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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.

O God, in whose life we find life, open the hearts of our lawmakers to the whispers of Your Spirit. Make them productive, accomplishing Your purposes on Earth, even as Your providence guides them. Lord, redeem their failures, reward their diligence, and validate their faith. Crown their labors today with Heaven's approbation, strengthening them to rise above all that is common to do the uncommon.

We pray in Your holy 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.

### MINIMUM WAGE FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 354.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 354, S. 2223, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Repub-

lican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 o'clock this morning, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half. At 11 a.m. there will be six cloture votes on six U.S. district court nominations. Following the votes, the Senate will recess until 2:15 to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2262

I am told that S. 2262 is due for its second reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2262) to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week the Senate will begin consideration of an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

Over the next few days Members of this body will come to the floor and make their case for or against increasing the minimum wage. Most of the statements we will hear today will be in favor of it because the Republicans are not anxious to come here and speak against raising the minimum wage. They will be very silent most of the time, and they will not talk much about an increase in the minimum wage, which is so vitally important to our country.

The American people will be inundated with figures and facts regarding the economic impact of an increase to \$10.10. Why was that number chosen? It was chosen because at that number—\$10.10 for 40 hours—a person is no longer in poverty.

As supporters of this legislation, Senate Democrats have ample evidence to back our position that an increase in

the Federal minimum wage is good for America. A recent study from the Economic Policy Institute indicates that increasing the minimum wage and tying it to inflation would raise wages for 28 million American workers. That is about 10 percent of the American people. Contrary to what Republicans would have us believe, these 28 million Americans aren't just high school kids looking to make a few bucks after school. That same analysis reported that the median age of minimum wage workers is 35 years old, proving that these employees are grown men and women, most of them with families. If we needed any more reason to pass this important legislation, the most recent polling data reveals that about 75 percent of Americans back an increase in the minimum wage.

So the evidence supporting an increase in the minimum wage is ample, and it is there for all of us to see. However, the real issue transcends political polls and studies. The heart of the minimum wage debate is not found in statistics but, rather, in a question we should ask ourselves: What kind of a country do we aspire to be?

This Nation is home to the greatest economy on Earth. Even as we continue to recover from the great recession, there is no question that we are the richest country on the planet. Can anyone in this Chamber doubt that our economy has the capability of providing livable wages to American workers? The fact that in America there are full-time working mothers and fathers who must juggle two to three jobs just to provide food and shelter for their children is unconscionable.

Before any sulking billionaire comes forward as upset and pens an op-ed in some newspaper calling me a collectivist, as they have done, let me be clear: This is a question of fairness. Do

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



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