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Senate

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Minister Angela Williams, Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, DC, a resident of South Carolina. We are pleased to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Minister Angela Williams, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, our Sovereign Lord, we thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon our Nation. For You, O Lord, are our strength and our righteousness. We recognize that ours is a priceless inheritance—a country founded on the truth that all women and men are created equal and endowed by our Creator with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We cannot forget these words, lest we fail as a Nation.

With Your everlasting arms, lift up the Members of the United States Senate, so that they may carry out their indispensable mission of conducting the Nation's business fully and fairly. Incline Your ear toward the United States of America, that You may hear the prayers of Your people. Let Your face continue to shine upon those of all races, nationalities, religions, and creeds—the rich and the poor, those with privileges and those who have been denied.

Now, more than ever before, we need Your peace. Families, schools, and communities too often seem besieged. But we know that in the midst of it all, You have only to say, "Peace, be to you." Lord, help us to walk with You in integrity and wisdom and do that which is always just in Your sight. Continue to bless those who work on Capitol Hill, as we give to You all glory, honor, and praise. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE V. 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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period for morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators DURBIN and THOMAS in control of the time.

Senators should be aware that cloture was filed on the motion to proceed to the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill and on the motion to proceed to the intelligence authorization bill. Under the provisions of rule XXII, those votes will occur on Wednesday, 1 hour after the Senate convenes. During Thursday morning's session, there will be a time set aside for those Members who have not had the opportunity to make their statements in memory of our former colleague, Paul Coverdell.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the hour of 12:30 p.m. the Senate stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m. in order for the weekly party caucuses to meet.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a

period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator DURBIN, or his designee, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., and Senator THOMAS, or his designee, from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Massachusetts.

GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I commend the Senate's guest Chaplain today, Minister Angela Williams, for her eloquent prayer opening today's session of the Senate. Angela became a licensed minister in January of this year, and she is currently an associate minister at Shiloh Baptist Church in the District of Columbia. I had the privilege of attending her first sermon there last November. She is also currently a graduate student at Virginia Union University in Richmond, where she is pursuing the degree of master of divinity.

Angela's father, J.C. Williams, is also a minister. He served for 28 years with great distinction as a Navy chaplain. He retired in 1998, and is now an associate minister in Martinez, GA. Rev. J.C. Williams served as guest Chaplain for the Senate last September.

Our guest Chaplain today wears many hats. Angela Williams is also a talented lawyer, and is a graduate of the University of Texas Law School. As an Assistant United States Attorney in the Middle District of Florida, she was selected to serve on the National Church Arson Task Force, which was created by the Department of Justice to investigate, prosecute, and prevent the epidemic of church arsons that were afflicting many parts of the country. From 1996 to 1998, Angela Williams investigated and prosecuted approximately 25 percent of those Federal cases nationwide.

Angela is also well known to many of us in the Senate and the House of Representatives. For the past 2 years, in

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



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addition to her ministry, she has served as a member of my Senate staff on the Judiciary Committee.

All of us on both sides of the aisle and with the Clinton administration who have worked with Angela have great respect for her ability and dedication. Her principal responsibilities have been in the area of law enforcement issues, especially hate crimes, and she deserves great credit for her leadership on this important issue in our country today.

Angela will be leaving my staff at the end of this week. All of us who know Angela wish her well. We have been very impressed with her calling to the ministry and her dedication to it. It has been a privilege to work with her as a member of our Senate family, and we are grateful for her inspiring prayer as guest Chaplain today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. THURMOND pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 342 are located in today's RECORD under "Submissions of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week will be the last week before we break for the party conventions—the Republicans in Philadelphia; the Democrats in Los Angeles. We have a full array of legislation that could be considered this week. I am not sure, being a member of the lowly minority, as to what issues we will actually address, but the American people should pay close attention to what has occurred in this Chamber in the last 2 weeks.

A little bit of history puts it in perspective. Not that many years ago, we were struggling with annual deficits. It was crippling the economy of the United States and certainly causing a shockwave across America as families had to step back and consider the impact of a huge national debt that we passed on to future generations. In fact, our national debt now is approaching \$6 trillion, and we collect \$1 billion in taxes every single day in America to pay interest on our old debt.

That \$1 billion in taxes does not educate a child; it does not buy a tank or a gun; it does not provide health insurance for anyone; it does not improve Social Security or Medicare. It pays interest on old debt.

