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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, thank You for this opportunity to commune with You. Inspire our lawmakers to daily create time when they can meet with You. Lord, keep them from becoming discouraged by the difficulty of achieving their goals, knowing that You monitor their efforts and will reward their faithfulness.

Help us all to pause and be grateful for all the blessings we receive from You each day. May we never take for granted the blessings of life, salvation, sunshine, flowers, and countless other gifts from You. Alarm us with disappointment in our souls if what we planned is less than Your best. And, Lord, we ask You to bless Francis, the new Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP 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. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 14, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP, a Senator from the State of North Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HEITKAMP 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, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 933. There will be an hour of debate equally divided and controlled on the Harkin amendment. At 11:15 this morning, or approximately 11:15, there will be a rollcall vote on the Harkin amendment. We will continue to work through the amendments to the bill throughout today's session. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled.

Last night I filed cloture on the substitute amendment and the bill. As a result, the filing deadline for all first-degree amendments is 1 p.m. today.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 558

Mr. REID. I understand S. 558 is at the desk and due for its second reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 558) to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from awarding any grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other financial assistance under section 103 of the Clean Air Act for any program, project, or activity outside the United States.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. 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. MCCONNELL. 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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank the Chair.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yesterday I asked Senate Democrats to forward a thoughtful budget that Americans of both parties could rally around, one that controls spending, gets our economy healthy again, and advances the serious reforms necessary to make government programs more efficient, effective, and responsive to the needs of 21st-century Americans. I asked them to please shelve the tax hikes. That is because we understand the negative effect more taxes would have on our fragile economy and the millions of Americans still looking for work. It is also because we know Washington Democrats already got $600 billion in taxes they demanded earlier this year. Remember, that is in addition to the

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

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