



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2009

No. 28

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.

Almighty God of love, whose plan for history is to unite all things in You, bring unity to Capitol Hill. We do not ask for uniformity, with its leveling process that reduces everything and everybody to its lowest common denominator. We ask for true unity, with its bountiful diversity in which each person finds individual fulfillment in the community of love. Lord, give our Senators unity like the symphony with its variety of instruments, its many different notes which produce grand harmonies. May our lawmakers produce these melodies by seeking to understand before being understood, to console before being consoled, and to serve before being served.

We pray in Your strong 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. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2009.

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.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

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 proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from California is recognized.

THIS RECESSION

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I would like to take this time to bring us up-to-date on where we stand with this recession, nationally and in my home State, and also to alert the American people to something.

In 1993, when Bill Clinton got elected, this country was in a lot of trouble. We had terrible deficits—we had a terrible trade deficit, we had debt. President Clinton and the Democratic Congress came in, and we said we have to get our country back on track. The President put together a budget. I wish to remind people that budget did not get one Republican vote. I wish to read to you what Senator Lott, on August 6, 1993, said about that Clinton budget.

As we all know, that Clinton budget got us on the path of deficit reduction and an actual surplus in our fiscal year budget. It set us on the path of debt reduction. As a matter of fact, we were far along on that path. We expected to

have no debt whatsoever. When George Bush got in office, the Republicans took over and the deficits soared and the debt soared.

I wish to read what Senator Lott said in 1993. Remember, it was a very similar situation in terms of a budgetary crisis, a fiscal crisis. When Bill Clinton's budget passed—and we helped him get it passed—we set off on a path of economic recovery that was unmatched. Listen to this. This is Senator Trent Lott, August 6, 1993, in opposition to the Democrats' economic plan:

This is a pork alert; Pork alert. This bill is 1,800 pages. We will not know until next April 15, probably, all the stuff that's in here. Are we talking about a little money? . . . No, we are talking about big sums.

He says:

So when you stand up and say Republicans have not been involved, let me assure you, we should have been involved. We would have liked to have been involved. But we would like to concentrate on spending cuts at first. And then talk about other things like economic growth incentive activities, that we would like to see considered in this process.

The Republicans who have been in charge for a very long time have been the party of "no": Do it my way or it is the highway. Only I can write the perfect bill.

I have said, and I say this respectfully to my friends, I could write a perfect bill—for me. I can assure you the people of California would like my bill better than the bill that is before us. Each of us can stand and write the perfect bill.

So we have a choice. We can allow this new President to have the opportunity to do what he said he would do during the campaign, which is to ensure that this National Government becomes part of the solution.

Believe me, I defend my Republican friends' right to say no, no, no. They have every right to do it. They have absolutely every right to do it. What I feel a little sad about is they feel they have to filibuster; each and every time

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S2091

we have to get 60 votes—60 votes—60 votes—because they know very much it becomes a hardship. But that is what they are doing.

I ask unanimous consent to have this and another quote printed in the RECORD.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mrs. BOXER. In 1993, when they proposed the Democrats' economic plan, back then, that plan that set us off on economic recovery and economic prosperity, they said almost the same exact words: We are not involved, it is pork, it is this, it is that, it is a big bill. They held up the bill.

It is all the same. It is not the GOP; it is the SOP, the "same old party." Right now we can't be the same old party.

Democrats can't be the same old party, Republicans can't be the same old party.

We need to join together. I hope more of my colleagues on the other side will join us. I thank the three who have, and I look forward to working with them as we move out into the future.

EXHIBIT 1 1993 QUOTES

Last, the American people should know unequivocally this plan does not reduce our long-term deficit. What I am suggesting is, if you like these taxes, wait around because the deficit starts back up in 1998 even with all of these taxes and more will be needed. And I ask where are we going to get the spending cuts and the money to bring it under control? My guess is more taxes year after year.—Senator Packwood August 6, 1993

This is a pork alert; Pork alert. This bill is 1,800 pages. We will not know until next April 15, probably, all the stuff that has been slid in here. Are we talking about, oh, just a little bit of money? A few million here and there? No; we are talking about big sums.

