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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, King of the universe, bestow upon our lawmakers understanding to know You, diligence to seek You, wisdom to find You, and a faithfulness to embrace You. Today, help them to experience the constancy of Your presence. Lord, give them a courage which shows itself by gentleness and integrity. Provide them with a wisdom which shows itself by simplicity and unity. Impart to them a power which shows itself by humility and restraint. Guide them by Your higher wisdom and fill them with Your peace.

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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

TRADE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I was glad to see our Democratic friends accept our path forward on trade yesterday. Under our plan, the Senate will avoid the poison pills that had been floated in favor of the very type of bipartisan approach we have been advocating for all along. It follows the reg-

ular order. It allows Senators to express themselves without endangering more American trade jobs for the people we represent.

So this is good news. It is good news for bipartisanship. It is good news for a new Congress that is getting back to work. And it is good news for America's middle class.

The people we represent deserve the kind of good jobs we could secure by knocking down unfair trade barriers. One estimate shows that trade agreements with Europe and the Pacific could support as many as 1.4 million additional jobs here in our country. In Kentucky, they can support more than 18,000 additional jobs.

But we can't get there without first passing the kind of legislation we will vote to open debate on this afternoon. It is the only way to enact clear standards and guidelines that our trade negotiators need to move forward, and that Congress needs to appropriately assert its authority in this area.

So yesterday's agreement is significant. I thank Chairman HATCH and his negotiating partners for the good, bipartisan cooperation that got us to where we are.

I would like to thank the President, too. No, you are not hearing things. President Obama has done his country a service by taking on his base and pushing back on some of the more ridiculous rhetoric we have heard. He was right to remind everyone that "you don't make change through slogans" or "ignoring realities." He should be recognized for it.

The American people sent a divided government to Washington. But it doesn't mean they don't want us to work together on issues where we can agree. And on this issue, we do agree.

Today's vote brings us closer to achieving a positive outcome for the people we represent. I look forward to continued positive engagement from both the President and Members of both parties as we move forward on these bills.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is good to see forward momentum on trade. That is certainly good for the American people. But there are other issues that both parties should want to address, too, such as the broken promises of ObamaCare. It would be nice to see more bipartisan support there, and I hope we will at some point, because we all know that ObamaCare is a law filled—literally filled—with broken promises. We all keep seeing reminders of how it failed so many of the same people we were told it would help.

Back in my State in Kentucky, we are seeing how hospitals and their patients are feeling the negative effects of this partisan law. That is particularly true in the rural areas of my State. A recent report showed that ObamaCare's multibillion-dollar attack on hospitals in Kentucky is expected to result in a net loss of \$1 billion over the next few years—a net loss to Kentucky hospitals of \$1 billion over the next few years.

These hospitals are expected to lose more money under ObamaCare than they are expected to gain in new revenue from the Medicaid expansion. And, largely due to ObamaCare, these losses are forcing Kentucky hospitals to cut jobs, reduce or freeze wages, and, in some instances, even close altogether. We have lost at least two rural critical-access hospitals this year.

Officials report that Kentucky hospitals are suffering partly because more than three out of every four Kentuckians who signed up for ObamaCare were in fact put on Medicaid, and we know that Medicaid reimburses hospitals for less than it costs to treat patients.

So despite promises that greater access to coverage would decrease visits to the emergency room and the cost associated with those visits, the vast majority of emergency room doctors now say they have actually experienced a surge—a surge—in patients visiting the ER since ObamaCare came into effect.

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



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