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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, February 8, 2010)

The Senate met at 2 p.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable MARK BEGICH, a Senator from the State of Alaska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father, whose power is unsearchable and whose judgments are a great deep, we quiet our hearts today in Your presence.

Give to our lawmakers a reverential awe of You, which is the beginning of wisdom. May they use this wisdom to amend the defective, leading people to choose life and blessings. Lord, let this high place of governance become the audience chamber of Your presence, as You provide our Senators with courage in the midst of fear, faith in the midst of doubt, and hope in the midst of despair.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK BEGICH 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, February 9, 2010.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable MARK BEGICH, a Senator from the State of Alaska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BEGICH 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, the issue before the Senate today is what we do with Mother Nature. Mother Nature has been very difficult to deal with. The Presiding Officer, being from the State of Alaska, is used to this kind of weather, but most of us are not. We have one snowstorm and that is usually it for the year, but we have had a series of them this year. Maybe it is a result of the Senator from Alaska bringing the weather with him.

What we are trying to do—we don't have it worked out yet—we may be able to get consent to start the judge vote pretty soon and have that run for a reasonable period of time and then have the second vote be open for some considerable period of time so that people, if they are here, could vote on both and then go home if they are Washington residents or some people who are having trouble getting here could be here on time to vote on that. We are close to being able to work that out.

I would also say we are contemplating, if we can work out the procedural difficulties, not being in session tomorrow. We have some things we have to work out prior to that time because, as most everyone knows, we have been working on a bill to end this work period. It is really a nice piece of

legislation. It started with a bipartisan jobs tax credit with HATCH and SCHUMER; we have a section 171 small business tax issue that small businesses are really looking for; we have a highway bill extension; and we also have Build America Bonds.

We also, prior to the end of this month, have to do some things that are extremely important to the country. We have to extend the PATRIOT Act. We have a number of other things we have to extend. We have only been able to get agreement to extend those for short periods of time, but they need to be done—some tax extenders. We have to do a number of those things. We hope we can merge the two. We will make that determination, how we are going to do that, in the next few hours. We have a message that we can use from the House, so we do not need permission to move to that.

The issue before the Senate and the decision I have to make after speaking to the Republican leader is what we do when we come back here on Thursday. We will have an intervening day. I would rather not be in session tomorrow if, in fact, we have to file cloture on that package I just talked about. I have told everyone what I think would be the appropriate way to do it is to get on that bill and to have some amendments on both sides. I hope we can do that. We really need to finish the bill this week. I hope we can do that in a reasonable time.

It appears from what I have been able to determine that the storm will end sometime early tomorrow evening. The problem is, the streets in the DC area are pretty difficult, so we would have to make sure everyone has time Thursday to get here. There are some people who live in the suburbs when they are in Washington, so we have to make sure they have time to get here.

Anyway, we are working on these issues. We have the Presidents Day recess. I hope we do not have to work

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



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S509