



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2009

No. 145

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O, God of light shining in darkness, O, God of hope lifting from despair, we turn our thoughts to what You have done in our lives, what You are doing, and what You promised to do in the days to come. Let our gratitude for Your grace rise up in joy and praise to Your throne.

Lord, use the talents of our lawmakers for Your purposes. Inspire them to dedicate their abilities to You to be used in faithful service. Show them how to maximize their opportunities to bring justice, equality, and peace to our Nation and world. Empower them to enable justice to prevail over injustice, reconciliation to replace conflict, and caring to replace apathy. Lord, give them a sense of destiny and a deep dependence on Your guidance. Strengthen their desire to have congruity between beliefs and behavior as they seek to live worthy of their privilege.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, October 8, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR 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. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes. The majority will control the second 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act. We hope to reach short time agreements on available conference reports. Senators will be notified when any votes are scheduled during today's session of the Senate. Senators SHELBY and MIKULSKI feel we can finish the bill that we are working on today.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE CBO REPORT

The Finance Committee report came out yesterday from CBO. It was outstanding, \$81 billion, bending the curve. That bill will be voted on by the Finance Committee on Tuesday morning. It will be reported to the Senate.

Since Harry Truman was President, Democrats have fought to make it

more affordable to live a healthy life in America. Every day we come closer to achieving that goal. Yesterday was a landmark occasion. Yesterday the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office confirmed that the Finance Committee plan, which is one of the five plans in Congress to reform the way health insurance companies treat people in this country, will reduce the deficit.

It did not say it will keep the deficit the same. It did not say it will increase it, not even by one penny. It said, in black and white, that the Finance Committee's bill will reduce our deficit, not just in the short term but over the long term as well.

That is something progressives, conservatives, and Independents, everyone in between, can be thankful for and can applaud. Today we stand closer than ever to fulfilling that fundamental promise, the one for which we have fought more than 60 years. We stand closer than ever to fulfilling the cause of Senator Ted Kennedy.

But as anyone who has even superficially followed the debate knows, the route to realizing Senator Kennedy's dream is far from smooth sailing. There are still those who will not rest until the American people are denied the change they demanded, those who will not be happy unless the status quo is sustained. There are those who still want to pick fights against us, even though we are interested only in fighting for hardworking American families. There are those who consider this a zero sum game and will only declare victory if President Obama concedes defeat. So let me be very clear. Just as Democrats believe in ensuring quality, affordable health care for every American citizen, we believe equally as strongly that this country has no place for those who wish for its leaders to fail.

Just as yesterday brought us another step closer to real reform, it also brought us another round of Republican excuses, from the Republican

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



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