

SENATE—Thursday, October 12, 2000*(Legislative day of Friday, September 22, 2000)*

The Senate met at 9:36 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, 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, we praise You for Your faithfulness. We say with Jeremiah, "The Lord's mercies are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."—Lamentations 3:23.

We are profoundly moved by Your merciful kindness to us. You never give up on us. When we forget You, You infuse our lives with reminders of Your consistent love; when we resist Your guidance, You find new ways to get through to us; when hubris becomes a habit, You break the bond of self-sufficiency by showing us what we could accomplish with Your supernatural strength.

Lord we confess our need for humility. It is a combination of gratitude, honesty, and courage. We admit that all that we have and are is Your gift; we honestly face the distance between what we are and what we could be in our relationships and responsibilities; we need courage to blow the cap off of our reservations and live the full potential according to Your expectations.

Here we are at the beginning of a crucial day in the life of this Senate. As we rush into the schedule, we meet You at the pass. We don't need to spin to win with You. You know all about us. And so we simply ask You to take our minds and focus our intelligence on what is best for America, to take our wills and guide us to choose what is righteous and just, and to take our voices and speak Your truth through them. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BOND. On behalf of the leader, permit me to explain that today the Senate will begin debate on the HUD-VA appropriations bill. Senators BYRD and BOXER have amendments in order. Those amendments will be offered and debated prior to 12:30 p.m. today. At 12:30, there will be up to four stacked rollcall votes on amendments to the VA-HUD bill, final passage of the bill, and final passage of the conference report to accompany the legislative branch/Treasury-Postal appropriations bill. Following the votes, the Senate is expected to begin consideration of the conference report to accompany the Department of Defense authorization bill. There are approximately 6 hours of debate requested on the conference report. Therefore, Senators should expect votes into the evening regarding the DOD authorization conference report.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CRAPO. The clerk will report the pending bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4635) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic.

DIVISION A

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61); pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans

as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 92 Stat. 2508); and burial benefits, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of Article IV of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940, as amended, and for other benefits as authorized by law (38 U.S.C. 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61; 50 U.S.C. App. 540-548; 43 Stat. 122, 123; 45 Stat. 735; 76 Stat. 1198), \$22,766,276,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That not to exceed \$17,419,000 of the amount appropriated shall be reimbursed to "General operating expenses" and "Medical care" for necessary expenses in implementing those provisions authorized in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, and in the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992 (38 U.S.C. chapters 51, 53, and 55), the funding source for which is specifically provided as the "Compensation and pensions" appropriation: Provided further, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to "Medical facilities revolving fund" to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapters 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 51, 53, 55, and 61, \$1,634,000,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, other than under subsection (a)(1), (2), (5) and (11) of that section, shall be charged to the account: Provided further, That funds shall be available to pay any court order, court award or any compromise settlement arising from litigation involving the vocational training program authorized by section 18 of Public Law 98-77, as amended.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 19; 70 Stat. 887; 72 Stat. 487, \$19,850,000, to remain available until expended.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, as amended: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended: Provided further, That during fiscal year 2001, within the resources available, not to exceed \$300,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$162,000,000, which may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for "General operating expenses".