

SENATE—Wednesday, May 16, 2001*(Legislative day of Tuesday, May 15, 2001)*

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

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

Holy God, show us Your high intent and keep us from ever being easily content. This is Your Nation; we are here to serve You. Just as Daniel Webster said that the greatest conviction of his life was that he was accountable to You, we press on with intentionality in the duties and deliberations of this day. We want to know what You desire in everything we do and say. Make us aware that You are the unseen guest at every meeting, the silent observer of all our actions, and the careful listener at every conversation. Heighten our awareness not only of Your presence but also of Your power. Give us courage to attempt what only You could help us achieve. Renew our enthusiasm, reinvigorate our vision, revitalize our patriotism, and replenish our strength. In the name of our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE 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, May 16, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN D. CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CHAFEE 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 therein for up to 10 minutes each. Under the previous order, the Senator from Kansas is to be recognized to speak for 15 minutes.

RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10 a.m. At 10 this morning, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, the education bill. Senators should expect rollcalls throughout the day with respect to amendments to the education bill.

Also, as a reminder, the tax reconciliation bill was reported out of the Finance Committee last night. It is expected that the Senate will begin consideration of that measure on Thursday. The majority leader hopes that significant progress can be made on the bill on Thursday with the expectation of completing the reconciliation bill on Monday.

In addition, the majority leader is expecting that the Senate will complete action on the education bill next week prior to the Memorial Day recess. I thank my colleagues for their attention.

I just mention that both of these bills, the reconciliation bill and the education bill, are two of the more important issues we will be taking up this entire session. It is our intention to complete both of them by the end of next week. That will take a lot of cooperation and attentiveness by all Members. I encourage Members if they have their amendments to bring them forward. Let us not spend a lot of time on them, complete the amendments on the education bill and on the reconciliation bill so we can give some good news to taxpayers and to everyone who is interested in improving education.

Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for their attention.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my colleague leaves the floor, we on this side understand the importance of the education bill. We are doing our best to work through it. I think we have made good progress. We have had some short days which has interfered a little bit, but I think we are down to the end of that and we should be able to wrap it up next week. I would say to my friend—and I hope the majority understands this—we understand the importance of reconciliation. The American people deserve a tax cut. They are going to get one. The only thing I would add is that we have to make sure we are able to read the documents; we have a little bit of time to look at them. My suggestion, to avoid problems that some would call dilatory, others would call necessity, would be that we take this matter up as early on Monday morning as possible and finish it on Tuesday. Maybe we could even finish it Monday night with a long day. I hope we are not forced to do this bill by not having an opportunity to look at it. As you know, with the budget, we had some problems because we didn't have a chance to see it. Our problems over here were very minimal. On the House side, they had a lot of problems because they tried to jam that bill through.

So I say to my friend that I hope we have time to look at it. We understand there is a timeframe that we must work under. We have 20 hours. In addition to that, we have the break coming up. The leaders on the majority side want to finish this most important legislation prior to that time. I accept that. All I am saying is let us have enough time that we can tell people over here, with some degree of certainty, how big it is; that they will have an opportunity to look at parts they are interested in and have the staff review the whole bill.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I appreciate my friend and colleague's suggestion. I will just mention a couple of things. One, the bill that passed the Finance Committee last night passed by a vote of 14-6, a bipartisan bill by every definition. The bill that passed last night in the Finance Committee is the same one introduced by Chairman GRASSLEY and ranking member BAUCUS last Friday. It hasn't really changed. The information from the Joint Tax Committee is available. The analysis of the bill is available. The bill itself has now been reported, but it hasn't