

SENATE—Wednesday, January 31, 2001

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

God, our help in ages past and our hope for years to come, we thank You for our Constitution and the stability and strength it has provided for our beloved Nation. Today, we gratefully remember the life and leadership of Gouverneur Morris, born on this day in 1752. We prayerfully recall that he was the writer of the final draft of the Constitution, the head of the Committee on Style, and the originator of the phrase, "We the people of the United States."

Thank You for the impact of Mr. Morris, who at the age of thirty-five became a member of the Continental Congress and spoke 173 times during the Constitutional debates, more than any other delegate. We honor his memory, not just for the quantity of his words but for their quality. In particular, we are moved by his conviction about You. "There is one Comforter," he said "who weighs our Minutes and Numbers out our Days." About the importance of a strong faith in You he said, "Religion is the only solid basis of good morals; therefore education should teach the precepts of religion, and the duties of man toward God." May we never forget that "morality is truth in full bloom." Father, keep America rooted in Your moral absolutes. You are our Judge and Redeemer. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate.

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 31, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Sen-

ator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the assistant majority leader, the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. NICKLES.

SCHEDULE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30, with Senators BROWNBACK and DURBIN in control of the time. Following morning business, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of John Ashcroft to be the Attorney General of the United States. Debate on the nomination will be the business of the day, and the Senate will remain in session into the evening to allow all Members adequate time to discuss this nomination. It is hoped a vote on the confirmation of John Ashcroft will occur early in Thursday's session. Senators will be notified as that vote is scheduled.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 220

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 220) to amend title 11 of the United States code, and for other purposes.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I object to further reading of this bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the rule, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

DEBATE ON THE ASHCROFT NOMINATION

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I also wish to bring to the attention of my colleagues the fact we had significant debate on this last night. Senator SESSIONS did an outstanding job in making his presentation. I encourage col-

leagues to review his statements and encourage all colleagues who wish to speak on this nomination to come to the floor early and make their statements so we can confirm John Ashcroft, or have a vote on his confirmation by tomorrow.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could ask my colleague to yield for a brief interruption.

Mr. NICKLES. I yield.

Mr. REID. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank my friend from Oklahoma. I know how important his statement is. I know how much of a tragedy the State of Oklahoma and everyone in the country suffered.

But I did want to say before we left the floor that we agree with the Senator that the debate should go forward in full flow, and I say to the Democratic Senators within the sound of my voice, this could be a very late night. We have a lot of people on the Democratic side who want to speak on this nomination. They are going to have that opportunity.

We did not do as much talking as probably should have taken place last night. We completed our work at 7 o'clock. We expected to go to 9. I think tonight we will go at least until 9 or 10 o'clock.

I say to Democratic Senators, they should be prepared because there may not be a tomorrow. I know there are efforts around here to move this forward. We have completed 14 of the 15 nominations that had been sent to us by the President, which is a record-setting pace. We want to move forward on the Ashcroft nomination as quickly as we can. We hope it does not have to go into next week. We will need cooperation from the Republican side. We are going to do the best we can to have somebody in place just as quickly as we can.

I, again, apologize for interrupting my friend, but I appreciate his allowing me to do so.

Mr. NICKLES. I appreciate my colleague's comments. I echo that. I encourage all Senators who wish to speak on the Ashcroft nomination to come to the floor earlier today, rather than later today. It was a little regrettable because I think both leaders had stated publicly we intended to be in session late last night for this nomination. But we could not get additional speakers so we adjourned earlier than planned. I thank my friend and colleague from Nevada.

I might also add when he said we moved forward expeditiously, I am pleased we have confirmed all but one nominee. But I might remind my colleagues, 8 years ago every Clinton