

Senator BYRD. Also, after I complete this statement, I will ask unanimous consent there be a period of morning business until 5 o'clock. But at this point I would like to make some opening remarks with regard to how we would like to proceed this year and some discussion about the legislative schedule.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, if I could apologize to the distinguished majority leader, I have a couple of Senators who have been waiting for me for about a half-hour and I need to get into the room. Out of respect for the Senator, I should stay and listen to his eloquence and his visionary comments about his plans for the 105th, and I apologize. I would like to come back and make a statement with regard to the opening day as well as Senator BYRD, and I will do so at a later time. But I apologize up front to the distinguished majority leader for my absence as he makes his remarks.

Mr. LOTT. I am sure he will read them in the RECORD, Mr. President, and will have some comment later.

LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is customary on this opening day of Congress to lay out the highlights of the legislative schedule ahead of us and discuss whatever procedural problems or changes might be in the offing.

First of all, I am not going to give today a finite list, or a list that we will have on the agenda that we will try to complete before the Easter recess, but I will do that on the 21st. I do want to mention some of the bills that I think have a high priority that we will be taking up early on in this session.

It is no great secret that I would like to make the schedule of the Senate more predictable. I think that will help us all do a better job. One of the things that I could not understand when I first came to the Senate was the inability to make any kind of plans as to when we would begin; when would we end; could I get home for supper with my family; would I be able to go back to my State and be with my constituents. The uncertainty is killing in many respects, and so I am going to work very hard as majority leader this year to try to give some greater degree of predictability. I will not always be able to do it, but I will work with the minority leader as he leads the Democrats to try to make that information available as to when we will come in. We will try not to go late every night.

We will try not to go late every night. In fact, my hope is we will finish up at a very reasonable hour, hopefully 6 o'clock every week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We may have to go late to some extent on Thursday. We will need to be in on some Fridays and some Mondays, but I will try my best, again cooperating with the Members of the other side of the aisle and their leadership, to make that information known to the Members as early as pos-

sible so they can make some plans as to when they can be with their families or be with their constituents.

As a first step in that effort, last month I provided the Democratic leader and to all the Members on the Republican side of the aisle and to the Democratic Members, a calendar outlining the recess periods for the first session of the 105th Congress. I strongly intend to follow that calendar. But, obviously, any Senator who tries to delay our session or cause us problems can mess up those good intentions. But, barring emergencies, there is no reason why the Senate should not be able to function with a high degree of predictability about the timetable. That will require cooperation from our colleagues all throughout the year, as we get ready to have the President's Day recess period, or as we go to the Easter period, or even later on in the year.

With that in mind, I want to mention, in a general way, several matters I hope the Senate will be able to consider prior to the scheduled Easter recess. It is not inclusive, and it may not be that we will be able to get to these issues. It will depend on conversations on both sides of the aisle, communication with the leadership on both sides, meetings with the chairmen, and it will also depend on the ability of committees to act. I will be more specific later on this month, as I indicated.

By early February, the President should have submitted to us a detailed budget for fiscal year 1998. How that will take shape—and what degree of cooperation might be involved there—remains to be seen. But, one way or the other, the Senate will have to consider a budget for the year ahead. I hope that we will come to an agreement on balanced budget over a period of years. It will take a lot of effort, but a lot of progress, I believe, was made last year and the gap between the Congress and the President was closed perceptibly over those past months there, the last months of 1995 and early 1996. We ought to pick up where that ended and see if we cannot come to an agreement that would lead us to a balanced budget over a period of years. Needless to say, that budget is going to be one that will be negotiated between the parties in the House and the Senate, and with the President.

Toward the same goal the Senate should, I believe, in due course, consider, again, a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I know there are those who do not agree with that here in the Senate and they will certainly have ample opportunity to be heard and make their case. But I have noticed that good intentions do not accomplish the job. Even a plan to get us to a balanced budget does not always get us there, and we have not had a balanced budget now in some, I guess, 28 years or so; 1969 was the last balanced budget. So it looks like it will have been 30 years that we will have gone as a Federal Government without a bal-

anced budget. I think the plan is not enough. I think that the constitutional amendment will add a great deal of weight to that desire and, in fact, require us to have a balanced budget.

