

DURBIN, Senator KYL, and the House leaders, said to all of us: No President in history has spent as much time as I have on a compliant basis—meaning with leaders—trying to come up with some effort on this budget problem we are having today. The President has spent hours, days, and weeks of his time working on this. As we know, he believed he had—as I understand it—two tentative agreements with the Speaker. The Speaker backed out of both of those.

The President—and I have not spoken to him this morning, but I did several times yesterday—is willing to work with anybody who can give him a proposal. That is my point today. As I said earlier—a letter is coming, terrific—I have not received it yet, but I am sure it is coming. The Republicans say they will not vote for my legislation. What will they vote for? Do they have any ideas? Let me know. I will be happy to work it in. We have gone so far as to even accept the Republican bill we got from the House as a shell. Nobody has to worry about it being my bill. If we work something out, it will be the Boehner bill, if that makes everyone happy.

Mr. McCONNELL. If my friend will yield, I think the answer is a bill the President agrees to sign. That is what we were trying to achieve last weekend. We don't have time to ping-pong stuff across the Hill anymore.

I think the majority leader and I are probably in basic agreement that, with 2 days left, the only legislation Congress has time to deal with, and should deal with, is something the President says he is willing to sign. I am certainly not critical of the President for not spending time on this. He has spent enormous time on it. But we have not gotten a result yet.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are here dealing with reality, not a world of fantasy. We are dealing with reality. The reality is, the debt ceiling is fast approaching, and we have to raise it or default on our debt. We have a matter before this body that would increase the debt ceiling until March of 2013. It would reduce the debt by \$2.4 trillion on basically issues that the Republicans voted on. They talk about, I don't think we need to do the overseas contingency fund because the wars that were started—and still going on—by President Bush cost a lot of money, trillions of dollars. The Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget have said those wars are winding down. As a result of that, we will save \$1 trillion. They have scored it. That is a reduction in our debt.

I also think that if the Republicans have some way they want to improve my legislation, please let somebody know. If they don't want to call me, call the President of the United States. But we have to work forward. Mine is the only proposal we have. If mine passes, we will continue to push this because it should pass because it is the only proposal we have left.

My friend says let us vote. We say the same thing. Let us vote. We want to vote. Why in the world, on something as important as this, can't we have an up-or-down vote as they had in the House? To underline my point, my friend, the assistant Democratic leader, the whip, served in the House longer than I did. They are taking up over there today, as I understand it, what we call a consent calendar, which are issues that are of minor importance, no controversy whatsoever. They are taking up extending the debt ceiling on that calendar. I think that is unheard of.

We are willing to vote right now, but 60 votes we are not willing to take because this should not be filibustered. We are not going to agree to the 6-month proposal because, as I indicated in my prepared remarks, that would mean we would be back in this mess in a matter of weeks. We want to be fully engaged.

I repeat to the people who are supposedly sending me this letter, what do you want? What do I say to my caucus because my Republican colleagues haven't come up with any alternative. It is easy to do. We can amend my legislation. In the meantime, that will not happen, and we are going to proceed forward and do the best we can to overcome this filibuster.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I will wrap up my comments by pointing out again the comments from my good friend, the majority leader, about the nature of the Senate. He said it has always been the case that we need 60 votes. We all know that. It is widely known in the country as well. Most people believe a filibuster means we are trying to delay something.

I wish to make clear to the American people Senate Republicans are ready to vote on cloture on the Reid proposal in 30 minutes, in an hour, as soon as we can get our colleagues over to the floor. We are ready to vote. By requiring 60 votes, particularly on a matter of this enormous importance, is not at all unusual. It is the way the Senate operates.

I will not belabor it any further. We are happy to vote at any time the majority leader thinks it would be appropriate to vote on his proposal.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, a filibuster is known all over America as a way to stall, prevent votes. That is all this is about. If my Republican colleagues are so anxious to vote, let us have a vote. We would move this matter down the field very quickly.

Finally, the matter that is now known as the Reid amendment, is that the President's first choice? No. He wanted to do what he called the grand deal. He thought he had that worked out with the Speaker. But the President knows what I have put forward is good for the country. It extends the debt ceiling and reduces the debt.

I say to my friend the Republican leader the President will sign my legislation. My friend says he wants something the President will sign. He will sign this. We can pass it tonight and get it through the House and he would sign it tomorrow.

So, Mr. President, I would hope the world understands, our country understands—because all Senators understand—this is another filibuster being conducted in an effort to prevent our moving forward to handle the debt situation we have in our country.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### ESTABLISHING THE COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PROCESSING DELAYS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to refer the House message to accompany S. 627, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 627, an act to establish the Commission on Freedom of Information Act Processing Delays with an amendment.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 589, to cut spending, maintain existing commitments, and for other purposes.

Reid amendment No. 590 (to amendment No. 589), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on the Budget, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 591, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 592 (to the instructions (amendment No. 591) on the motion to refer), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 593 (to amendment No. 592), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time from 1:30 to 7:30 is equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees in alternating 30-minute blocks, with the majority controlling the first block of time.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, those who are following this debate—and I think many across America are—should understand what just happened. There was a discussion about the filibuster. A filibuster is a Senate rule that does two things: It says you cannot move an item to a vote, and you have to wait a period of time to have what is called a cloture vote. In order to pass a cloture vote, you need 60 votes, not a majority. So I would just correct, if I can, the record. A filibuster does more than delay the vote; it establishes a higher vote requirement—60 votes, not a majority.

Yesterday, the Speaker of the House brought before his body of 435 Members