

If cloture is not invoked on the trade bill, it is the majority leader's intention to move on to other legislative items. This trade bill has been the pending business for 1 week, as of tomorrow's date. One week is precious time when the end of a congressional session is near. The majority leader will, of course, notify the minority leader as to the next legislative item that he intends to bring up.

The Senate may also begin consideration of the conference report to accompany the D.C./Labor-HHS bill, with the vote anticipated early next week.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BENNETT. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of the Senator from Florida.

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

The Senator from Florida.

COMMENDING SENATOR BENNETT

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have a statement to make on legislation which I will introduce this evening. But prior to that, I express my gratitude for the eloquence of the remarks the Senator from Utah has just delivered on behalf of our friend, John Chafee. Many of us have attempted to reach into our souls and express the depth of our affection for this special man. The Senator from Utah has succeeded in that effort. I commend him and thank him for sharing those emotions.

Mr. President, I have a second item before I turn to my remarks for purposes of an introduction.

THE TAX EXTENDER BILL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have exercised the prerogative, which is each Senator's, to place a hold, which means legislation cannot be brought up without at least referring to and discussing it with the Senator who has placed the hold. In this case, I did so on the legislation which is commonly referred to as the tax extender bill. This is legislation which extends the life of a number of current tax provisions. As a member of the Finance Committee, I support this legislation and I will vote for this legislation. I am going to announce publicly that I am withdrawing the hold I had on that legislation. I will give a brief explanation.

First, I am doing so because I think, in the spirit of comity and the effort to get important work accomplished during what I hope will be the relatively few days remaining in this first session of the 106th Congress, it is appropriate to allow the Senate to take up this leg-

islation without further delay insofar as it is the product of my action.

Second, an explanation of why I imposed the hold in the first instance: I supported this legislation. I supported it in large part because it meets what I think is a fundamental test—it is paid for. This legislation contains increases in certain taxes sufficient to cover the cost of the tax relief which will be made available through the extenders. Not to do that would have had the effect of dipping into the surplus. Now that means dipping into the Social Security surplus, since we have already spent the non-Social Security surplus. This bill meets the test of being fiscally prudent.

However, I alert the Senate that there was another bill, which in many ways was a companion of the tax extender legislation, voted out of the Finance Committee almost simultaneously with the tax extender legislation. That is legislation which will provide for increases in the reimbursement level to providers of various health care services under the Medicare program. Again, I support the concept that there is a justifiable case for increasing those reimbursements. We have done so, in this legislation that the Senate will possibly soon be considering, in the amount of approximately \$1 billion in fiscal year 2000, \$5 billion in fiscal year 2001, and an additional \$9 billion over the next 8 years, for a total of \$15 billion.

My criticism of that legislation is, unlike the tax extender bill, it is not paid for. Therefore, we will be asked to vote for \$15 billion of additional spending, which will have to come directly out of the Social Security surplus. It had been my intention, by holding the tax extender bill, to propose an amendment to the tax extender bill which would have been the additional reimbursement for Medicare providers but with an appropriate offset so that there would be \$15 billion either of reduced spending elsewhere or additional taxes to pay for the additional reimbursement for Medicare providers. It had been my thought that by merging these two bills together and using this as an opportunity to provide the offsets for the Medicare reimbursement increases, we would be able to send to the House of Representatives legislation which it might both consider and favorably vote upon.

It now appears that, in fact, we are not going to take up the increased reimbursement to Medicare providers, at least not take it up as separate legislation. Rather, it will be either delayed to some future date or taken up as part of the likely end-of-session major financial compromise.

It appears as if there is no purpose to be gained by holding the tax extender bill for purposes of offering an amendment to a bill which is not going to be taken up anyway. For those somewhat

convoluted reasons, but reasons which I hope will be satisfactory to the Members of the body, my colleagues, I am announcing that I am lifting the hold on the tax extender bill. It is my hope that we will soon pass it and that it will serve as a model for other legislation when we decide that it is important enough to extend a tax benefit to a certain class of taxpayers, or important enough to increase spending in the form of additional appropriations to certain citizens of this country, that we will have the fortitude to make the judgment as to how we are going to pay for either those reductions in revenue from one source or increase in appropriations to another.

(The remarks of Mr. GRAHAM pertaining to the introduction of S. 1827 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed as in morning business for 4 minutes.

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

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Chair because I know it is extending beyond the time which the Senate was to be in session, and as always I appreciate his courtesy.

COMMENDATION OF SENATOR GRAHAM

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, before the Senator from Florida leaves the floor, let me commend him for a very visionary statement about education, the need for an additional large number of teachers, and the vast source of knowledge which we can tap if we utilize people who have had a previous occupation and then are willing to go into teaching, which surely is as high a calling as exists, I believe, anywhere in the world. Teachers should be placed way up there on a pedestal, as far as I am concerned, because of the responsibilities they are given and the commitment so many of them have shown.

I want to extend my congratulations to the Senator from Florida for selecting an area where we can really make a contribution through legislation to not only our children but to students at whatever age through the use of these great pools of talent he has identified.

IN HONOR OF SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, every Member of our Senate family was gripped in sadness and grief when we heard of the death of John Chafee.

John Chafee was a giant for many reasons. He was a kind man. He was a truly gentle and a magnificently decent Senator.