The Senate will, also in due course, consider the numerous nominations in the executive branch as the President restructures his administration for a second term. It is my intention to deal with those nominations expeditiously and fairly. I think the President is entitled to make his selections for Cabinet Secretaries and other administration positions and expect them to be considered early and in a fair manner by the Senate. We will do that. As I indicated earlier, we will begin hearings, either this week or certainly next week, and we hope to begin to have votes on those the week of January the 20th and 21st, right after the inauguration. Some of them may have some difficulty, may take more time, but, we are going to move forward as rapidly as we can.

On both sides of the aisle there is considerable interest in taking up some of the reauthorizations that come due this year. These should not be diminished. They are very important. Certainly one of those is the ISTEA or Inter-service Transportation Efficiency Act; that is the highway bill. This legislation is as complicated as it is important. It will not be partisan. It will not be regional. It will not even be philosophical. It will vary from State to State. Sometimes you have States right next to each other that have different views on how those funds should be distributed between highways or mass transit, and what the formula would be for distribution between the States. I think a lot of work needs to be done, but it is very important. Transportation and infrastructure in America is essential to our economic growth and development, and the free movement of Americans all over this country. I hope we can get this done, out of committee and on the floor of the Senate and completed by the Easter recess. It will take an extraordinary degree of cooperation and consensus, but the only way you get that done is to get started.

Also, in the same area of transportation, there are a number of other proposals we need to consider such as the problems that we are finding with airbags in passenger vehicles. Parents throughout America now are concerned about the safety of their children in their cars. How do we go as long as we have without realizing the danger that they impose? Now it seems like every week we hear of another incident where some child was injured as a result of the airbag. There are, I presume, some solutions. But we need to think about that and work on it.

We should also address the crisis in American education. I am a product of what I think was a good public education system in America. My mother was a schoolteacher for 11 years. I worked for the University of Mississippi for 3 years, in their placement

and financial aid office and in the alumni office. I worked with the student loan programs. I worked with the work-study program. I know the importance of financial aid. I know the importance of good, quality education.

But over the years, since the 1960's, as we spent more and more money, it seems that the quality of education has continued to go down. You have children in high school who cannot read. You have children who do not have discipline. You have children assaulting teachers. You have drugs in junior high school. I am sure it is even in elementary school. These are major concerns. We may not have the answers in Washington. I think probably the answers really are at the local level. But we need to think about this problem and work with State officials and local officials, administrators, teachers, parents, and children to see if we cannot find some ways to improve education, the accessibility of education in America, the safety of education in America. We cannot tolerate violence and drugs in our public schools, so we need to focus on this issue and we need to do it soon.

The Senate should affirm as a matter of principle that no child has to attend a school where he or she is in danger of assault or is exposed to narcotics. I therefore hope that we will bring legislation to the Senate soon that gives youngsters and their families the same choice in education that more affluent families enjoy in America.

The Senate should also consider ways to give families the flexibility they need to balance their responsibilities at home and on the job. Employers and employees should be able to arrange comp time, flex time, and family-wage provisions without interference from Government. The President has indicated that he supports the flextime and the comp time, at least the flextime, and I think we ought to find out exactly what we can do in terms that have flexibility for parents on the job, but work with the employers and employees together to find these solutions.

By the same token, employees should have the flexibility to work in concert with management for their mutual benefit. They should not be locked into an approach to labor relations that presumes conflict and discourages cooperation. So I hope we will be able to bring the TEAM Act to a vote in the near future.

Other legislative items that we might be able to work on during the next 2 months should include reauthorization of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This legislation is a very difficult balancing of conflicting interests. To his great credit, Senator FRIST came close to working it out last fall, but, frankly, the clock kind of just ran out and we could not complete the job. This time I am confident that we will bring in more consideration of various views and complete this very important legislation.

In the area of criminal justice, the Senate should allow the death penalty for drug kingpins. There continue to be tremendous problems in this area and this is one place where we can provide some additional penalties that will hopefully allow us to deal with the drugs that are pushed upon our children.

For small businesses, we should permit the electronic filing of forms with SBA and other Government agencies. This is the 20th century. It is almost the next millennium. Let us get with modern technology. It saves money, it saves time, and it probably saves jobs, if we will move to this opportunity for small businesses.

For adoptive families, we should make it easier and more secure for adoption to occur. Senator DEWINE and others have been working along those lines.

Finally, to fulfill a provision of the omnibus appropriations bill of last September, the Senate will vote sometime during the month of February on a Presidential recommendation concerning the AID's population program. This vote is locked in and required by law.

This is not—again I repeat—not an exclusive list. By the time the Senate settles down to legislative business on January 21st, it is likely to be revised after I have had the benefit of the views of Members on both sides of the aisle and the committee chairmen and committee leaders on both sides.

