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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2006, at 2 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2006

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.

O God who has comprehended our lives and is the author and finisher of our faith, teach us to live our days with the heights above us and on level plains. We thank You for Your grace that strengthens us for the tasks of each day and for the unfolding of Your wonderful Providence. Keep us from becoming intoxicated by the desire for success and protect us from the fear of failure that paralyzes noble striving. Lead us through the abysses of pride and across the gorges of pretension to the richness of Your transforming spirit of love.

Guide the Members of our Nation's legislative branch today with Your wisdom. Show them solutions to the problems that beset our land. Empower them with a compassion that seeks first Your glory and deliver them from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind.

Help us all to praise You with our words and deeds.

We pray in the name of the captain of our salvation.

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, February 2, 2006.

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 majority whip is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this morning we will resume debate on

the House-passed tax reconciliation bill. I would like to observe that yesterday and today, up until the time we pass the tax reconciliation bill, we are actually engaging in an utterly futile activity that should have been avoided by the simple act of granting consent. In effect, the minority, in apparently a display of pique, wants to make the Senate, in effect, do again a bill it already did in December.

I am not opposed to dilatory tactics when they are not pointless. I have been in the minority in this body and have been a proud guardian of gridlock from time to time when there was a point to it, when we were actually trying to defeat a measure. But it seems to me to some extent it demeans the institution and grates on the nerves of everyone when common courtesy of granting consent is not offered.

Nevertheless, yesterday and today, we will plod through a bill that we did about 5 weeks ago one more time; at the end, with the same result.

Let me report that at this point there are 7 hours remaining for that debate, although we do not believe all of that time will be necessary. At some point early this afternoon, we expect on this side to yield back time, and we would begin voting. The so-called vote-arama will be a series of consecutive votes on amendments to the bill which will eventually lead to passage. We hope it is not a lengthy voting series because that will simply inconvenience all Members on both sides of the aisle. However, that is up to the Members of

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



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