

SENATE—Thursday, April 27, 2000

The Senate met at 9:32 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:

Lord God of hope, help us to make this a day for optimism and courage. Set us free from any negative thinking or attitudes. There is enough time today to accomplish what You have planned. We affirm that we are here by Your divine appointment. We also know from experience that it's possible to limit Your best for our Nation. Without Your help, we can hit wide of the mark, but with Your guidance and power, we cannot fail. You have brought our Nation to this place of prosperity and blessing. You are able to bless us now in this pressured day of business if we trust You and work together as fellow patriots. Fill this Chamber with Your presence, invade the mind and heart of each Senator, and give this Senate a day of efficiency and excellence for Your glory. We thank You in advance for a truly great day, for You are our Lord and will show the way! Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, led the Senate in 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). 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 not to extend beyond the hour of 12 noon with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. is under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I claim some leader time at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. is under the control of the leader or his designee.

Is there objection? If not, the Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand my friend from Ohio wants to read the morning script. I was told that. I have something I wish to say. I want to use leader time. But I was told by the staff that there was something he wants to outline for today's activity of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, before my colleague speaks, it is our intention at this point to not only read some comments of the majority leader but also to begin some discussion today under the leader's half hour of time. Senator GORTON and I want to talk a little bit about the education bill we will be taking up tomorrow.

That was our intention.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the leader not being here, I certainly agree to extend whatever time Senator GORTON and Senator DEWINE desire. I want to claim a few minutes of leader time.

Mr. DEWINE. I have no objection if my colleague wants to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, if the Senator from Nevada wishes to speak, the Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

MARRIAGE PENALTY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the reason I want to talk today is I think it is important for the minority to have its voice heard around here. The first of May is approaching, and we are again being called on to vote on the so-called marriage penalty bill. The majority will argue that if you support the marriage penalty, you must vote for cloture. That certainly is transparently false. Here is why.

This procedural vote has nothing to do with limiting the marriage penalty, which the Democrats support certainly just as strongly as the Republicans. In fact, the vote is another attempt by Republicans to shield their deeply flawed tax bill from scrutiny by the Senate and by the public. In effect, we are being gagged.

Republicans don't want to debate this bill because they don't want anyone to know what is really in it. In truth, it is marriage penalty relief in name only. Sixty percent of the measure on which we are going to vote today is for matters that have nothing to do with the marriage penalty. Sixty percent of the \$248 billion proposal goes to people who do not face a marriage penalty.

The majority likes to talk about relevance. I know a little bit about rel-

evance, as I think most people do. Sixty percent of this bill is irrelevant to the marriage penalty.

The majority is seeking to cut off debate on this bill before it is even begun. Invoking cloture would also block Democratic amendments that propose better ways to eliminate the marriage penalty and to address other urgent priorities such as prescription drug benefits for seniors.

Democratic amendments say, yes, let's fix the marriage penalty for people who actually pay it. In fact, one of the amendments proposed by Senators MOYNIHAN and BAUCUS, the lead Democrats in the Finance Committee, says: There are 65 marriage penalty provisions in the Tax Code with one sentence; let's eliminate all of them. That is one of the things we are being prevented from bringing forward.

We want to move forward and start legislating the way this Senate has debated for over 200 years. We have agreed to say, OK, we are not going to go along with what the Senate has done for 200 years. We will play the game of the majority in an effort to allow our voices to be heard just a little bit.

Even though the Standing Rules of the Senate don't require it, we have bent over backwards to keep our list of amendments short. We have 10 amendments, and we have agreed to limit debate on those amendments to 1 hour each.

These are amendments by Senators MOYNIHAN and BAUCUS on the tax proposal. Senator BAYH, one of the most thoughtful Senators we have ever had in the Senate, has talked about another alternative.

We have amendments offered by Senator SCHUMER from New York dealing with the college tuition tax credit. We have one amendment by Senator DORGAN who represents the farm community. He wants to do something about CRP in the tax bill. These are amendments that should take several hours if they were debated properly. We are willing to take a half an hour and have the majority have a half an hour. That seems fair, but we have been prevented from doing that.

We could finish this bill in 1 day. The question is, Why will Republicans not stop casting blame and get on with the marriage tax penalty vote? Sadly, the answer is somewhere blowing in the wind. Republicans know Democrats have better proposals. Republicans also know that given a choice, the American people prefer the minority's approach. The American people say give us marriage tax penalty relief and a