



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2005

No. 101

Senate

The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LISA MURKOWSKI, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Dr. Percell Church, Jr., of the Zion United Methodist Church in North Las Vegas, NV.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

May we bow with humility in prayer. Eternal and Everlasting God, we approach You today with reverence, sincerity, and hope, knowing that You are our source and strength in this world. Your sovereign hand continues to create opportunity while the almighty wind of Your spirit propels us into our destiny. It is You who has made us in Your image and for Your pleasure, and for that alone we are grateful and thankful.

We acknowledge and center ourselves in this time of prayer that though we are living in the heat of calamity, You are the calm that cools, cares, and constructs a divine citadel. It is through the sagacity of Your spirit we are ushered into a place where we experience the forgiving nature of a true and loving Lord. And yet, with intentionality and precision, You cause those things which have made us stumble to somehow sustain, support, and strengthen our faith in You.

Lord God, we ask a special blessing for our Senators. You have ordained this group of "servants of the people" to lead our Nation and bless our world. As they live out the course of their tenure, please continue to bless their families and respectful constituencies.

It is in Your Name, power, and glory we pray. 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 22, 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this morning, we will resume debate on the Defense authorization bill. Chairman WARNER is here, and Senator LEVIN just walked into the Chamber. He is here as well. They will be here to manage the bill this morning. Senators are expected to come over and offer several amendments. Although no roll-

calls will occur today, the managers will be able to accept amendments which have been cleared on both sides of the aisle.

We will file a cloture motion today, which will be ready for a vote on Tuesday. This will allow us to finish the bill next week. If we invoke cloture, Senators will still be able to offer their amendments, and we would still be ensured we could proceed to passage sometime before the August recess.

As the majority leader has repeated, we have a number of items to consider over these last days prior to our departure for the month of August. I will say more on next week's schedule at closing, but Senators should be ready for a long week next week. I do not believe anyone should be preparing for any early departures, and that includes next Friday.

I remind our colleagues we will be voting Monday evening. We have not yet set any votes at that time. However, we do expect a vote or votes to occur on Monday.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

WELCOMING OUR GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is a pleasure for me to be here this morning to recognize Dr. Percell Church. As has been indicated by the Chair, he is the leader of the Zion United Methodist Church in Las Vegas.

When he came to Las Vegas a short time ago, in relative terms, he had some very big shoes to fill. The Zion United Methodist Church had been operated, pastored, by one of Nevada's very famous residents, Marion Bennett, who had served with great distinction

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



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in the Nevada State legislature and led this very large church.

So when Dr. Church came to run the church, we were all anticipating the tremendously large shoes he had to fill. And it is easy for me to say that he has done it with distinction, honor, and class.

Dr. Church is a native of New Orleans, LA, where he earned a bachelor of science degree from Southern University. He later earned his master of divinity from Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA, and received his doctor of ministry from Oxford University.

Serving in the ministry for more than 20 years, this young man, Dr. Church, has been a guest speaker at countless churches around the world. He has ministered in India, Nigeria, the Bahamas.

He is leading the revival and growth of the Zion United Methodist Church. He hosts a daycare center servicing working parents in the Las Vegas area. He has established a remarkable youth ministry, the purpose of which is to get young adults involved in the church and the community. That has been successful.

He is also a loving husband to his wife Angela, and a loving father to his three sons, Daniel, Ephraim, and Immanuel. They are with us today.

I commend Dr. Church for his leadership and wish him well in his ministry and his continued service to humanity. What a great addition to the State of Nevada has been Dr. Percell Church. I am proud to be able to say he is my friend, and I look forward to his continued spiritual guidance to the people of Zion United Methodist Church and the people of the State of Nevada.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. REID. Madam President, changing direction here a little bit, I say to Dr. Church, and others, I want to take up where we left off last night. I have thought about what status we are in here today. It is so disheartening to me. We took up this bill, this very important Defense authorization bill, Wednesday, very late in the day. Statements were given by the two managers.

We came to do our work yesterday, and we worked hard, and we were suddenly struck with the suggestion—we thought it was just some of the rumors that happen around here in the Senate that could not be valid. I called the majority leader: You are not going to file cloture on the Defense authorization bill after 1 day of debate, are you? And he said: Yes. I said: Well, Bill, I am going to go to the floor and complain about that because that is wrong.

