



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1999

No. 112

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, all that we have and are is the result of Your goodness. We dedicate this day to counting our blessings and naming them one by one all through the hours of this day. We praise You for the gift of life. You have given us intellect to know You, emotions to praise You, and determination to do Your will. You have blessed us with loved ones, families, and friends. And what a privilege it is to live in this free land of opportunity. Today, help us recount the privileges that we have as citizens and leaders of this Nation.

Father, we also want to praise You for the courage and the strength You provide to face the challenges You give us as individuals and as a Senate. Thank You for problems that define the next steps of what You want us to do. You have shown us that problems are only the flip side of an undiscovered answer. Our problems give us an opportunity to discover Your power.

With everything within us, we praise, thank, and glorify You, our God, Savior, Lord, Provider, and Friend. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE VOINOVICH, a Senator from the State of Ohio, 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 ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from Nebraska, Mr. HAGEL, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader I wish to announce that today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the pending disaster relief amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations Act. It is hoped that the Senate will be able to dispose of those amendments today at a reasonable hour. As a reminder, the Senate will recess today from 12:30 to 2:15 so that the weekly party conferences can meet. As a further reminder, a cloture motion on the dairy compact amendment was filed on Monday. Therefore, under the provisions of rule XXII, that cloture vote will take place 1 hour after the Senate convenes tomorrow, unless an agreement is made by the two leaders.

Prior to the August recess, it is the intention of the leader to complete action on the Agriculture appropriations bill, the Interior appropriations bill, and it is also hoped that the conference report to the tax reconciliation bill will be available for consideration.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m. Senators are permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Nebraska or his designee is recognized to speak for up to 30 minutes.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I yield such time as I may require.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, over the weekend in Nebraska, I met with a number of agricultural producers about the current prices in American agriculture. Over the last 3 weeks, my staff and I have spoken to over 100 agricultural producers in the State of Nebraska—hog producers, cattle producers, grain producers; and then the second rim, the outer rim representing the agricultural community—bankers, implement dealers, automobile dealers. All had a consistent theme as to what we must do to direct our attention and our effort to dealing with this crisis in America.

As we begin debate today on the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations bill and on the emergency appropriation for agriculture, we should keep in mind some important dynamics about American agriculture. Leaders of both parties in the Senate committed last week to including in the fiscal year 2000 Agriculture appropriations bill an emergency funding measure to provide the short-term assistance needed for our agricultural producers, and that assistance should include increasing the market transition payments—I am confident we will see legislation to do that—lifting the caps on loan deficiency payments, and additional funding for crop insurance. I know that part of Freedom to Farm in 1996 was the commitment to America's agricultural producers to, in fact, reform crop insurance. We are on our way in that area, but we have not yet arrived at that reform.

Crop insurance is a very key dynamic to the future of American agriculture. The emergency appropriations bill should include relief for livestock producers, and I am confident we will see that in both of the bills that will be presented today, plus other emergency measures.

As we address this immediate crisis, we must continue to work on the long-term priorities. The perspective is

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



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