

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sterling Laudon, Sarah Weaver, Rebecca Nolan, Kevin Murray, Will Stein, and Will Kellogg, staff on the Finance Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor for the 113th Congress.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 325

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks tomorrow, Thursday, January 31, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 7, H.R. 325; that the following amendments, the text of which is at the desk, be the only first-degree agreements in order to the bill—Portman, dollar for dollar cuts, S. 43 text; Portman, government shutdown prevention, S. 29 text; Toomey, full faith and credit; and Paul, prohibition of F-16s to Egypt; that the only motion to commit in order to the bill be a Vitter motion to commit regarding spending cuts; that the time until 12:15 p.m. be for debate on the amendments, motion, and the bill, to run concurrently and be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, prior to votes in relation to the amendments and the Vitter motion in the order listed; that upon disposition of the amendments and the Vitter motion, the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of H.R. 325, as amended, if amended; that the amendments and the Vitter motion be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold; that there be no amendments in order to any of the amendments or the Vitter motion prior to the votes; finally, that there will be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote and that all after the first vote be 10 minutes or less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, let me make a comment, if I could, to the Chair. It is my hope that we don't have sequestration with the military, with the Defense Department. I have been very much concerned about that. I am going to do everything I can to preclude that from happening. In the event that did happen—we are looking at about a month from now—I have an amendment I wanted to put on this bill. I could do it another way too, but perhaps as a freestanding bill. I wish to explain what it is, and then I wish to ask the distinguished majority leader a couple of questions.

The amendment I had, or that could be in a freestanding bill, would give the

Secretary of Defense the flexibility to implement the cuts under the sequestration in the least harmful way possible, that would authorize him to have the power to make adjustments within the confines of the sequestration so if there would not be any more money, it would not change that. It would allow the Chiefs to examine and determine whether they could make some changes to make something that could be catastrophic maybe less catastrophic. I have supplied a copy to the leader's office.

What I wish to do—I don't want to object to this, because I want to make sure this continues. I wish to ask if I could have some latitude to help me to get this before the Senate so we could accomplish this.

I would say this, through the Chair, to the leader, that I have already talked to not just the Chair of the Joint Chiefs but all of the Chiefs. They all say that in a period of 1 month, quite frankly, they are starting right now to see if there is something they could put together to make it less onerous should we have to have that.

So I would like to ask if there is something that could be done through the leadership to help me get this done if the worst should happen and we should be faced with sequestration a month from now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Through the Chair to the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, as the leader for the Republicans on that committee, he understands the importance of the military and what sequestration would do. I have spoken to the distinguished Senator previously—and, in fact, as late as this morning we talked—and there are Democrats who also believe there should be some relief given in regard to sequestration. The issue we have to work through is how we have a balance between the cuts in defense and nondefense.

So there are many different ways we could approach this, but I am committed to approaching it. I have said, and I will continue to say, sequestration was a last resort. We thought we would do better with the supercommittee. We didn't. So this is what we are faced with. I hope we can all work together to lessen the burden on defense spending and, of course, non-defense spending. That is what sequestration is all about. I am committed to doing that.

I am happy to work with my friend from Oklahoma. If he can't find enough allies, either Republicans or Democrats, I will be happy to continue to work with him to figure out a way we can have this issue brought before the Senate.

Mr. INHOFE. Through the Chair, I would make a comment that many times the distinguished leader has been helpful, such as with the highway bill and the pilots bill of rights and others,

and I have to say I would not have been able to get them through without that support. What I would ask for is the same support to help me overcome some of the problems that would come with sequestration.

To give an example, sequestration would cancel flying operations for four out of nine aircraft carriers, which would take about 9 to 12 months to restore at a cost of two to three times as much. What they could do with this bill, which I plan to introduce tomorrow, is have the latitude, while spending the same amount of money, to keep the flying hours where they are so they would not have to be restored in another vehicle. Little things such as that are significant.

It also would address the problems we hear of every day from the Secretaries in the military—the various departments and the Chiefs—having to do with the other problems on the CR. So this would address both of them and give latitude and make it better.

I would just say I hope the leader could assist me in getting this bill through in a timely fashion that I will be introducing tomorrow.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think it is my choice, and I am confident the choice of the senior Senator from Oklahoma, to avoid sequestration. We need to do this through some type of balanced plan, and I am committed to doing that.

Mr. INHOFE. I appreciate that very much, Mr. President. I do not object.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would finally say it is not as if the Senator from Oklahoma is asking that the actual amount of dollars be lessened. He is just saying they should be rearranged. So I appreciate his good will on this legislation.

We need to get this bill to the President. So it is my intention, after the use or yielding back of time, to move to table these amendments and the Vitter motion.

We expect to have one vote tomorrow prior to the Senate recessing for caucus lunch meetings, and the remaining votes will occur after the caucus meetings. Again, I express my appreciation to the Senator from Oklahoma. I know how strongly he feels about the military and that he wants to try to relieve the pain in some way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the request is agreed to.

CONGRATULATING THE MEMBERS OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from S. Res. 13 and that we now proceed to its consideration in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows: