

SENATE—Tuesday, May 16, 2000

The Senate met at 9:31 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:

Sovereign God, our Help in all the ups and downs of life, all the triumphs and defeats of political life, and all the changes and challenges of leadership, You are our Lord in all seasons and for all reasons. We can come to You when life makes us glad or sad. There is no circumstance beyond Your control. Wherever we go, You are there waiting for us. You are already at work with people before we encounter them. You prepare solutions for our complexities, and You are always ready to help us resolve conflicts even before we ask. We claim Your promise given through Jeremiah: "I have plans for you: plans for good and not evil, to give you a future and a hope."—Jeremiah 29:11.

Lord, our only goal is to please You in what we say and accomplish. Bless the Senators in the decisions they make and the votes they cast. Give them, and all of us who work with them, Your strength to endure and Your courage to triumph in things great and small that we attempt for the good of all. In Your holy name. Amen

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, a Senator from the State of Ohio, 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 able Senator from Ohio is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Today, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m. with Senators MURKOWSKI, KENNEDY, and DORGAN in control of the time. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2521, the military construction appropriations bill. Senators who have general statements on the bill are encouraged to come to the floor during this morning's session.

As a reminder, votes are possible throughout the day's session and throughout the remainder of the week.

Notification will be given as votes are scheduled. Senators can expect votes on Mondays and Fridays during the consideration of the appropriations bills. I thank my colleagues for their cooperation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI, or his designee, is recognized to speak for up to 45 minutes.

The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2000

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am going to take advantage of this time to speak on behalf of the National Energy Security Act of 2000.

For the benefit of the Chair, this is the result of a 10-member task force appointed by the Majority Leader, which he asked that I chair. The Task Force included Senators NICKLES, CRAIG, HUTCHISON, COLLINS, DOMENICI, SNOWE, ROTH, SANTORUM, and SMITH of New Hampshire.

The bill before us is S. 2557. The purpose of the legislation is to address a harsh reality that it is currently hard to identify just what the administration's policy is toward energy in this country at this time, other than to increase imports of crude oil coming into the country. The Majority Leader charged us to examine the impacts of increased U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources and the resulting increased energy cost to American consumers.

It is estimated that the increase in the price of crude oil, which has risen from roughly \$10, \$11, \$12 a barrel a year ago, to as high as \$34—and it is currently about \$30—has resulted in an increase, if one could compare it to a tax increase, of about \$100 billion to the American consumer.

If you have taken a cab in Washington, DC, you have noticed there is a little sticker that says they are going to charge 50 cents extra because of the increased cost of gasoline. If you have taken an airplane lately, you have noticed a surcharge from \$20 to \$40 on your ticket. So the multiplier is out there, Mr. President, and it is a significant factor in adding to inflation.

So at the leader's request, we have established a very simple goal for our energy security through this legislation. The goal of the bill is to decrease America's dependency on foreign oil to less than 50 percent by the year 2010. It is kind of interesting, but the current administration figures indicate that since President Clinton has come to office, we are currently consuming 14 percent more oil than we did approximately 7 years ago and producing 17 percent less.

There is indeed a need for an energy policy. This is what the National Energy Security Act of 2000 proposes to establish.

We anticipate achieving the goal of reducing our imports of oil through a number of considerations.

One is enhancing the use of renewable energy resources—including hydro, wind, solar, and biomass. We spend a good deal for experimental funding for these renewable sources. But the reality is we have a long way to go before they are going to take a major share of our energy production.

Second, we are proposing to conserve energy resources and improve energy efficiencies.

Third, we propose to increase domestic energy supplies, including oil, gas, and coal.

The bill also addresses the concerns of regional consumers, particularly in the Northeast.

It allows the Department of Energy's Secretary Richardson to create a home heating oil reserve and strengthen the weatherization program.

It establishes a State-led education program to encourage consumers to take action to minimize seasonal price increases and shortages of home heating fuel.

It provides incentives for construction and rehabilitation of private home heating oil storage facilities.

The purpose is very simple. Imported energy should supplement our domestic energy supplies—not supplant them.