

SENATE—Friday, April 7, 2000

The Senate met at 9:02 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:

Father, help us to accept our humanity. Life is a struggle when we pretend to have it all together. We end this week in honest confession of the times that we forgot You, went for hours, even days, without asking for Your help, and endured life's pressures as if we could be our own source of strength. In the quiet of this moment, we invite You to fill our depleted resources with Your spirit. We want to let You love us, forgive us, renew us, and grant us fresh strength. To this end, we admit our needs and accept Your power. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, 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.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today the Senate will continue to vote on the remaining amendments to S. Con. Res. 101. Needless to say, votes are expected to occur throughout the morning with an expectation of voting this afternoon and perhaps into the evening, if we are not able to resolve some of the pending sense-of-the-Senate amendments and other amendments.

There are 2 minutes of explanation on amendments prior to each vote. To make this process as smooth as possible, I ask that Senators remain in the Chamber between votes. I thank my colleagues for their cooperation.

We will be talking with various Senators about amendments. So that everybody will know, there are 75 amendments filed by Republicans and 36 by Democrats. We are going to work with our Democratic minority whip and the ranking member of the Budget Committee to see if we can encourage a number of Senators to accept sense-of-the-Senate proposals and let us accept them on both sides. We will be working

diligently at that. If we don't have success, then looking at this, I say that probably we would not finish before 6 o'clock tonight, or even later. We will work very hard. If Members will help us, we can do better than that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE). The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have lined up five votes on each side. I say, however, to my friend, the manager of the bill, there is a tremendous amount of staff time that is still going to be required. Each side has not been able to review each other's amendments. I respectfully suggest to the majority that the minority doesn't think we have done anything untoward in offering amendments. We have offered half as many as the majority. This doesn't mean they should have twice as many cleared as we have cleared. If both sides can work out the clearance, that is fine.

The point I am trying to make is that we are trying to work our way through this amendment process. If there is some effort, in effect, to try to punish us by staying here late to work through these amendments, we are willing to do that. I think the more logical way to go would be to work our way through the amendments.

I say to the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, we would be much better off if we gave the staff a matter of hours, perhaps days, to work their way through these amendments. These are very difficult subjects. As to the sense-of-the-Senate aspect, most of those have been resolved. There are some that are very substantive in nature, and we need to work our way through them.

I personally think it is going to be impossible to finish this bill today. If we have to vote on all these amendments, we are not talking about 6 o'clock tonight; we are talking about 6 o'clock Monday morning. It is up to the majority whether they want to put us through this. I think the more logical way to do it would be to have our very proficient staffs work on these amendments over the weekend and get it down to a reasonable number so we can complete this bill next week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. We will carry the Senator's message to the majority leader. Right now, we have 10 votes that we are willing to proceed with, 5 on each side. The first one is the Santorum amendment on military benefits; followed by Conrad on lockbox; Abraham on Social Security lockbox; Johnson on veterans; Ashcroft on So-

cial Security investment; Mikulski on digital divide; Senator Bob Smith on prescription drugs; Graham of Florida on education; Voinovich on reconciliation instruction and taxes; and Kennedy on Pell grants.

I yield the floor.

FISCAL YEAR 2001 BUDGET—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 101, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 101) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal years 2001 through 2005 and revising the budgetary levels for fiscal year 2000.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate supporting additional funding for fiscal year 2001 for medical care for our nation's veterans)

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I understand my amendment is next in the queue. I ask the amendment be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. SANTORUM] proposes an amendment numbered 3058.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 23, line 7, strike "47,568,000,000" and insert "48,068,000,000".

On page 23, line 8, strike "47,141,000,000" and insert "47,641,000,000".

On page 27, line 7, strike "–59,931,000,000" and insert "–60,431,000,000".

On page 27, line 8, strike "–48,031,000,000" and insert "–48,531,000,000".

At the appropriate place insert the following:

"(A) It is the sense of the Senate that the provisions in this resolution assume that if CBO determines there is an on-budget surplus for FY 2001, \$500 million of that surplus will be restored to the programs cut in this amendment.

"(B) It is the sense of the Senate that the assumptions underlying this budget resolution assume that none of these offsets will come from defense or veterans, and to the extent possible should come from administrative functions."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, my amendment increases veterans' health care benefits by \$500 million, which is what the Independent Budget, which is supported by a variety of veterans organizations, has come forward and said they need to provide adequate health care for our Nation's veterans.

I commend the chairman of the Budget Committee for increasing veterans' health care benefits by \$1.4 billion, but that isn't enough to provide