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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.

Eternal Lord God, our shelter in the time of storm, You have guided our Nation through many seasons of danger and duress. In these challenging economic times, give our lawmakers the wisdom they need to make a positive difference in the lives of our citizens. Help them to see that without wise and prompt action, multitudes will face a future of privation and uncertainty.

Lord, use our Senators today to make America all You intend for it to be.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, 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, October 18, 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 any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the second half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2112. The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 today for our weekly caucus meetings. We will work on an agreement with respect to pending amendments to the appropriations bill that is now before the Senate. We will notify Senators when votes are scheduled. I hope we can process some amendments which are now pending. It is my understanding Senator MCCAIN is coming to offer a number of amendments. I look forward to working with Senator MCCONNELL and others to move the process along as quickly as we can.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2250, H.R. 2273, S. 1720, S. 1723, and S. 1726

Mr. REID. Madam President, I understand there are five bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for a second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2250) to provide additional time for the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to issue achievable standards for industrial, commercial, and institutional boilers, process heaters, and incinerators, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 2273) to amend subtitle D of the Solid Waste Disposal Act to facilitate recovery and beneficial use, and provide for the proper management and disposal of materials generated by the combustion of coal and other fossil fuels.

A bill (S. 1720) to provide American jobs through economic growth.

A bill (S. 1723) to provide for teacher and first responder stabilization.

A bill (S. 1726) to repeal the imposition of withholding on certain payments made to vendors by government entities.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to each of those bills.

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

### EDUCATION UNDER SIEGE

Mr. REID. Madam President, America's education system is literally under siege. This terrible recession we are involved in has put millions of families in our country in a desperate economic situation. It has also put our schools at risk.

Since 2008, we have lost 300,000 education jobs, including 200,000 in the last year alone. Without talented, dedicated teachers and support staff, our schools cannot provide the world-class education students need to succeed in today's difficult economic climate. As State and local governments are forced to slash education funding again and again, it jeopardizes the future of millions of children, regardless of where they live or how much money their parents make.

Nevada alone is facing a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall in 2011, practically ensuring further cuts to State and local education. But Nevada can ill afford to lose more teachers, police, and first responders. The State has already

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



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slashed State education funding below previous session levels. Any additional cuts will place thousands of Nevada teaching jobs at risk. School districts in Nevada have already made difficult cuts: laying off teachers, eliminating programs, and reducing the number of hours children spend in school.

The State has delayed expansion of all-day kindergarten, eliminated resources for gifted and talented programs, cut a magnet program for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. All around schools have been eliminated.

Further cuts will affect the basic pillars of American education. Already the school board in one county, Lyon County, a rural part of Nevada, has considered moving to a 4-day school week. Students in the United States already spend much less time in school than students in other countries, including those with whom we compete for jobs. Most American people spend a month less in the classrooms than those in South Korea or Japan, whose students are among the highest performing in the world.

At a time when Nevadans are competing for jobs with graduates from countries around the world, as well as those in neighboring States, school districts should not be forced to make decisions such as the one facing Lyon County, NV. The Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act, filed last night and led by Senator MENENDEZ, will ensure the Lyon County school district will not have to choose between laying off teachers and reducing the school year.

It will protect gains made by school districts such as the one in Washoe County, which increased its graduation rate from 55 percent to nearly 70 percent in a period of less than 2 years. Budget cuts would threaten that progress. The district cannot expect to improve on these gains if it has to jam more students in every class and lay off literacy and math specialists.

The teachers legislation I introduced last night will stem the loss of education jobs and help districts such as Washoe to continue to improve. This legislation will provide Nevada with an additional \$260 million to keep teachers in the classroom and maintain class sizes. It will support 3,600 education jobs in the State and give the economy a jolt.

It will not increase the deficit by one penny. It asks millionaires and billionaires to contribute a tiny fraction more to help turn our economy around. That is an idea two-thirds of Americans and a majority of even Republicans support. This Nation's schools have already been hit hard by State and local budget cuts. We cannot afford to lose more teachers or lay off more police or first responders.

