

SENATE—Monday, November 8, 1999

The Senate met at 12 noon 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, You have shown us that any week without Your grace and guidance makes us weak. So as we begin this new workweek, we dedicate ourselves to trust in Your goodness, to walk with You humbly, to listen to You attentively, and to serve You obediently. We ask for quiet and peaceful hearts, alert and agile minds, and ready, responsive wills.

Remind the Senators that there is enough time in any one day to do what You require and artesian strength to accomplish what You desire. Free them from tension and tiredness, worry and anxiety. Give spinning wheels good tread. Help them to trust as if everything depended on You and work knowing that You depend on them to accomplish Your best for the Nation.

We love You, Father, and we commit this week to be an expression of that love. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CHUCK HAGEL, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, 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 is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. THOMAS. Today, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 2 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume debate on the bankruptcy reform legislation. By a previous consent agreement, the minority leader, or his designee, will be recognized at 3 p.m. to offer an amendment relative to minimum wage, which will then be set aside so that the majority leader, or his designee, can be recognized to offer an amendment relative to business costs. Votes on these amendments have been set to occur at 10:30 on Tuesday. The leader has announced there will be at least one vote at 5:30 p.m. today in relation to the bankruptcy bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGEL). 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 with Senators allowed to speak for 5 minutes therein.

Under the previous order, the time until 1 p.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, or his designee.

The Senator from Wyoming.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SENATE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, let me first thank my friend from New Hampshire for coming down. We have morning business now for 2 hours, and we intend to talk about some of the issues before us during this first hour. I am going to at some point—and I hope the Senator will also—talk a little bit about some of the things we have accomplished this year. I understand the media is always interested in the conflicts and where we have controversy. And that is fine. But they do not always talk about the things we have accomplished, the things we have done with the budget, the fact we have spent less in growth this year than we have for a number of years, the fact that we are setting aside Social Security and have proposals out there to strengthen Social Security. We have done a lot for education; indeed, authorized more money to be spent than the administration asked for and allowed for it to be spent on the local level. These are things that are terribly important.

Defense is probably the singular most important thing the Federal Government has to assume. The expenditures of defense have gone down ever since the gulf war. This year we have raised them because in order to fill out the mission the military has, there must be more resources to be able to encourage people to come into the military and to stay there.

We have talked about tax relief, and, indeed, sent to the President a bill which would have given tax relief to all citizens of this country in various ways rather than spending it. Unfortunately, it was vetoed. We will be back with tax relief. When we have an excess amount

of money, that is where it ought to go, back to the people who have paid it.

In health care, we have done some things and intend to do more before the week is over; and bankruptcy.

I wish to say I hope before we finish we can put some emphasis on the positive things that we have done for the good of this country.

I yield to my good friend from New Hampshire, who has done a superb job on the appropriations bills, and continues to do so, whatever time he may consume.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his courtesy in yielding me some time. I especially thank him for his commitment to making the American people aware through floor statements of how much we have accomplished and how many positive things have occurred in this Congress.

As he mentioned, the most positive is that we have a balanced budget for the first time in generations; that for the first time in years, 20 years or so, the Social Security trust fund money is going to be used for Social Security, which is one of the most important things we could do and thus preserve it for the benefit of senior citizens and the next generation of senior citizens. Something that is really an incredibly positive stride in the way we have dealt with ourselves in this Nation and has led in large part to the economic prosperity that we now experience is the fact that the Government has finally decided to live within its means. That is a result, in my opinion, of a Congress which has aggressively disciplined spending of the Federal Government.

In fact, I recall when this Congress was first elected, a Republican Congress, the President had sent up his budget for the year, and it projected \$200 billion deficits for as far as the eye could see. I think the year was 1996, and for the next 10 years it was \$200 billion of deficits every year for as far as we could see.

Well, we in the Republican Congress, the first Republican Congress in 40 years, said that was not acceptable; we were going to have to live within our means. Others said it was not doable. We proved it was doable.

That is a positive event. We now have multiple billions of dollars of surplus, a big enough surplus so we will have no impact on Social Security in this budgeting cycle.

What I wanted to speak about, however, beyond the good news, is the issue that has caused us to sort of grind through the process of wrapping up the appropriations bills, specifically the