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## Senate

The Senate met at 12:09 p.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.

Eternal Spirit, thank You for Your steadfast love and Your unchanging mercy. Your wondrous deeds sustain us and Your compassion keeps us secure. Thank You for traveling mercies and for the shield of Your protection during the conventions. Remind us that true greatness comes through service. May we esteem others as better than ourselves.

Bless our lawmakers today. Strengthen them in their challenging work of striving to find common ground. Protect them from strife and division as they seek unity for the good of our Nation and world.

In a special way, comfort those who mourn in Russia and help those who face the challenges of nature in Florida. We pray also for the speedy and complete recovery of President Clinton. Lord, we treasure each other as these situations remind us of the fragility of life. Empower us all to trust You without wavering. We pray this in Your holy Name. 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, first, let me welcome everybody back from what

I hope was a safe and productive August break. It seems as if only a few days ago we were here on the floor finishing our work prior to our recess. Since that time, we have had the two party conventions, and our colleagues have been spending time with their constituents and with family and friends.

Today, we will resume our Senate business with a period of morning business to allow Senators to make statements and to introduce legislation. A number of colleagues have expressed their desire to come to the floor, and we will coordinate an informal schedule of speakers over the course of this afternoon.

Under the consent agreement reached prior to the recess, at 5 p.m. today we will proceed to executive session for debate on two district court nominations. Those nominations are Virginia Maria Hernandez Covington, of Florida, to be a U.S. district judge for the Middle District of Florida, and Michael Schneider, of Texas, to be a U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Texas. The Senate will vote on the confirmation of those judicial nominations at 5:30 today, and those will be the first votes of the day.

Following those votes, we will consider the nomination of Michael Watson, of Ohio, to be a U.S. district judge for the Southern District of Ohio. I do not anticipate a rollcall vote to be necessary on the Watson nomination; therefore, the two votes at 5:30 today should be the only rollcall votes of the day.

I know there are colleagues who are ready to speak; therefore, I will defer some longer opening comments to about 30 minutes from now. I would say at this time that our plans are to begin consideration of the Homeland Security appropriations bill tomorrow morning. I am discussing with the Democratic leadership an agreement to allow us to move quickly on that legislation. Again, I will have more to say

on the Senate schedule in about 30 or 45 minutes.

With that, Mr. President, I look forward to a productive legislative period.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### COMPLETING THE SENATE'S BUSINESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I join my colleague, the majority leader, in welcoming all of our colleagues back, and also our staff and a new class of pages who are starting today. We are pleased they could join us. We know they will be enjoying their experience, and we are delighted they could be here as we begin this important business.

I had the opportunity to talk with Senator FRIST briefly this morning. He and I come to the floor this morning with the realization that, with what limited time is left, we must do what our eloquent Chaplain has just prayed we would do; that is, we find the common ground required to deal with the array of legislative challenges that we face as a Senate body and as a country.

It would be my hope we could do what the majority leader has suggested, which is to begin deliberations on the Homeland Security appropriations bill very early in the session, hopefully as early as tomorrow. I will be discussing this matter and other scheduling issues with our caucus and our leadership tomorrow morning, but I can say, even having not had the benefit of those discussions, there is a great deal of interest in working with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to achieve completion of the Homeland Security bill, as we have called for now for a couple of months.

We also have, of course, 11 other appropriations bills that have not yet reached completion. Most have not

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



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