

SENATE—Wednesday, July 14, 1999

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, You are the healing power for the physical and emotional illnesses of Your people. Through the ages You have guided the development of medical science in the discovery of cures for the diseases of humankind. You use surgeons, physicians, nurses, technicians, and pharmacologists to facilitate Your healing. Throughout history, You have motivated the building of hospitals for the care of the sick, and You have made medical science and the practice of medicine a divine calling. Now, at the end of the 20th century, when commercialism often blocks humanitarianism, guide the Senators in their debate of health care issues. May their deliberations on differing plans to assure patients' rights bring them to compromises and solutions that are right and just for the future of all Americans. We pray that Your abundant healing mercy be the ambience of their attitude in this crucial debate. O Divine Healer, Source of the miracle of healing, grant this Senate the miracle of agreement. In Your reconciling power. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator ALLARD is now designated to lead the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. ALLARD) 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately proceed to a period of morning business until 10 a.m. I see Senator GRAMS is here for some remarks after my opening statement.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Patients' Bill of Rights Plus, and a number of amendments will be offered, I am sure, throughout the day. Debate will resume on the pending Dodd

amendment regarding coverage of clinical trials.

As we go forward today, I remind Senators that we will continue to have what I am sure everybody will agree has been a good debate. I assume there will be several amendments offered today, and so there will be votes, I hope, even this morning or early afternoon and then throughout the rest of the afternoon. By previous consent, the Senate will complete action, I remind Senators, on the pending bill during tomorrow's session of the Senate. We may go into the evening, but it will be a normal evening. We have tried to make sure we had full time allocated for this debate and amendments. We agreed in the beginning that we would at least have normal days or more.

Actually, so far, on Monday we spent 6 hours 17 minutes on this bill. The average Mondays are 4 hours 46 minutes. On Tuesday we spent 7 hours 5 minutes. The average Tuesdays are 7 hours and 30 minutes. The average Wednesdays are usually around 9 hours 39 minutes. So we are going to stay right on track. I encourage my colleagues to make their best case, offer their amendments, make their speeches, but at the end of this week I hope we will come to a conclusion that will produce a bill which will address the important areas of patients' rights, consumer rights, protections they need, the right to access of documents, the rights that they should have to care, including emergency instances, but there has to be a prudent standard; there has to be some common sense applied to all of this.

I would also say at this point how proud I have been of the only doctor we have in the Senate. I think we are really blessed and privileged to have Dr. BILL FRIST here. Not only is he an outstanding human being but, unlike a lot of us, he knows what he is talking about. Having been a highly acclaimed heart surgeon, having a family that has been involved in hospital care, he has an extent of knowledge when it comes to clinical tests or how patients are treated, what procedures are necessary, most of us just do not have. So it has been a real pleasure to watch him at work over the past few days.

The Senate may consider any available appropriations bills when we complete the Patients' Bill of Rights. I remind Senators we are scheduled to have a vote on the Abraham-Domenici Social Security lockbox on Friday. There have been indications that the President supports a lockbox concept. I asked him in our meeting on Monday: Mr. President, what is your plan? Do you support the House version, which

is a real lockbox? The Senate version is really tight because it bases the lockbox on the declining debt that would result from locking the Social Security funds up and not allowing them to be spent for anything but Social Security. Or the House version, which is a more procedural effort to keep these funds from being spent, requiring a supermajority vote, for instance, in the Senate of 60 votes in order to spend that money for anything but Social Security, which I think it should not be. Or is there some compromise version?

Senator DASCHLE and I have communicated on that a couple times over the past 2 days. We hope that maybe we can come to some agreement and get this Social Security lockbox done, set those moneys aside so that we can move on and deal with other issues such as Medicare reform and returning some of the tax overpayment to working American families.

So after the Patients' Bill of Rights, we do have the vote scheduled on Friday on the lockbox for Social Security, and then we are looking at other appropriations bills that we could go to Friday or early next week or the intelligence authorization bill. We will confer with leadership on both sides before that announcement is made.

With that, I thank my colleagues, and I yield the floor so that Senator GRAMS can make his statement.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each. Under the previous order, the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. GRAMS, is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. It is my further understanding that under the unanimous consent agreement of last night the Senator from Wisconsin is to be recognized for 10 minutes and the Senator from Rhode Island is to be recognized for 5 minutes. Is that true?