



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2005

No. 2

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, ruler of all nature, thank You for the gift of life and for the opportunity to invest in freedom. As electoral college votes are counted today, increase our gratitude for this great land.

Infuse the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Government with strength to meet the challenges of our time. Remind our leaders that humility precedes honor and that service is the litmus test of greatness.

Continue to bless those who seek to relieve the suffering of the tsunami victims. Help them to remember that they are doing Your work and reward them from the bounty of Your love. We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 6, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Ms. MURKOWSKI thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, today we are in session to consider two committee membership resolutions. We hope to have those resolutions considered and adopted in a short while. The two resolutions will make majority and minority committee appointments for the 109th Congress, as well as officially appoint the chairmen and ranking members for each of those committees.

In addition to that business, today at 1 p.m. we will have a joint meeting with the House to count electoral votes. Members should begin gathering in the Senate Chamber at 12:40 this afternoon so we may depart as a body at 12:50.

Senators have been asking about the possibility of rollcall votes during today's session. At this point we have to say, unfortunately, that rollcall votes are still possible during today's session. As always, we will alert Members as the voting schedule becomes more clear. Once we have adopted our committee resolutions and the electoral vote count is completed, it is my intention the Senate will adjourn until January 20, Inauguration Day.

I will have more to say on the schedule today before the Senate closes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

TODAY'S AGENDA

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are very close to working something out on committee funding. We have an agreement on the split. It is just a question of what we are splitting. I have a meeting today with the ranking members. I spoke to virtually all of them last night and we will be able to work something out here. It is important we do that. We have Members on our side, new Senators, we want to appoint to committees. The majority has new Members they need to appoint to committees. There will be some new committee chairs, new ranking members. We want to expedite this. We hope to have it done, as I told the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, by noon today. It is something we need to do. I am confident we can do that.

On our side if, in fact, there is an objection filed to any of the States that are going to report their electoral college findings, we will not require a rollcall vote on our side, but that does not mean there won't be one. So whether there is an objection filed, we will wait and see at 1 o'clock today. After that, there will be decisions made by individual Senators as to whether there is a vote.

Procedurally, as I understand the rule, if there is an objection filed, automatically the electoral college proceedings are put in recess for 2 hours. During that 2 hours, Members in the House and Senate are allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes each on the objection. Following that, the electoral college reconvenes. If, in fact, there is an objection filed, I think everything would be completed by around 4 o'clock today.

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



Printed on recycled paper.