying our men and women fighting overseas, force deep cuts to Social Security and Medicare, and throw even more Americans out of work than tell big oil companies and corporate jet owners to pay their fair share.

Clearly our Republican colleagues are serious about politics, not deficits. You cannot be serious about deficits and at the same time recklessly jeopardize our economic standing in the world in order to protect tax breaks for the wealthiest few. Yet that is what leaders such as MITCH MCCONNELL seem to be saying. Yesterday my Republican colleague drew a line in the sand on cutting wasteful spending in the Tax Code, calling elimination of special interest giveaways politically impossible. Politically impossible? Really? Just two weeks ago 34 Senate Republicans joined Democrats in passing the repeal of subsidies to ethanol companies. Politically impossible? The landmark budget agreements of the 1990s brought us into balance and ushered in surpluses that took a balanced approach and created prosperity and job creation such as we have not seen in this decade.

Politically impossible? Right now in America middle-class families are living paycheck to paycheck while Senator MCCONNELL and his colleagues are going to the mat to protect billions in tax breaks to oil companies. They say two things—Senator MCCONNELL says two things: He says he is not raising taxes. He wants the average American to think it is your taxes. No one wants