

SENATE—Friday, September 10, 1999

The Senate met at 9:31 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MIKE DEWINE, a Senator from the State of Ohio.

PRAYER

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

Almighty God, Creator of the world, Ruler over all of life, our Adonai, sovereign Lord of our lives, we join with Jewish Senators in celebrating Rosh Hashanah, "the head of the year," the beginning of the days of awe and repentance, a time of reconciliation with You and with one another.

We thank You that we are united in our need to repent, to return to our real selves for an honest inventory, and then to return to You with a humble and contrite heart. Forgive our sins of omission: the words and deeds You called us to say and do which we neglected, our bland condoning of prejudice and hatred, and our toleration of injustice in our society. Forgive our sins of commission: the times we turned away from You and Your clear and specific guidance, and the times we failed to acknowledge You and rebelled against Your management of our lives.

O gracious God, sound the shofar in our souls, blow the trumpets, and wake our somnolent spirits. Arouse us and call us to spiritual regeneration. Awaken us to our accountability to You for our lives and our leadership of this Nation. We thank You for Your atoning grace and for this opportunity for a new beginning.

And so, Lord, help the Jews and Christians called to serve in this Senate, the Senators' staffs, and the whole Senate support team to celebrate unity under Your sovereignty and to exemplify to our Nation the oneness of a shared commitment to You. In Your holy name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MIKE DEWINE, 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. THURMOND].

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 10, 1999.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE DEWINE, a Senator from the State of Ohio, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. DEWINE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from Ohio, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning during morning business to say a few words about a couple of subjects that are very important to me and to the people of my State. As the American public knows, the last couple of days we have been engaged in a tremendous debate about the Interior appropriations bill. It is 1 of the 13 appropriations bills in this Congress we are trying to negotiate and pass as part of our overall budget, and it is a very important and quite contentious piece of legislation. There are many issues about balancing our resources: how they should be harvested, how they should be spent, how they should be invested.

There are about 21 Senators in this body, on the Republican and Democratic side, who have worked very hard on a very comprehensive Conservation and Reinvestment Act which is now pending in the Energy Committee. Next year, as this bill comes out of this committee and becomes part of the national debate, it is my hope and vision we will be debating how to use the resources we have been able to set aside this year for the American public.

In the bill we have crafted, which is S. 25, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, we have made a statement that there is a better way to spend the money that is coming from offshore oil and gas, a much better way to spend this money than what we have done the last 50 years. For the last 50 years, we have taken almost every dime that has

come from oil and gas, almost every dime, and put it back into the general treasury of this country and operated our Government.

I believe, and I think the American people strongly believe, that a good portion of that money should go back to protect the environment. We are depleting one resource, a great resource that we have in oil and natural gas, we are depleting it at a tremendous rate in the Gulf of Mexico, which is now the place, basically, outside of Alaska, where most of the offshore drilling occurs, and of course a little in the interior States. But the Gulf of Mexico has the bulk of our reserves. States such as Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and, to a certain degree, Alabama contribute.

We are happy for the industry. We are learning to manage it in a more environmentally friendly way. We believe they can coexist, the oil industry and other industries and the environment. But all of this money, as you know, has gone into the general fund. We think it is time some of this money be reinvested before the wells run dry. One day there is not going to be any gas left, there is not going to be any oil left, and I, frankly, would like to have something to show for it.

For those of us who have children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews and families, we would like to be able to say we were wise and smart and conservative and careful and good stewards of the great bounty God has given us, and we have decided to set aside permanently—not hit or miss, not willy-nilly but permanently—a portion of this money to create and sustain our National Park System, to create green spaces and places from New Jersey to California, from Washington State to Florida, from one point of this Nation to the other, to expand the public areas, to expand the green space, to protect our habitat, to provide wilderness areas in a way that makes sense for every community. That is what this bill does. It fully funds the land and water conservation fund which was promised by the last five Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, a great promise that sounded terrific and probably got some votes for them in the elections. The problem is, it was never funded consistently.

I quote from a poll recently taken by Frank Lunz. As you know, he is a Republican pollster, but he did an absolutely outstanding job in this survey of the American people: 94 percent of the American people would like to set aside and create a special way of funding these kinds of programs. In fact, it might be of interest for some Members