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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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 Lord God, our helper and friend, set up Your throne in our hearts today and rule our spirits. Banish every evil emotion and desire. Direct our minds and thoughts to those things that are true, noble, just, pure, and praiseworthy.

Guide our lawmakers with Your might. Govern their actions so that they will live with integrity. Control their speech so that they will speak the truth with civility, humility, and moderation.

Help us all to so live that we may not be ashamed at Your appearance. And Lord, we also ask You to be near Dr. Richard Smalley, a Nobel Laureate, who is very ill.

All this we ask for Your love's sake. 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.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will have a period of morning business which will allow Senators to come to the floor to make statements. I announced last night that there would be no votes today, and I do not anticipate a lengthy session. We expect to consider some executive nominations over the course of the morning, and we also will be able to consider any other cleared legislative items before closing.

On Monday, under our order from last night, we will begin consideration of the deficit reduction bill. I will have a few comments on that shortly. That bill does have a statutory 20-hour time limit, and we now have an order which divides that time over the course of Monday. Also, we have set out a time for Tuesday and Wednesday of this coming week. We will not have any votes during Monday's session, but Senators can expect a very busy week on that deficit reduction package. I will have more to say about the course of next week later today and will outline the voting schedule, as we know it, a little bit later this morning.

I congratulate, once again, Chairman SPECTER and Senator HARKIN for completing the work on the Labor-HHS appropriations bill last night. That was the final of our 12 appropriations bills to be considered by the Senate. Senator COCHRAN has done a tremendous job throughout the appropriations process, and we thank him for his efforts and his committee members for shepherding the bills through.

### RECONCILIATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Monday we begin consideration of the def-

icit reduction bill, a bill that goes by the title of a reconciliation bill. Indeed, it has been 8 years since we have addressed spending on a reconciliation bill, a critically important bill. It may well be the most important piece of fiscal legislation we will debate. I fully expect it will be enacted this year. For those who may watch this debate, I should be clear that the bill we will debate is focused on one piece of the Federal budget, not the entire Federal budget. It is, however, a major piece of the budget, mandatory spending. That word "mandatory," sometimes referred to as entitlement spending, represents about \$1.4 trillion or 56 percent of overall Federal spending this year. It will continue to grow in the future, particularly as that demographic shift occurs, as the baby boomers begin to travel through our system in 2008.

Mandatory spending, entitlement spending, encompasses a whole range of programs familiar to my colleagues—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal-civilian military retirement, student loans, TRICARE, foster care, child nutrition, SSI, unemployment insurance, farm price support programs, veterans disability, and the list goes on. If Federal spending is to be controlled—and it absolutely must be controlled—over time, these programs are going to have to be addressed. They are going to have to be reformed.

Over the last 5 years, mandatory entitlement program spending has grown at an annual rate of over 7.1 percent. That is three times faster than the overall growth in our economy. It simply cannot be sustained. The result is a greater share of our national economy's productive capacity, that proportion of our productive capacity, is being shifted toward those programs. We have to find a balance. It is incumbent upon us to do so.

Under the procedures laid out by the Budget Act for considering this deficit reduction legislation that we will have on the floor beginning Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next

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



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