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# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

## SENATE—Tuesday, March 21, 2000

The Senate met at 10:04 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Most Reverend Roger L. Kaffer, Auxiliary Bishop, Joliet, IL.

We are glad to have you with us.

### PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, the Most Reverend Roger L. Kaffer, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

God bless our Senators,  
Leaders we love.

Stand beside them and guide them,  
Day and night with Your light from above.

From Rhode Island to Nevada,  
To the Rockies, white with snow,  
God help our Senators,  
Your will to know;

God help our Senators  
In wisdom grow.

God bless our Senators,  
Women and men.

Give them courage and patience  
To share insights again and again.

Father, no one has all answers  
But together help them find  
Answers that come from You  
To those not blind.

In God we trust and pray:  
Teach us Your mind.

Life, justice, liberty,  
Happiness, too,  
Founding Fathers have taught us.  
God-endowed, these are ours to pursue.  
When our Senate meets in session  
To determine what is best,  
God bless our Senators,  
In truth's great quest.  
God bless our Senators,  
North, South, East, West.

Through Christ Our Lord. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PETER FITZGERALD, a Senator from the State of Illinois, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

### BISHOP ROGER L. KAFFER

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I wish to speak for a couple of moments about our guest Chaplain, Bishop Roger Kaffer from Joliet, IL, who just gave the opening prayer.

Bishop Kaffer is an old friend of my family. In fact, he went to grade school and to high school with my mother back in Joliet, IL—St. Raymond's grade school and Joliet Township high school. He is now the Auxiliary Bishop in the Joliet diocese outside of Chicago, IL.

I thank him for his prayer and welcome him to the Senate. We very much appreciate it.

I thank the Chair.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until the Senate recesses for the weekly party conference lunches from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. When the Senate reconvenes, it will begin consideration of H.R. 5, the Social Security earnings legislation. Under a previous agreement, there will be approximately 4 hours of debate with three amendments in order to the bill. Any necessary votes on those amendments will occur this afternoon with a vote on final passage to occur on Wednesday morning. For the remainder of the week, the Senate may begin consideration of the crop insurance legislation or any other legislative or Executive Calendar items available for action.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

### READY TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know the Senator from Missouri wants to speak in morning business.

We are ready to proceed on the issues that have been outlined. We are anxious to get to the Social Security earnings limit withdrawal. Also, we are anxious and look forward to the budget debate which will take place, we hope, next week. We must keep our eyes on the prize, and that is to do something about the \$5 trillion debt that has accumulated, recognizing that is necessary for a tax cut for everybody in America.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be a period of time for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. Also, under the previous order, the Senator from Missouri, Mr. ASHCROFT, is now recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The Senator from Missouri.

### REPEAL OF SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, as has been noted, we will be dealing today with the repeal of the Social Security earnings limit. I think individuals on both sides of the aisle are eager to deal with this kind of legislation.

What is the earnings limit? The earnings limit is simply a way of saying that if citizens between 65 and 69 years of age earn over a modest amount of money when they earn outside income by working, the Government deducts from their Social Security \$1 for every \$3 they earn; that is, for \$1 over \$17,000, the Government reduces the benefits \$1 for every \$3 of earnings.

This makes it very difficult for a number of people who are between 65

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