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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 6, 2006, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2006

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Senate met at 8:45 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:

May we pray.

Eternal, sovereign Lord, supply our needs for today.

Give strength to the weak as they shoulder heavy responsibilities. Give rest to the weary, that their tired hands will find new vigor. Give comfort to the sorrowful and compensate them for every joy that life takes away. Give all of us the presence of Your love, that we may find the peace of sins forgiven and the power to break the chains of temptation.

Use our Senators today for Your glory. Uphold them when they reach the limits of their strength.

We pray in Your powerful Name. 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, leadership time is reserved.

NOMINATION OF BRETT M. KAVANAUGH TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume the consideration of Calendar No. 632, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brett M. Kavanaugh, of Maryland, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Committee wishes to speak on the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh. I also wish to do that.

I ask that the Senator from Vermont be recognized.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are concluding the debate on the controversial nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to a seat on the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

I spoke last evening, and I shall not speak longer today except to again express my concern that we are putting a person with no judicial experience on the second most powerful court in the land.

This vote will go forward, unlike the votes for two far more qualified people nominated by President Clinton who were pocket-filibustered by the Republican leadership of the Senate, along with 59 other judges nominated by President Clinton who were pocket-filibustered by the Republican leadership.

What I worry about with this nomination of Mr. Kavanaugh, whose ABA rating has been downgraded—it is almost unprecedented to see that happen—is that he is a man who in all his statements spoke of making rulings that would make President Bush proud. This is an independent branch of Government. He is not supposed to make any President—Republican or Democratic—proud. He is not supposed to be a rubberstamp for anybody.

I think when you have a Republican-controlled Congress which has refused to be a check on the Bush-Cheney administration, whether it is the war in Iraq, the lack of weapons of mass destruction, the failures of Homeland Security with Katrina, or this latest fiasco in the Veterans' Administration, there is no accountability. We at least should be able to speak to our courts and to expect our courts to be accountable.

This is an administration that has been secretly wiretapping Americans for years without warrants, despite the requirements of the law. This is an administration that refused to allow the Justice Department's own Office of Professional Responsibility to proceed

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



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