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Senate

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will be led in prayer today by our guest Chaplain, Dr. John Tolson, First Presbyterian Church, Orlando, FL.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Our Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of this day, for Your incredible love for us and for the privilege and opportunity of and the freedom in which we live. May our lives reflect our gratitude for all these things by living according to Your purpose.

Father, we realize that our children, to a large extent, will become like us as parents. In the same way the shaping of our Nation will be molded by its leaders. May we be willing to ask if we, as leaders, are like what You want our Nation to become.

Your word says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." In our great and rich Nation, too many find themselves spiritually poor. Father, help them to open their eyes to Your love. Please help all of us to understand that no woman or man can open his or her heart without humility and willingness to accept their dependence on You.

On this day when we honor President Lincoln and all he did to unite our Republic, we recall how he never lost sight of Your hand of grace and guidance.

Father, help and encourage the Members of this great body to aspire to excellence as Senators, as leaders, and as Americans. Build Your character into their lives so that their conduct will be a reflection of You.

And now, may the living Lord be with you this day; may He go above you to watch over you, behind you to encourage you, beside you to befriend you, and within you to give you peace

and before you to show you His way. 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. BROWNBACK). The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. The Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Miguel Estrada to be a circuit judge for the DC Circuit. We have spent 4 days and over 20 hours debating this eminently qualified nominee. Yesterday 14 Senators participated in the debate. To afford Senators ample time to fulfill their constitutional advise and consent responsibilities and to facilitate unfettered consideration of this nomination, I expect tonight to be a very late night. Senators are encouraged to come to the floor over the course of today to engage in this debate.

The Democratic leader and I have discussed options to conclude the Senate's constitutional responsibilities as they pertain to this nominee. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to object to any time agreement and refuse to set a time for a dispositive vote. My objective is to provide all Senators with sufficient opportunity to debate the merits of this nominee and then to move this nomination to a final vote.

Therefore, once again, I encourage Senators to come to the floor today and this evening and, if necessary, tomorrow and tomorrow evening, to ex-

press their views so a final vote can be scheduled. I do hope the Democratic leader will assist me in achieving this goal.

In addition, the Senate continues to wait for the completion of the very important conference report on the omnibus appropriations bill. Those discussions have gone on over the course of the last several days, well into last night and over the course of this morning. This omnibus appropriations bill—I believe I speak for both sides of the aisle—is a must-pass item to be addressed and ultimately passed prior to any recess.

Mr. REID. While the majority leader is on the floor, Mr. President, we on this side are prepared to stay as long, of course, as the leader asks us to do so. But because we will have to have people here to make sure there are people on the floor to discuss whatever they feel they want to discuss during this nomination process, do you have an idea how late you might want us to stay tonight?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I want to provide ample opportunity. We have been on this nomination since last Wednesday. I would expect we will be here very late into the evening; I don't know what time. But if we are to achieve having a recess at all, I do want to be able to fully address the issue of the omnibus appropriations and the Estrada nomination. I would think it is going to be very late tonight, but I can't give an exact time.

Mr. REID. As I said last night, as Senator HATCH and I were closing the Senate, everything has been said, but not quite everyone has said it, on the nomination of Miguel Estrada. Both sides have talked about what they like and dislike about this nomination. Yesterday, of course, there were a lot of repetitive statements.

We will be here. I think it is quite clear that we won't be speaking much about Miguel Estrada as the day proceeds. We will want to talk about

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



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