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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, infinite sovereign Lord, our lawmakers face complex issues that challenge the best of human thoughts and actions. As You gave insight to King Solomon, impart wisdom to Your servants in the Senate. Help them to believe that You are real and relevant and a ready helper for all their challenges. May they recognize their need for divine intervention and develop the necessary humility to seek it. Lord, shower them with wisdom and strength far beyond their own to face these critical days. In their worries and cares, give them the joy of knowing You are with them. We pray in the Name of Him who is all wise, all powerful, and all loving. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK UDALL, 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. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, we will begin consideration of S. 1390, the Department of Defense authorization bill. At 4:30 today, the Senate will turn to executive session to consider the nomination of Robert Groves to be the Director of the Census and debate the nomination for 1 hour.

At 5:30 p.m., the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the nomination. Under an agreement reached last week, if cloture is invoked, all postcloture debate time will be yielded back and the Senate will immediately proceed to a vote on confirmation of the nomination. I expect that if cloture is invoked, the vote on confirmation would be a voice vote.

Upon disposition of the nomination, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill. As previously announced, there will be no rollcall votes after 2:00 or so tomorrow afternoon.

HEALTH CARE AND THE SOTOMAYOR NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the coming weeks are a critical time, not just here in the Congress but in our country. This month we will work to stabilize our broken health care system and lower costs for the middle class. This

month we will also discuss, debate and, I am confident, ultimately confirm President Obama's outstanding nominee, Judge Sonia Sotomayor.

These goals require both sides to work together. I repeat. These goals require both sides to work together. Each will require all of us to work in good faith. If we are to do what our country needs us to do, we must work as partners, not partisans.

We have said all along we strongly prefer to fix health care as one collaborative body, not as two competing parties. I had a positive meeting with four senior Republican Senators about the road ahead for health care, and it is health care reform we talked about. We finished the meeting and there was a general agreement we needed health care reform, and it should be done on a bipartisan basis, not resort to what we call reconciliation, which requires only a simple majority.

I appreciate very much the commitment of those four Republicans to getting this done. I look forward to more Republicans showing the same commitment.

The Finance and HELP Committee chairmen are working tirelessly to mark up the health care bills. Our goal remains the same. We would like to see those bills on the floor in July. I hope our Republican colleagues will work with us to achieve that goal.

Just as our commitment to a bipartisan plan has not changed, neither have our principles about that plan: lowering skyrocketing costs, and bringing stability and security back to health care. We are committed to passing a plan that protects what works and fixes what is broken. A plan that ensures that if you like the coverage you have, you can keep it.

We will make sure people can still choose their own doctors, hospitals, and health plans. Americans need affordable health care they can count on. Too many families live just one illness or one accident or one pink slip away

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



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