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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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, give our lawmakers grace to choose the way that leads to light. Direct their thoughts, words, and works so that they will follow where You lead. Prosper the works of their hands as they seek to glorify Your Name. Lord, free their hearts to give You zealous, active, and cheerful service. Help them so live that whenever Your call comes for them—at morning, midday, or evening—it may find them ready, their work completed, and their hearts at peace with You.

We pray in Your sovereign 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, June 17, 2010.

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. GILLI-

BRAND, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, if any, there will be a period of morning business until 10 a.m., with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans will control the final half.

Upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message which accompanies H.R. 4213. There will be up to 2 hours for debate on the Thune amendment, which is numbered 4376, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators THUNE and BAUCUS or their designees. If all time is used, at approximately noon today, the Senate will proceed to a vote on the motion to waive the Budget Act with respect to the Thune amendment.

As a reminder, last night I filed cloture on the Baucus substitute amendment. The managers of the bill will work with Senators on agreements to consider amendments so that we can move toward completion of the bill as quickly as possible. Senators should expect additional votes today in relation to amendments to the bill. Senators will be notified when additional votes are scheduled.

I have spoken to the manager of the bill, Senator BAUCUS, and he has spoken to a number of his Republican colleagues, and we are going to try to ar-

range a number of votes as soon as we finish the Thune matter. There are at least three that I know the Republicans want to offer, and there are a number on our side, but we will try to get that done as quickly as possible. This is not a time for never-ending amendments. This is the seventh week we have been on this legislation. They have not been contiguous, but they have certainly been spent on this legislation. So we hope we can work out a reasonable agreement on the amendments that need to be debated and voted on. If we can't work something out tonight, this afternoon, we will have to have a cloture vote in the morning. I would hope that can be avoided. I don't know if it can be.

The problem we have is that we have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, to work to extend the time administratively so that the 21-percent cut to Medicare doesn't go into effect. We think we have been able to do that, until tomorrow. But we are in very perilous times here. Unemployment compensation benefits have already expired. These tax extenders, which are so important to businesses, have expired. Therefore, it is essential that we get something done. Remember, Medicare reimbursement is not just for Medicare patients. Even though some doctors have already said they are going to drop Medicare patients, it is for more than Medicare patients because most reimbursement in our country is based upon Medicare levels—insurance companies, HMOs, and veterans programs. So everyone on both sides of the aisle should understand that the time to sit back and say: We will work something out later isn't going to be here. We have to do something today, or tomorrow at the latest, because of this 21 percent cut. We have cried wolf for the last time. It will go into effect over the weekend.

We also have an important element in this legislation that deals with

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



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