The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable Jack Reed, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Honorable Jack Reed 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. REED thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

Recognition of the Acting Majority Leader

The Acting President pro tempore, the acting majority leader is recognized.

Schedule

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the majority leader has asked me to remind everyone we are going to have a vote at approximately 9:25 this morning.

There will now be 20 minutes of concurrent debate on the nomination of Sharon Prost to be United States Circuit Judge and Reggie Walton to be United States District Judge.

Following these votes, the Senate will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair, as both parties are having conferences.

This is an extremely important day for us. We have the Defense Appropriations Committee bill which we believe will be brought up and also some legislation dealing with the airlines. So there will be roll call votes today. There will be roll call votes on Monday, earlier than usual—sometime probably midmorning or early afternoon. So we ask everyone’s cooperation, which we usually get.

Reservation of Leader Time

The Acting President pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

Executive Session

Nomination of Sharon Prost, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished majority leader, Senator Daschle, and my dear friend the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Leahy, for their support and efforts in moving this nomination and scheduling this vote today. The nominees before us are both great people, but I am going to first chat about the nominee Sharon Prost.

She is no ordinary nominee. She is an extraordinary woman of integrity and intellect who is the nominee to be an appellate judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. She also happens to serve as the Republican Chief Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, my chief counsel, Sharon Prost.

Many of us who have worked with Sharon either on the Judiciary or the Labor Committees know her well. Sharon grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home, where the values of faith, family, and country were instilled in her. Simply put, Sharon embodies the American dream. Her parents were concentration camp survivors who arrived in this country from Poland in 1948. The pursuit of their own educations was derailed by the war, but they nonetheless emphasized to Sharon the importance of education and hard work in achieving success—advice Sharon has followed throughout her life. And, as Sharon noted at her hearing, her parents instilled in her the love of community, love of family, and love of God.

Tragically, Sharon’s father died when she was only 13 years old. Upon his death, she had to support herself, and worked her way through high school and college. But despite the obstacles she faced, and her sister Marlene became the first in their family to graduate from high school and go on to attend college. Perhaps one of the best-educated individuals ever to have worked in the Senate, Sharon holds four degrees, including a bachelor of science from an Ivy League university, a law degree, an LLM in tax, and an MBA. She got three of her degrees at night while working full-time.

A labor lawyer at heart, Sharon first came to work for me 12 years ago, after