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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. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Congregation Beth Chaverim, Virginia Beach, VA.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Our one God of Shalom, who brings us together to be one family, having just celebrated July Fourth, inspire our tireless Senators these trying times of unique challenge and singular opportunity to safeguard and increase our blessings in our beloved and leading land of flourishing democracy.

Enable and ennoble these faithful partners of Yours to be coworkers with the Creator—for that is our glory—in the healing of society's blemishes, yet turning our planet Earth into a paradise for all. Facing complex issues and raging debates, allow them to connect to the inner calming call of divine presence, awed by the wonder of being and reassured by the spirit of renewal at the heart of life's awesome drama. May they perceive in their own journey God's guiding hand of majesty, mystery, and mastery, ever sustained in both trial and triumph.

As son of Polish Holocaust survivors, I thank You and America. 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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will conduct a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes. Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the class action fairness bill. Last night we had a series of opening statements, and therefore today we hope to make progress on that bill.

As I mentioned yesterday, the issue surrounding class action has been thoroughly debated before the Senate. This bill has bipartisan support. I continue to hope we can reach an agreement to consider relevant amendments to the underlying legislation. I believe we should debate and vote on any class action amendments and allow the Senate to ultimately vote on passage of the legislation after a fair time for consideration.

Having said that, I am concerned about all the reports in the various periodicals with regard to this bill being used as fly paper, as a vehicle to carry all kinds of unrelated issues. I just simply hope that will not be the case and that we can stay on the bill with relevant amendments. The legislation is too important to become mired down in a myriad of completely unrelated issues. Therefore, I believe in order for the Senate to pass the class action bill, we should reach an agreement as to how best to proceed. It is not my intent to cut off any Member's right to offer amendments; however, I do believe we should be clear that the amendments will be related to the underlying bill. I will continue to talk to the other side to find a path by which we can complete this bill, and I will have more to say on the schedule following the period of morning business.

RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Before the distinguished majority leader leaves the Senate floor, I wanted to alert him and the two managers of the bill that after morning business, we have a number of Democratic Senators, both for and against the legislation, who wish to make opening statements on the bill. I have six Senators who have contacted me, and the time they will consume will probably take us until at least the noon hour on just opening statements on the bill. I have not heard from anyone else, but I wanted the managers to know that. I have heard—I am not sure this is the case—that the managers are going to first look to a Republican to offer an amendment, and then how we normally do things is to go back and forth. There is certainly no rule that that needs to be the case, but we do, after morning business, have a number of Senators who wish to make statements on this bill. Under what we have done in the past, that certainly is appropriate. No one has taken an inordinate amount of time.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I am sure the managers will shortly be aware of that. It is important that people are heard on a very important bill. We began the bill late yesterday, and we need to have a very productive day today and possibly into tonight to continue progress on the bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when the distinguished Presiding Officer makes a statement as to our going into morning business, I would ask unanimous consent that Senator LINCOLN be recognized on the Democratic side for 15 minutes and Senator HARKIN for 10 minutes.

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

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



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