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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord of our pilgrim years, the day returns and brings us the round of its concerns and duties.

As our Senators serve You and country, make them aware that their attitudes, words, and actions influence the structure of events and human relationships around our Nation and world. Help these representatives of freedom to master themselves that they may be the servants of others. In these times of strain, keep them from magnifying the slights and stings that are a part of the legislative process. Give them pure hearts and a passion to serve the American people with integrity and honor.

Lord, today, we commit to You all that we have and are to realize Your best for this Nation and world.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND 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 bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 30, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for an hour. Senators will be permitted to speak for 10 minutes each. Under an agreement reached last night, we are going to turn to the consideration of H.R. 3357, the highway trust fund legislation, among others things. Rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day.

The Senate will recess from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. to allow for a Members-only briefing with Secretary Clinton and Secretary Gates, who both just returned from overseas—the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

I have not had an opportunity to speak to the Republican leader today, but we will probably have the four votes after the briefing we will have with the two Secretaries. We will stack them, and we should be able to complete all the debate at that time. The legislation has not yet arrived from the House, but I think it will be here in the next half hour or so.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE WEEK VIII, DAY IV

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the American people are making their voices heard in the debate over health care. One of the things they are demanding is that we do something to lower costs. This is why the proponents of a government takeover never fail to mention lowering costs as one of their primary goals. Yet, more and more, Americans are beginning to ask themselves a very simple question: How can more government lead to lower costs?

They look at Medicare, a government-run health care program that's nearly bankrupt, and they don't understand how an even bigger, more complicated government-run health plan won't end up in the same condition—and they certainly don't understand why the administration would propose cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicare to help pay for this massive new government-run plan.

Yet, this is precisely what some are proposing: that we use Medicare as a

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



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