In Nevada, local governments have already made the difficult choice to cut almost 9,000 jobs. These unprecedented layoffs have extended the recession and slowed the recovery in Ne-

vada. And further budget shortfalls threaten thousands more jobs. Nationwide, State and local budget cuts will cost as many as 280,000 teaching jobs next year unless we do something about that. This teachers and first responders legislation will invest \$30 billion to create or save nearly 400,000 teacher jobs; that is, those who are going to be laid off this year, plus those who have been hurt and laid off in past years. That money will help State and school districts stop more layoffs and rehire tens of thousands of teachers laid off since this severe recession began.

We will also invest \$5 billion to retain and rehire the police, firefighters, and first responders to protect our communities throughout this tough economic time. That is why it is so important that the Senate move to this as quickly as possible. Teachers out of work through no fault of their own and students who desperately need a good education are relying on us to act.

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. MCCONNELL. 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.

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#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

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#### SOLVING THE JOBS CRISIS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, it is no secret that the vast majority of Americans are not happy with Washington right now. They say 13 percent of the public approves of Congress, and I have not met any of those people.

It is also no secret that the President of the United States is trying to use the displeasure of Washington for political gain. I think that is a pretty sad commentary on the state of affairs over at the White House lately. As the only person elected to represent every American, the President should speak for all Americans, especially in times of crisis, not divide them for short-term partisan political gain.

But it is perfectly obvious why the President would find the path of division appealing, because on the No. 1 issue we face, jobs and the economy, the President's policies have not worked as advertised. After nearly 3 years in office, he has failed to make any progress on his promises to turn the jobs crisis around. I think we can pretty much sum up that failure with a single number, 1.5 million. That is how many fewer jobs there are right now in America since the President signed his first stimulus, according to the Obama

administration's own Labor Department—1.5 million.

So what is the President trying to do? Well, he is trying to change the topic. He wants to deflect attention from that 1.5 million job loss. He wants to think the problem is not his policies, it is those mean Republicans in Congress who oppose them. But the President leaves a few things out of the reelection script he brought along on his bus tour.

First of all, it was not just the Republicans who defeated his latest stimulus bill last week. The only reason a majority of Democrats voted to debate it is they knew they would not have to vote on it. That is why the majority leader repeatedly moved to block a vote on the measure itself, the actual proposal.

Second, we are now living under economic policies that President Obama himself put in place. This is not something you will hear on the bus tour, but let's be clear. The President got everything he wanted from a Democratic-controlled Congress during the first 2 years of his presidency. He owned the place.

Now we are living with the hard realities that those policies have brought to bear on the American worker. So at this point, anytime the President says "pass this bill," people have a very good reason to be skeptical, because this is not the first time President Obama demanded that Congress pass what he calls a jobs bill. But if this one were to pass and it worked as advertised, then it would be the first one that did.

Again and again, the President's response to America's ongoing jobs crisis has been to insist that Congress pass some urgent piece of legislation right away or an even worse calamity would result. Those bills were supposed to create jobs and prevent layoffs as well.

But he keeps coming back for more. I guess the President is counting on the American people to forget that part. He is counting on us to forget about the other stimulus legislation he has already signed into law and that has failed to live up to its hype every single time.

Again and again the President has demanded that Congress do something to create jobs, and the only thing we seem to end up with at the end of the day is more debt, more government, and fewer jobs. So let's review the record for a while.

Two and a half years ago, President Obama went down to Florida and said the first stimulus—the nearly \$1 trillion government spending bill he signed shortly after taking office—would save or create millions of jobs, including jobs for firefighters, nurses, police officers, and teachers.

Well, what happened? The States got their bailout, the national unemployment rate didn't budge, and a year and a half later the President was back asking for another one. That is right, a year and a half after the first stimulus,