



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2012

No. 70

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.

Eternal God, sustainer of us all, give today to our Senators reverence to realize Your presence, humility to know their own needs, trust to ask You for help, and obedience to accept Your guidance. Remind us all that all great things have their price.

May we remember that there is no purity without vigilance, no friendship without loyalty, no joy without service, and no crown without a cross. Help us to be willing to pay the price that we may enter into our reward.

We pray in Your sacred 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. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2012.

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.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

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

STOP THE STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATE HIKE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 365, S. 2343.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to calendar No. 365, S. 2343, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for Federal Direct Stafford Loans, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, following my remarks and those, if any, of the Republican leader, the Senate will begin debate on several motions to proceed to Republican budget resolutions. Consent was asked last night, I am quite sure, that the first hour be equally divided between the two leaders, with the majority controlling the first half and Republicans the final half. That is already done?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. There will be up to 6 hours of debate on the motions to proceed to the budget resolutions. Senators should expect five rollcall votes around 4 p.m. if all time is used, and it probably will be.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, S. 3187 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3187) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs and medical devices, to establish user-fee

programs for generic drugs and biosimilars, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill shall be placed on the calendar.

OBSTRUCTIONISM

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is almost universally acknowledged that Republican obstructionism has reached new heights in the Senate. There are separate articles written about it. There are even now books written about it. Democrats would have to break a filibuster, I guess, to declare the sky blue or the Earth round, and passing the most commonsense and consensus legislation could take weeks or months. So with a mile-long list to do, we can't afford to waste any time. Yet today Republicans will force the Senate to waste a day on a series of political show votes. We will spend hours debating and voting on a handful of nonbinding budget resolutions even though we already have a legally binding budget. If one of the Republicans' budgets passed—which it won't—by law, it is nonbinding. We have a binding budget resolution.

The Senate could spend the day passing tax cuts for small businesses that grow and hire people or even legislation to keep the Food and Drug Administration running. We could be considering the Paycheck Fairness Act, ensuring American women receive equal pay for equal work. We could be debating cybersecurity legislation, and the Pentagon says the No. 1 issue facing this country today is cyber-insecurity. We could be working on a farm bill. Senators STABENOW and ROBERTS have done such an outstanding job saving the country \$23 billion and reducing the debt by that much. We should be on that bill. We could be protecting 7 million students from rate hikes on their Federal loans. We could even move a

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



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