We might add other items or delete some I mentioned as being just too time consuming as we try to deal, certainly, with the budget agreement and other issues that are going to be required by law or by their urgency, in terms of possible treaties, as well as confirmations.

Both the Democratic leader and I are hopeful this can begin a pattern of advance notification of recesses and floor agenda. But we have to stress that its successful implementation will require all Members to act in a cooperative and courteous manner with respect to the needs of all other Members.

Let me mention one case in point. Members should be aware there is a 15-minute limitation with respect to roll-call votes. Past practice has allowed for an additional 5 minutes, so-called overtime, for Members who are running late. However, the 5-minute overtime soon turns into 7 minutes, 8 minutes, 9 minutes, or even more. The entire Senate repeatedly has been inconvenienced in that way.

We try to be reasonable: Senators don't hear the bells; sometimes they get caught on the subway; sometimes the elevators are not operating; sometimes for very good and valid reasons they are out in the city or across State lines and they are trying very hard to get back here, and we have had to use some judgment.

But, as we try to allow that latitude, it continues to grow and expand, and the time to take a vote can easily run

up to 30 minutes, and that inconveniences all the other Senators who are here ready to do business and go on to the next amendment or perhaps the next vote.

So we are going to try very hard to stick with the 15-minute vote with a 5-minute overtime. Once again, the leaders will have to be willing sometimes to say, "We have to cut this vote off." I have had to do that when it has involved Senators on this side of the aisle, as well as the other side. I think maybe if we make it clear we mean business a couple of times, Senators will be more inclined to come over and vote when the time begins and within the allotted time. But, again, we will use discretion wherever it is really necessary.

I hope we can continue to provide all Senators advance information about scheduling, especially such matters as evening sessions and Mondays and Fridays. If we all are able to plan in advance, our work will be better, I believe, because we will have certainty and will not be as exhausted as we sometimes get when we go late into the night. Our constituents will be better served, and our families will be much happier as a result of it.

I look forward to the challenges we have before us in the Senate. I had some people say when I was home in Mississippi, "You must get tired thinking of getting back and getting to work."

I said, "Absolutely not." This is what it is all about. This is a great opportunity to try to make a contribution for the people you love, your family, your community, your State, and your country. If we approach it that way, if we decide we are going to work together, hard going as it may be sometimes, to do what is right for our country, there will be no limit to what we can accomplish.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. LOTT. I will be glad to yield to the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I congratulate the distinguished majority leader on the speech that he has made outlining what he hopes to achieve in a general way, without going into specifics, in the months and weeks and days ahead.

May I say, as one who has been majority leader, who has been minority leader, who has been President pro tempore, who has been a chairman of a committee, who has been a Senator like all 100 Senators, that I am particularly encouraged by these two leaders that we now have in the Senate.

I think that with respect to the minority leader, no one could be more considerate of his colleagues, more thoughtful, more eager to reach out and to bring them in to hear what they have to say, to work with them. No one is more eager to work with the majority leader than our current minority leader.

And may I say with respect to our current majority leader, I think we

have a leader who is interested in the Senate, who is interested in putting the Senate where it ought to be—first—and who is interested in improving the decorum in the Senate so that the people who view this Senate, through that all-seeing electronic eye, will see a truly premier upper House.

We have students, we have professors, we have young people in high school, we have lawyers, State legislators, and people in all walks of life watching the Senate daily when it is in session, and they expect to see the best.

I have been a member of the State legislature in West Virginia, in both houses, but even in the State legislatures—and they are closest to the people—even there they will look to the U.S. Senate and to the other body across the way for inspiration.

It saddens me to see a Presiding Officer in this Senate reading magazines or a newspaper or books when he is supposed to be presiding. Millions of people are watching, as well as visitors in the galleries, and I wonder if they go away thinking the Presiding Officer doesn't have much interest in the body if he is not listening to what is being said. He should be aware and alert to what is going on and ready to protect the rights of every Senator while debate is under way.

I think we have a majority leader now and a minority leader who are going to bring these things to the attention of the Members. We, all 100 of us, owe these leaders our very best support when they are trying to do the right thing: Trying to make the Senate what the framers intended it to be.

