

SENATE—Thursday, December 20, 2001*(Legislative day of Tuesday, December 18, 2001)*

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Dear Father, sovereign of this Nation, we press on with the work of the Senate with the message and meaning of this sacred season in our hearts. Although the Senators worship You in different liturgies based on their religious backgrounds, they all believe in You as sovereign of this Nation. Help them and their staffs work together in a way that exemplifies to our Nation that people who trust in You can trust one another; that people who experience Your goodness can be people of good will. May this historic Chamber be a place of creative exchange of insight that leads to greater unity around shared convictions about what is best for America. You are here listening, watching, judging. When we end this week, may we hear Your affirmation: "Well done, you have pulled together for the sake of America." Amen.

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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U. S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 20, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002—CONFERENCE REPORT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3061 which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3061) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by all conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of Wednesday, December 19, 2001.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time that has been assigned run equally against all parties during this time. There is no one here on the bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEBRASKA SENATORS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, until someone comes to work on these bills, I would like to mention one thing. I wanted to say this last night. The hour was late. The Presiding Officer was the same.

I have had the good fortune during the time I have served in the Senate to work with some outstanding Senators. The two who come to my mind are from the State of Nebraska. Senator Jim Exon was such a unique individual. I have so many fond memories of this great big man who had such a big body, but in that big body was a great big heart. He was a tremendous Senator. I miss him a great deal.

Then, of course, to serve with BOB KERREY is an experience. He was truly a free spirit, someone who was not only

an American hero, having the Congressional Medal of Honor, but someone who was as valiant in his legislative duties as he was in his military duties.

Following in the footsteps of these two men whom I enjoyed serving with so much is the Presiding Officer, a man who served as Governor of the State of Nebraska and came to the Senate with great credentials from my perspective. On paper, the Presiding Officer has all the credentials to be a great Senator. A lot of people are good on paper in all walks of life. But in the short time I have served with the Presiding Officer as a Senator from Nebraska, his credentials certainly have served him well in the Senate because the Presiding Officer is as good a person as he is on paper.

I extend my congratulations to the people of Nebraska for sending to the Senate a person with such great qualities. I am sure the people of Nebraska appreciate Senator BEN NELSON. But I am not sure they appreciate him enough. For those of us who work personally with the Presiding Officer on a daily basis, in some of the most difficult legislative matters that ever come before this country, I can say without hesitation that Senator BEN NELSON is in the same caliber as Nebraskans who have served before him and with whom I have had the honor of serving: Senators Exon and KERREY.

Nebraska should be very proud of the dignity and the service of the three people I have had the good fortune of serving with in the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to make a couple of general comments. As we move towards perhaps the final day, certainly very close to the final day of our time here, I hope we can move forward. We have three appropriations bills that we have been looking forward to discussing and have to finish before we end. There will probably be some discussion on particularly the Defense appropriations.

Nevertheless, the bill and the issue that I suppose we will talk about the most, and seems to be one that is not agreed to, is that of economic stimulus. Certainly that will be coming forward. We have talked about it for a very long time. The President has talked about it. We have had meetings about it. The House obviously has worked out a separate proposal for us. I am hopeful that as we undertake this effort, we will decide, as we should on