It is debt that was accumulated primarily during the period when Presidents Reagan and Bush were in office and some partially during the period when President Clinton first began, but

we have turned the corner. People have come to understand a dramatic thing has occurred. We are now reaching a point where we are not talking about deficits and debt but about the possibility, the opportunity of a surplus. This is something which America's families and businesses have worked hard to earn: a surplus that reflects a strong economy with more and more people working, which reflects the fact we have had the greatest period of economic expansion in the history of the United States. In fact, I hope we do not become blasé about this. This is something that was hard to achieve and American families and businesses working with our Government leaders reached this new point.

Having reached the point where we can look ahead and say we have a strong economy and a surplus coming, it is now up to the Congress to decide what to do with that surplus. There are two very different approaches as to what to do with the surplus.

During the last 2 weeks, the Republican Party has come to the floor of the Senate and suggested they know what to do with this surplus. They have suggested we take \$1 trillion, approximately half of the projected surplus over the next 10 years or so, and dedicate it to tax cuts. Tax cuts are a popular proposal for politicians. Any of us would like to stand before a crowd in our States or hometowns and talk about cutting their taxes. But the honest question is, Is that the best thing for us to do at this moment in time?

On the Democratic side, we believe that there is a better approach. We believe our first obligation is to pay down the national debt, strengthening Social Security and Medicare and making certain that our children carry less of a burden in the future. The Republicans say give tax cuts, primarily to wealthy people, over \$1 trillion worth. We say take that money and pay down the debt. We are not sure if that surplus is actually going to be there 2 years, 4 years, 6 years from now. Wouldn't every family and business in America agree it is more sensible to first retire this huge debt that looms over America and its future? That is the Democratic position.

Most people believe we should deal with the national debt. The Republican position, with notable exceptions, including the Presiding Officer, who has taken a more conservative approach when it comes to dealing with the surplus—is, no, we should cut taxes on a permanent basis and hope for the best. The tough part of it, too, is that this cutting of taxes is primarily going to those at the highest income levels.

I had a chart last week which showed that 43 percent of the estate tax cut proposed by the Republicans went to people making over \$300,000 a year. For people with an average income of \$900,000 a year—a show of hands is not necessary—the Republicans proposed a \$23,000-a-year tax break. If one is making somewhere in the neighborhood of

\$75,000 a month, will another \$2,000 a month really make a difference in their life? I find that hard to imagine. Yet when it comes right down to it, that is what we hear from the Republican side: Give the tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America.

On our side, we believe this surplus should be used to pay down the debt, strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and then find those targeted tax cuts that can make a real difference in a person's life.

Let me give a few examples of targeted tax cuts that cost far less than what the Republicans have suggested but would mean dramatic tax relief to working families. I start with middle-income families worried about paying for college education expenses, as well they should be. Between 1990 and 1998, average tuition and fees increased 79 percent at public universities, 56 percent at private 4-year institutions, compared to a 23-percent increase in the Consumer Price Index and a 41-percent increase in per capita disposable income. Families know this. When children are born, they think ahead: How are we going to pay for this kid's college education?

On the Democratic side, we believe if we are talking about changing tax policy, let us give to middle-income families the deduction of college education expenses, a helping hand so that if a son or daughter is accepted at a good university, they don't have to make the decision that they can't go because of money. That is our idea. We would have deduction for college education expenses.

The Republican idea is an estate tax cut that would give an average \$23,000-a-year tax break to people making \$900,000 a year. What is of more value to the future of America: Someone who gets \$2,000 a month to put it in an investment or another vacation home or a family who takes a tax break offered on the Democratic side and helps their son or daughter go to the very best college or university into which they can be accepted?

Secondly, working families I know are struggling with the concept of day care, what to do with the children during the day so they have peace of mind in that the children are safe in a quality environment. Some working people choose day-care centers in their hometowns. They can be very expensive. I know my grandson is in day care, a very good one. I am happy he is there. Many families don't have that luxury. They can't turn to good day care because they can't afford it. What about the family who decides that instead of both parents working, one will stay home to care for the child? That is a good decision to make, if one can afford to make it.

On the Democratic side—this is another change in tax policy that is far better for America than to give tax breaks to wealthy people—Senator DODD of Connecticut came to the floor and said: Let's help families pay for