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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and Earth, Creator of humanity in Your own image, we rejoice because of Your strength. Lord, from the quietness that heals, from the searching that reveals, guide Your Senators into channels of faithful service. Use them to bind up the wounds of the broken, the disinherited, and the rejected. Teach them to bring harmony from discord and hope from despair. Help them to daily celebrate life in all its myriad aspects. May they never lose their zeal in working to make our planet a place of peace.

Bless the men and women of our military as they sacrifice to keep us free. Shower them with eternal blessings. We praise You, Lord, for all Your glorious power. Let the works of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts bring glory to Your Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN ENSIGN 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, April 21, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENSIGN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will begin with a 1-hour period for morning business. We will finish the emergency supplemental appropriations bill during today's session. The order from last night provides for up to three votes, including final passage, and those votes will be stacked for a time certain late this afternoon. We also have an agreement to consider the nomination of John Negroponte to be Director of National Intelligence. We will debate that nomination today and stack that vote to occur with the remaining votes on the emergency supplemental bill.

I thank Chairman COCHRAN and Senator BYRD for their hard work on the appropriations measure. That bill will go to conference next week, and we hope that we can have a conference report available in a reasonable period of time.

Again, we will alert Members when we have locked in the exact time of the stacked votes later today.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from South Dakota.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today in morning business to speak about a matter of great importance, and that is our broken judicial nomination and confirmation process. As Senators, we have sworn to support and defend the Constitution, and on the issue of judicial nominations the Constitution is straightforward. It states that the President nominates judges and the Senate has the duty to give its advice and consent on those nominations. For over 200 years, that is exactly how it worked, regardless of which party was in power.

Over the past 2 years, the Democrat minority has attempted to change the rules and stand 200 years of Senate tradition on its head. The Democrat minority now thinks that 41 Senators should be able to dictate to the President which judges he can nominate. The minority also thinks that it should be able to prevent the rest of the Senate from fulfilling its constitutional duty of voting up or down on judicial nominees.

The Democrats' position is contrary to our Constitution, our Senate traditions, and the will of the American people as expressed at the ballot box this past November. It must stop.

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



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