

SENATE—Tuesday, March 13, 2001

The Senate met at 9:33 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable HARRY REID, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

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

Almighty God, we hear Your voice sounding in our souls, "Take courage, it is I, the Lord; I am with you!" You have shown us repeatedly that courage is ours because You have taken hold of us. We can take the challenges of life because You have a tight grip on us. We say with Horatius Bonar, "Let me no more my comfort draw from my frail hold on Thee. Rather in this rejoice with awe—Thy mighty grasp on me!"

Suddenly we realize it is true: Courage is fear that has said its prayers. So often we are driven to our knees to seek Your will. Then You lead us to attempt what we could not pull off on our own strength. We discover that courage is Your gift for answered prayer. At the very moment we cry out for help, You open the floodgates of courage and give us that inner resolve that makes us bold and resolute. Thank You, dear God, for the fresh supply of courage to be dynamic leaders today. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable HARRY REID 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. THURMOND].

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HARRY REID, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. REID 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 extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 9:45 shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the time be extended so both sides have their full morning business time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's request is he be given 15 minutes, and the following 15 minutes for the Republicans. The time of Senator HOLLINGS was to start at 10 a.m. and will start at approximately 10 after the hour.

Mr. CONRAD. I will be happy to yield with the understanding I be recognized after the Senator from Pennsylvania takes care of the business he has brought to the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from North Dakota? Hearing none, that will be the order.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

SCHEDULE

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Bankruptcy Reform Act with Senator HOLLINGS to be recognized for up to 20 minutes. Two back-to-back votes will occur at 11 a.m. on the Feinstein amendment, No. 27, and the Kennedy amendment, No. 39.

The Senate will recess for the weekly party conferences from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. Upon reconvening, there will be 30 minutes of debate on the Conrad and Sessions amendments, with stacked votes scheduled for 2:45 p.m. There are several amendments still pending and others expected to be offered during today's session. Therefore, additional votes could occur. Senators should be aware that all first-degree amendments on the list must be filed by 1 p.m. today.

I thank my colleagues for their attention and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from North Dakota.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE TRUST FUNDS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise this morning to discuss once again the amendment that will be voted on after the party caucuses at 2:45. The amendment I am offering is to wall off and protect the Social Security and Medicare trust funds from being raided, from being used for other purposes.

I think every Member of this body remembers very well the time in which, for years, Social Security trust funds were regularly raided for other purposes. We only stopped that practice 3 or 4 years ago, and I think all of us do not want to go back to those days.

The best way to assure that we do not go back to those days is to agree to the amendment I have offered today, the amendment that is virtually identical to the amendment I offered last year that got 60 votes in the Senate.

We call it the Social Security and Medicare lockbox amendment because it protects both the Social Security surplus and the Medicare surplus.

In fact, if we go to the detail of what we are discussing, this amendment protects the Social Security surpluses in each and every year, takes the Medicare Part A trust fund off budget in the same way we have taken the Social Security trust fund off budget, and gives Medicare the same protections as Social Security.

This legislation contains strong enforcement language—budget points of order—to assure these funds are not used for some other purpose.

One of the things that leaves out, for anyone studying the President's budget proposal, is unless he uses Medicare trust fund money in 2005, he runs an \$11 billion deficit in that year.

That is part of the problem with this budget. It threatens to put us back into deficits because the tax cut is so large. Some of us believe it is critically important that we protect both the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund so they are not used for other spending in the Federal budget.

Some have argued, well, there really is no surplus in Medicare; that there are two trust funds, and there is a surplus in one—that is, Part A of Medicare, the hospital coverage part of Medicare, and Part B that covers largely doctors' services, which is in deficit.

I have heard this argument made over and over, but it is just wrong. It is