So when you stand up and say the Republicans have not been involved, let me assure you, we should have been involved. We would have liked to have been involved. But we would like to concentrate on spending cuts at first. And then we can talk about other things, like economic growth incentives, that we would like to see considered in this process.—Senator Lott August 6, 1993

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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

THE STIMULUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday the Senate cast one of the most expensive votes in history. We have heard a lot from our friends about the dangers of deficits over the last few years. Yet the Senate this week voted to spend more than \$1.2 trillion, including interest, over the next 10 years. The projected annual budget deficit for this particular fiscal year is also \$1.2 trillion. We are told, of course, this is

just the beginning. We have known for weeks the Treasury Secretary is planning a financial rescue plan. We still don't know the cost. Apparently, the sticker shock would have been too much to take, 1 day after the Senate voted to spend \$1.2 trillion on a stimulus—all of this on top of the \$400 billion Omnibus appropriations bill we will soon vote on, which will bring discretionary spending for the Federal Government for the very first time to over \$1 trillion this year.

Americans are wondering how we are going to pay for all of this. Judging by the market reaction to Secretary Geithner's announcement yesterday and the newspaper editorials this morning, it is clear everyone is looking for a little more detail. With that in mind, the importance of a thorough review of the administration's budget is all the more important, so we know the totality of what the administration is asking of taxpayers.

Any parent knows you don't buy a new car and plan the summer vacation before you set the family budget for the year. I think Americans would like to know exactly how the administration plans to pay for all these things in the context of all the normal annual spending.

In the 24 days Congress has been in session this year, Congressional Democrats have agreed to spend more than \$50 billion a day. Americans know they have a limit on their spending. This week they are wondering what the Government's limit is.

ENERGY PRODUCTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, our new Secretary of the Interior has weighed in on developing American oil and gas resources located on our Outer Continental Shelf. As the process moves forward, it is my hope he will be mindful that hindering the growth of responsible domestic energy production means hindering an increase of American jobs at a time when many people are out of work. It also means hindering America's dependence on foreign oil, which has a direct impact, of course, on the price of gasoline.

Last summer, Congress heard from Americans, and I heard from countless Kentuckians, demanding a balanced approach to our energy problem that includes boosting American energy production as well as conserving what we already have. I hope the Secretary of Interior will keep the views of the American people in mind as we go forward.

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. DURBIN. 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.

THIS RECESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, you know in your State of New York and I know in my State of Illinois what this recession really means. In December, the recession hit my home State of Illinois hard. We lost 1,200 jobs a day in the month of December—36,000 jobs. That is a hit that continues, I am afraid, in the month of January and maybe even in the early part of February. The overall unemployment rate for America is 7.6 percent. Madam President, 3.6 million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession several months ago. Clearly, that is the element which is driving our discussion now about what to do.

There are some on the other side of the aisle in Congress who argue that the best thing to do is nothing, let the economy solve its own problems. But, sadly, many of us are meeting the casualties of this recession, and many of us know them personally because they are in our families.

I talk to a lot of my friends who are struggling. It does not sound like much, you know, when they say: My hours have been cut back. A friend of mine, a lady who is raising three children, a single mom raising three kids, had her hours cut back. Her agency does counseling for drug addiction. So she is only working three-quarters of the regular time she was expecting. Well, as a result of that cutback in her pay, she could not pay her rent, and, sadly, she is now facing some of the hardest decisions of her life. So just a cutback in pay for many people who live on the margin makes all the difference. And then, of course, there are those who lost their jobs altogether. Many of those people find they stand the possibility of losing their homes. They cannot make the mortgage payments, and they are facing foreclosure. Their savings that have been devastated by the decline in the stock market have now become the only place to turn. They have had to make serious decisions.

I talked to groups of college presidents from Illinois who came to see me, and some of them, community colleges. The colleges and universities are struggling because a lot of students are sitting there saying: I cannot keep going to school. I mean, dad lost his job and mom is working, and I am a big drain on their savings at a time when they do not have it. So colleges and universities are scrambling all over the campus to try to get people to stay in school. They are afraid they are going to lose them. Community college representatives who came to visit me yesterday said, incidentally, their enrollment is up because a lot of the students say: I can no longer go to the expensive other school, so I am going to come back and do community college courses and try to keep up with it.

Lifestyles are changing. People are making decisions; some of them we hope will be temporary, some may not. That is what troubles me when we look