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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Out of the depths we lift our hearts to You, O God, waiting for Your providence to prevail more than they who watch for sunrise. Guide our Senators to find hope in Your presence as they trust the unstoppable cycle of seed time and harvest. Lord, give our lawmakers such reverence for You that they will stand for right although the heavens fall. May they delight in any work they do for You and tire of any rest that is apart from You. Create in them clean hearts, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. May they wait for the power of Your Spirit, working through their faith, to do more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 265, S. 1845, the unemployment insurance extension.

I ask unanimous consent that the leader time that I use and that of Senator MCCONNELL not count against the half hour that the proponents and opponents of this legislation have to speak, 15 minutes on each side.

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

Mr. REID. The vote will drag a little bit but not very much. My remarks are fairly short.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. to allow for weekly caucus meetings.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mr. REID. Over the last 45 months America's private sector has done OK—not great but done pretty well. Eight million jobs have been created. The stock market is booming and even the housing market is starting to show signs of life.

A number of States were hit so hard with the decline of the housing market. Nevada was hit the hardest, and California, Florida, Michigan—a number of States—were hit very hard. But even in those States the housing market is turning around a little bit—not enough but turning around. It is clear that the economy is picking up steam—not enough steam but picking up steam.

But for far too many Americans these bright headlines that I have just announced touting good economic news don't match the darker reality of their lives. They sit at the kitchen table—if they are lucky to have a kitchen table—and they are juggling their bills.

It was brought to my attention on the way to work this morning about how hard it is for so many people. On Constitution Avenue, as we were wait-

ing for a light, I could see off to the left a news camera and a reporter trying to wake up somebody who had been spending the night on the pavement—not on the grates where the heat comes up. They kept pushing and pushing. I could see they were talking to him. He or she didn't come out of that bundle of material on that sidewalk.

I don't know if this man is one of the long-term unemployed. I don't know. But there are lots of people who are in desperate shape. They may not be sleeping on a sidewalk on Constitution Avenue 14 blocks from the White House, but there are people in America who are desperate for help.

There are 1.3 million people who have already lost their unemployment insurance benefits. This is not good for the country. We are told by economists that for every \$1 we spend on unemployment benefits it gets \$1.50 back to us just like that. So we have to start understanding that we have a country where not everyone is benefiting from what is going on with these headlines I just reported.

Over the last 30 years the income and wealth of the top 1 percent has increased 300 percent. The middle class dropped almost 10 percent. Think about it, 300 percent; the middle class about a 10-percent drop.

I haven't even mentioned the poor. They have been hit harder than anyone else. When I say this, it is true. The rich are getting a lot richer and the poor are getting poorer. The middle class is being squeezed.

I have nothing against people of wealth. It is great we live in a country where people can make a lot of money, but we have to understand there are people who are really hurting. For those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own—and millions of them have struggled for months to find new work—a booming stock market of increasing corporate profits is of little comfort to them.

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



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