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SENATE—Friday, July 16, 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:

Gracious Father, we begin this day with the amazing assurance of Your lovingkindness. We hear Your word to us through Jeremiah, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you."—Jeremiah 31:3.—We respond with the grateful words of the psalmist: "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God."—Psalm 36:7. "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You."—Psalm 63:3.

As Your lovingkindness captures our thinking, we feel Your acceptance, forgiveness, and compassion. There is nothing we can do that will make You stop loving us but there is something we can do to realize Your love for us. We can love ourselves as loved and forgiven by You, and we can dedicate this day to communicating Your lovingkindness to the people around us. Remind us that practical, positive acts of lovingkindness heal the one who does them and those who receive them. Alert us to people who need Your lovingkindness through us and make this a "do it and say it" kind of day. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

The Honorable SPENCER ABRAHAM, a Senator from the State of Michigan, 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 ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader, Senator ABRAHAM, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately begin debate on cloture to the Social Security lockbox legislation for 1 hour, with a vote to occur at approximately 10:30 a.m. For the information of all Senators, that vote will be the only roll-call vote during today's session of the Senate.

Following the vote, Senator COVERDELL will be recognized for 1 hour of morning business. Senators KERREY and BREAUX will be in control of the second hour.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from Michigan.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, before we proceed, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Sandy Davis, a detailee from the Congressional Budget Office working with the staff of the Budget Committee, during consideration of S. 557.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

GUIDANCE FOR THE DESIGNATION OF EMERGENCIES AS A PART OF THE BUDGET PROCESS—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 1 hour of debate evenly divided between the two leaders prior to the cloture vote on amendment No. 297 to the instructions to the motion to recommit the bill S. 557.

Pending:

Lott (for Abraham) amendment No. 254, to preserve and protect the surpluses of the social security trust funds by reaffirming the exclusion of receipts and disbursement from the budget, by setting a limit on the debt

held by the public, and by amending the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide a process to reduce the limit on the debt held by the public.

Abraham amendment No. 255 (to amendment No. 254), in the nature of a substitute.

Lott motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Governmental Affairs, with instructions and report back forthwith.

Lott amendment No. 296 (to the instructions of the Lott motion to recommit), to provide for Social Security surplus preservation and debt reduction.

Lott amendment No. 297 (to amendment No. 296), in the nature of a substitute (Social Security Lockbox).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might need.

We find ourselves once again on the Senate floor. As I said to the Senator from New Jersey, some years back there was a movie called "Groundhog Day" in which the main character in the movie kept waking up each day in the same exact setting in which he found himself the previous day. Somehow that movie's theme seems to be playing itself out in this debate about the lockbox. We are once again to have a cloture vote to simply try to obtain the opportunity to have a vote on the amendment which was offered by myself, along with Senator DOMENICI and Senator ASHCROFT, to the underlying legislation.

We have previously tried to accomplish this without success. It is very frustrating because if we obtain cloture today, we would get this vote, but this legislation would then be open to further amendment by any Senator who wished to change its composition.

So I start the debate by pointing out to all my colleagues that all we are asking for is a chance to have a vote on one amendment.

Now, this past 4 days we have been debating the Patients' Bill of Rights. I remember back a few weeks ago the entire Senate was virtually shut down so a group of Senators who wanted to have that issue considered could have the entire issue considered and a full range of amendments brought up and voted on, and we did that. Here all we are asking for is a chance to have a vote on one amendment to a broader bill. I hope we will get the chance to do so.

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