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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).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, we exalt Your Name, for You are great and highly to be praised. We praise You because Your power is unlimited and You are able to do immeasurably more than we can imagine. You rule over the heavens and the Earth and hold in Your power our breath and our destiny.

Thank You, Lord, for Your sovereignty over the days of our lives. Exercise Your gracious authority over our Nation as You guide our lawmakers in the tasks of freedom. Give them an awareness of Your presence and Your willingness to be an ever-present help for life's challenges.

Help each of us to labor, not only for time, but also for eternity. Let our words and thoughts be acceptable in Your sight, for You are our strength and our Redeemer.

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.

LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of leader time under the standing order.

The Senator from Texas.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, this morning we will

have a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes. The first 30 minutes of that time will be under the control of the majority side, and the second 30 minutes will be controlled by the minority side of the aisle. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 150, a bill relating to taxation of Internet access.

Yesterday, we made a little progress on the bill by debating and disposing of one amendment related to the definitions in the bill. Unfortunately, following the vote we were sidetracked with an amendment related to a completely different subject than Internet access.

Currently, we are scheduled for cloture votes beginning Thursday on the Daschle energy-related first-degree amendment to the underlying bill, the Domenici second-degree amendment on energy, and finally the McCain substitute which is on the Internet access tax subject.

The chairman of the committee will be here shortly this morning, and I believe it will be his desire to try to reach agreements to consider amendments relating to the underlying bill. Hopefully that will be possible and therefore rollcall votes will occur on amendments today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The deputy minority leader.

Mr. REID. Parliamentary inquiry: If I do not reserve the Democratic leader's time, he can use that time throughout the day or do I need to reserve it?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. You may reserve it.

Mr. REID. The leader is here, so I will not do that.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to talk today about several agricultural issues.

First, last week, I met with John Stewart and Bill Fielding. They run a company called Creekstone Farms that sells premium Black Angus beef cattle.

Creekstone had a good marketing idea: In the wake of the mad cow scare, Creekstone thought that one way to re-open the Japanese markets, which had accounted for 28 percent of our Nation's beef exports, would be to privately test all of their cattle for BSE, or mad cow disease, at no cost to the taxpayers.

The Japanese markets have been closed for several months, but they have said that they would re-open their markets for Creekstone's beef.

Creekstone has built a top-notch laboratory at their headquarters in Kansas, and they have hired several full-time animal health experts. But they wanted to do this the right way, so they asked USDA to support them in their efforts.

The Department actually said "no." They said Creekstone could not test.

You see, USDA doesn't want to set a precedent that all beef needs to be tested. They suggest that large meat packers might essentially be forced into testing all animals. That, USDA contends, would be expensive and, well, inconvenient.

But nobody is suggesting that the Government mandate 100 percent testing. If a meat packer wanted to test, however, it might be a good marketing tool for them.

But the packers say testing would be too cumbersome, that consumers don't want and don't need testing information.

All of those arguments ring very familiar and very hollow. Remember, the packers and the Bush administration opposed another marketing tool—country-of-origin labeling for those very same reasons.

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



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