The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON 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.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to exceed beyond the hour of 10:40 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 2563

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2563), an act to amend the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would now object to any further proceeding on this legislation at this time.

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

SCHEDULE

The ACTING PRESIDENT, as has been announced, in 5 minutes the Senate will recess for purposes of the joint meeting with President Fox of Mexico. Senators have been notified to be here in 5 minutes to proceed to the House Chamber for the meeting.

When the Senate reconvenes at 12 noon, we will continue on the export administration bill. It is my understanding, having spoken with the managers of the bill, Senators SARBANES and ENZI, that progress has been made over the evening, and I have been told—and we will hear more from the managers shortly—that that bill can be wrapped up this afternoon. I hope that is the case because we want to alert Senator HOLLINGS and Senator GRASSO that we should move and will move to the Commerce-State-Justice Appropriations Act today as soon as this other legislation is finished.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

EXPORT ADMINISTRATION ACT

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, with respect to S. 149, which is before the Senate, it is our anticipation that upon returning from the joint meeting and going back into session at noon, we would be able then to move expeditiously. There are a couple of amendments that I presume Senator THOMPSON and Senator KYL will offer. We have had an opportunity to review those amendments. We think they strengthen the bill. We are prepared to accept those amendments.

There is a question of the blue ribbon commission on which an agreement has not been reached. I do not know whether Senator SHEPHARD, who authored that amendment, will proceed to offer it or not. If he does, we will have to take it up and, of course, be open to amendment. We hope to be able to resolve that issue rather quickly. We have a managers' amendment to be adopted. And then we anticipate going to final passage.

So that is the sequence that we envision. We think that could be done in short order. I don't think that it will really take a lot of time to do all of this, maybe an hour at most, and we could get this bill completed and off the floor. I say to the majority whip, we would be able then to move on to other legislation in the early afternoon. But that is my expectation of how we will proceed.

I want to acknowledge and thank Senator THOMPSON, Senator KYL, and Senator ENZI—Senator GRASSO was involved in the discussion that Senator ENZI had with the other two Senators—for moving this matter along.

Mr. THOMPSON. Will the Senator yield.

Mr. SARBANES. Certainly.

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, I think the Senator very well states the status of the situation and what has occurred. We have been discussing these matters as late as 30 minutes ago. I do anticipate that we will have two short amendments that have been