I really am encouraged, because I think that Senator LOTT is a man in that mold. He is bright, he has an endearing personality, he has an art of persuasiveness that will win many battles. He is considerate, he is patient, and a leader has to have all of these attributes. I thank him for all of these things.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I renew my great appreciation for the Senator from West Virginia, and I appreciate very much his remarks. I hope we can live up to his comments and expectations; we are going to work very hard to do that. I yield the floor.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I, too, would like, again, to express my gratitude to the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his kind remarks throughout the day, again most recently. I appreciate very much the manner with which he has expressed himself. It is an honor for me to be complimented in public by the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, and he has done so generously.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a pe-

riod for morning business until the hour of 5 p.m. today, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes each.

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

THE 105TH CONGRESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me first congratulate, again, all of our new colleagues and their families for this very momentous occasion. It is one of the most thrilling things for me to watch new Senators come down the aisle, accompanied by a colleague, to raise their right hand and to take the oath of office. I can recall so vividly my own experience in that regard now twice. I know, having had that experience, what a remarkable and what a memorable opportunity it is for any woman or man.

Let me also again reiterate my gratitude to the majority leader for his remarks and for the kindnesses that he has shown to me and to our caucus as we have worked through the schedule, worked through the committees, worked through the many procedural matters that we had to discuss today. We begin the 105th Congress with renewed hope, with optimism, with good will.

There is much to do, and there is much need to do it together. We have had many months of competitive political effort, and now it is time to govern. Franklin Roosevelt once said, "The future lies with those wise political leaders who recognize that the great public is interested more in government than in politics." Let us recognize that and seize the future. Let us summon the best in all of those around us as we call upon the best within ourselves to join in common purpose and in common cause. I have no doubt that our efforts here during the course of the 105th Congress will, by any standard, then be judged a success.

Mr. President, I indicated when I introduced the resolution relating to Senator BYRD that I had a statement. I would like at this time to make that statement.

ROBERT C. BYRD'S 50 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, tomorrow, January 8, 1997, will mark a momentous day in the life and career of one of this chamber's most esteemed and respected Members.

Fifty years ago, on January 8, 1947, before this Senator was born, ROBERT C. BYRD took his seat in the West Virginia State Legislature, thus beginning a remarkable half-century of public service.

On this golden anniversary of the beginning of a remarkable career, I want to take a few minutes to call attention to this achievement, to congratulate him for it, and to thank him for his service to the people of West Virginia and the United States.

Fifty years of public service. That is a long time. Perhaps I can illustrate.

It translates into two terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates, one term in the West Virginia State Senate, three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, and seven terms in the U.S. Senate.

Since ROBERT BYRD began serving the people of West Virginia, 10 Presidents have occupied the White House—that is nearly one-fourth of all Presidents in American history. ROBERT BYRD began serving the people of West Virginia before 20 Members of this Chamber, including this Member, were born. Before there was a CIA; before there was a Marshall plan; before the Korean war.

When ROBERT BYRD began his political career, Harry Truman had not yet upset Dewey or dismissed Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Senator Joe McCarthy had not yet begun his infamous Red-baiting. Lyndon Johnson was still in the House of Representatives, and he was being joined by John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, both of whom were taking their first congressional seats.

When ROBERT BYRD began his remarkable half-century career in public service, it was 2 years before the Soviet Union had tested its first atomic bomb, 10 years before the Soviet Union launched sputnik, and 12 years before there were 50 States in our Union.

Five decades is indeed a long time, but it is not for longevity alone that we recognize and applaud the senior Senator from West Virginia. We recognize our esteemed and respected colleague for the quality as well as the quantity of his public service. His lifelong commitment to public service has been one of total dedication to serving the people of his beloved State and to the highest ideals of public service. And the people of West Virginia have honored him for it.

In ROBERT BYRD's 50 years in public service, he has won every election in which he has been a participant. In 1970, he received the largest percentage of the total vote ever accorded a person running for the Senate in a contested election in the State of West Virginia.

In 1976, he was the first person in West Virginia history to win a Senate seat without opposition in a general election. He has held more legislative offices than anyone else in the history of his State. He is one of only three U.S. Senators in history to be elected to seven 6-year terms. He is the longest-serving Senator in the history of his State. And, on January 13, Senator BYRD will have served 38 years and 10 days in the Senate, becoming the fourth-longest-serving Senator in U.S. history—behind Senators Hayden, THURMOND, and Stennis.

West Virginians are not only pleased with their man in Washington; they are proud of him. They have honored him with nearly every honor the State has to offer; this includes being selected as the West Virginian of the Year three different times—the only person ever selected more than once.