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SENATE—Thursday, November 4, 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:

Dear God, take hold of us in this time of prayer. Force us to open the icy grip that we have on our problems so that we may with open hands receive Your plans. Help us to be willing to receive Your guidance. Shake any complacency, disturb any pride, and give us Your peace that passes understanding.

Reign as Sovereign Lord in this Chamber. Guide the deliberations, debates, and decisions of this day. Help the Senators to listen to You before they speak so that Your truth and justice may refine all that is spoken. In it all, may they consider You first, the good of the Nation second, party third, and personal success last of all. You grant Your power to leaders with Your priorities so, dear Lord, confront, challenge, and change us all so that we may know and do Your will. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MIKE CRAPO, a Senator from the State of Idaho, 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 Senator from Idaho is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany the financial services modernization bill. There are approximately 6 hours of debate remaining under the order. Therefore, Senators can expect a vote

on adoption of the conference report this afternoon.

As a reminder, the newest Member of the Senate, LINCOLN CHAFEE, will be sworn in today at 11:30 a.m. in the Senate Chamber. The majority leader encourages all of his colleagues to come to the floor to extend a warm welcome to our new colleague from Rhode Island.

For the remainder of the week, the Senate will consider appropriations bills as they become available and may also consider the bankruptcy reform bill if an agreement can be reached.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized. Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

WELCOME TO LINCOLN CHAFEE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, first of all, I join the Senator from Idaho in welcoming Senator CHAFEE to the Senate. His father was a very special Senator, and I don't think any of us will ever forget him. I hope that we will always honor his memory.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

FINANCIAL SERVICES MODERNIZATION ACT OF 1999—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 900 which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany S. 900, the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1990.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, before I start, since my remarks will be critical and hard hitting, and, I believe, will marshal considerable evidence for my point of

view about this financial modernization act—and I rise to speak in strong opposition to S. 900—I congratulate Senator GRAMM for his political skill. I do not mean this in a cynical way. Cynicism is not my style; it is not the way I approach public service. He has been very skillful in his work, and as a Senator, I pay my respects to his considerable ability.

I rise in strong opposition to S. 900, the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999. S. 900 would aggravate a trend towards economic concentration that endangers not only our economy, but also our democracy.

S. 900 would make it easier for banks, securities firms, and insurance companies to merge into gigantic new conglomerates that would dominate the U.S. financial industry and the U.S. economy.

Mr. President, this is the wrong kind of modernization at the wrong time. Modernization of the existing confusing patchwork of laws, regulations, and regulatory authorities would be a good thing, but that's not what this legislation is about. S. 900 is really about accelerating the trend towards massive consolidation of the financial sector.

This is the wrong kind of modernization because it fails to put in place adequate regulatory safeguards for these new financial giants the failure of which could jeopardize the entire economy. It's the wrong kind of modernization because taxpayers could be stuck with the bill if these conglomerates become "too big to fail."

This is the wrong kind of modernization because it fails to protect consumers. It allows banks, insurance companies and brokerage houses to share personal information about consumers' credit history, investments, health treatments, and buying habits. It weakens requirements for banks to invest in their own communities. It will result in higher fees for many customers and price gouging of the unwary. And it will squeeze credit for small businesses and rural America.

Most importantly, this is the wrong kind of modernization because it encourages the concentration of more

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