Now, let me say, Madam President, on this issue I do not agree with a number of my Senators, but the thing he wants to take up next is an NRA bill, a bill dealing with gun liability. Fine. But at the expense of the defense of this country? What are we coming to around here? What are we coming to

here? After 1 day of debate we are getting off to do gun liability? We can do that in September when we come back here, or finish this bill.

I want the American public to know what is happening. My dear friend, the senior Senator from Virginia, got up yesterday and, in his gentlemanly way, said: Well, it is my fault. It is not his fault. Let's be realistic about it. He does not determine when cloture motions are filed. It is done by the Republican leadership in this Senate. To think we are moving off of this bill after 1 full day of debate, and cloture is filed, should be an embarrassment to this leadership that is leading this Senate.

I attended a funeral on the Saturday I came back here a couple weeks ago in Boulder City, NV. A 21-year-old man was killed in service to our country. He was a Navy SEAL named Shane Patton. The SEALs are a very small, elite group. His commander there at that funeral cried because he had lost one of his men. I think we owe more to Shane and his family—his father was also a frogman, as they are called, Jim Patton.

The distinguished ranking member will today go over how much time we have spent on these Defense bills in years past. I guarantee you, it has been more than 1 day of full debate. People are going to say: Well, we are here on Friday.

We don't dispose of anything here today. We will offer some amendments. We will have no votes. We will vote late Monday, a few hours before cloture will be voted on.

Madam President, I don't know if I can deliver, but I am going to try. I am going to try to deliver my Democratic Senators to oppose cloture. See, I have been around here a little bit. I understand the games that are being played. The Republican leader wants to blame us for not having the Defense bill go forward. Well, I want the record to be spread, it is not us. It is them. I am going to do everything within my power to stop cloture from being invoked on this bill. We deserve better than this. Shane Patton deserves more than this. In his memory, we deserve more than 1 day of debate—a 21-year-old man, dead.

We have had one recorded vote on this bill. We could have had more, but we had to stop voting yesterday early. We have offered four amendments on this side. If cloture is invoked, Members of this body will be denied the opportunity to debate and vote on major issues.

What kind of major issues? Well, such as ensuring that our troops, active and retired, get the pay and benefits they have earned. No time to debate our course in Iraq. I don't know if I am being a little too political here, but let's think about this a little bit. We are spending about \$2 billion a week in Iraq—\$2 billion a week in Iraq. I wonder, as to just that alone, should we spend more than 1 day here in the

Senate on this bill? Two billion dollars a week.

I wonder if there should be a little debate here on a Defense authorization bill about what is going on in Iraq.

What about the fact that we need to spend a little time talking about the spread of weapons of mass destruction? A report was issued on Tuesday, led by former Defense Secretary Perry, that we have a lot of loose nukes, that the real problem we have in this country, as far as our security goes, is what to do about these loose nukes. I think that deserves a little bit of time. Should we spend a little bit of time addressing the detainee abuse scandal? I think that would be a good idea. We can't do this unless we have time to debate issues and have some votes. The Defense authorization bill in years past hasn't taken days; it has taken weeks to complete. No one is trying to slow up things. I support gun manufacturers liability legislation. JACK REED who doesn't like it, but I have kept him advised every step of the way. I support that legislation, but not at the expense of Shane Patton.

If cloture is not invoked, does that mean the leader, who has the right to pull this bill off the floor, will pull it off and go to gun liability and forget the promise he made to the Hawaiian Senators, a promise that he made that we would do native Hawaiian legislation?

The move that is taking place in the Senate regarding the defense of our country is unprecedented. The Armed Services Committee keeps records back to 1987. These records are thorough and highly accurate. During that period, approximately the last 18 years, no majority leader has filed cloture on the Defense authorization bill after so little time and so little action. Doing so now during a time of war, when more than 200,000 of our troops are in harm's way looking for our support, would be as disturbing as it is unprecedented.

As it stands now, if the majority leader proceeds with this motion, it is entirely possible that the Senate will vote to cut off debate on this legislation before we will have a single vote on a Democratic amendment—a single vote. Let me repeat, it is possible we will have voted to cut off debate before we have voted on a single Democratic amendment. We can go back before 1987. I can't believe anything like that has ever happened.

If this cloture motion is successful, those who support it are sending one message—they do not believe the Senate should debate the important national security issues that are very much on the minds of our troops, their families, and the American people. At the same time, the majority leader has apparently concluded we should cut off debate on this critical legislation after less than 3 days, only one of which is a real day—around here we don't do anything on Fridays and Mondays. We travel. We go around raising money. We don't have votes. We are down to a