

SENATE—Wednesday, May 23, 2001

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF SESSIONS, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, His Holiness Catholicos Karekin the Second, Catholicos of All Armenians, Holy Etchmiadzin, Republic of Armenia.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Catholicos Karekin the Second, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God and Lord, we come together from different places, cultures, and traditions on a unique day You have created. We rejoice and are glad in it. Help us walk together in Your light.

Thank You for our diversity and the richness this brings when we share our lives. Help us understand each other through our differences and recognize what we have in common. Thank You for democracy, which gives such dignity to each person and reflects Your sense of human worth. Please nurture our democracies—America, which has grown strong over two centuries, and Armenia, a new democracy with strong hopes. In this year, when we recognize the 1700th anniversary of Armenia's conversion to Christianity, may we grow stronger in faith and remember the importance of being true to the vision You give.

We join the prayer of St. Nersess the Graceful and ask You for wisdom so we may always think, speak, and do what is good in Your sight, and to save us from evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Please give us wisdom in our decisions and dealings with each other, staff, constituents, and those seeking our help. Thank You for placing us in positions of influence. Help us make the Nation and our world better.

Holy Father, I ask You to bless the Senators, the American Government and people, and Armenian people and nation. I pray for the unity of churches and peoples and ask You to bless the clergy of this Nation. We know that You alone are God. To You be glory, power, and honor, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF SESSIONS 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 21, 2001.

To the Senate:

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

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SESSIONS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for 3 minutes.

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

GUEST CHAPLAIN KAREKIN II

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I know I speak for all of my colleagues in thanking His Holiness, Catholicos Karekin the Second, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, for leading the Senate in prayer this morning. His prayer, I must say, was inspiring. I hope all of us took to heart particularly his admonition that we should show wisdom in our dealings with one another.

His Holiness is the world leader of the Armenian Church, which traces its roots to the first century preaching of Jesus' Apostles, Saint Thaddeus and Saint Bartholomew. The Armenian Church is among the Orthodox churches, which, along with the Catholic and Protestant Churches, constitutes one of three branches of Christianity.

The Catholicos was elected democratically by an assembly of clergy and lay delegates from around the world in October 1999. He is the 132nd in a continuous line of catholicos. He sits in Armenia and administers the Armenian Church from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and has authority over Dioceses on five continents.

In the United States, there are well over 1 million Armenian Americans who live in all parts of our country. They have made very important contributions to all aspects of American life.

His Holiness is well known not only for his spiritual leadership but his charitable works to help the needy, his educational programs, and his management skills. He is also recognized in the international religious community, where he sought to draw churches closer together. He has met with John Paul II and will be meeting in September with Pope John Paul II when he comes to visit Armenia.

The Catholicos is visiting the United States to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. He is meeting with U.S. religious leaders and the Armenian-American communities. The theme of his visit is "Walking Together in the Light of the Lord."

Mr. President, we are pleased and honored that he is here with us today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume voting—and voting—on amendments to the reconciliation and tax relief bill, and consecutive votes will occur throughout the morning. It is hoped—hope springs eternal—that final passage on the tax relief and reconciliation bill will occur during today's session. If passage occurs as expected, the Senate will resume consideration of the education bill. There will be additional votes all throughout the day, and Senators are encouraged to stay in the Senate Chamber after the final votes on the tax bill. I thank my colleagues for their consideration and cooperation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before we hear from our friend, I wish to indicate to the Senate that we have six amendments lined up. We are confident that the two leaders can work something out during the day. We hope maybe there can be some end to the debate on this bill, but that will be up to the two leaders. We have shared the first amendment with the majority. We have five others we will give to them briefly.

We are hopeful things will move along well today, and especially, if we

stick to our 10-minute voting, I think we can go through the first six amendments at an accelerated rate.

Mr. ROBERTS. I say that is splendid news.

RESTORING EARNINGS TO LIFT INDIVIDUALS AND EMPOWER FAMILIES (RELIEF) ACT OF 2002

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 1836, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1836) to provide the reconciliation pursuant to section 104 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2002.

Pending:

Collins/Warner amendment No. 675, to provide an above-the-line deduction for qualified professional development expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers and to allow a credit against income tax to elementary and secondary school teachers who provide classroom materials.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENT NO. 741

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I send up amendment No. 741 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. SNOWE], for herself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DODD, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. SMITH of Oregon, proposes an amendment numbered 741.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate that the modifications to the child tax credit contained in section 201 should be part of the final tax package)

ON page 18, between lines 14 and 15, insert: SEC. 202. SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE MODIFICATIONS TO THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.

(a) FINDINGS.—

(1) There are over 12,000,000 children in poverty in the United States—about 78 percent of these children live in working families.

(2) The child tax credit was originally designed to benefit families with children in recognition of the costs associated with raising children.

(3) There are 15,400,000 children whose families would not benefit from the doubling of the child tax credit unless it is made refundable and another 7,000,000 children live in families who will not receive an increased benefit under the bill unless the credit is made refundable.

(4) A person who earns the Federal minimum wage and works 40 hours a week for 50 weeks a year earns approximately \$10,300.

(5) The provision included in section 201 would give families with children the benefit of a partially refundable child tax credit based on 15 cents of their income for every dollar earned above \$10,000.

(6) For a family earning \$15,000 that is an additional \$750 to help make ends meet.

(7) Doubling the child tax credit to \$1,000 and making it partially refundable will benefit over 37,000,000 families with dependent children.

(8) The expansion of the child tax credit included in section 201 is a meaningful and a responsible effort on the part of the Senate to address the needs of low income working families to promote work and such an expansion would provide the benefit of a child tax credit to 10,700,000 more children than the provision passed by the House of Representatives.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the “10-15” child tax credit provision included in section 201 is a worthy start, and should be maintained as part of the final package.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a sense of the Senate amendment in support of the provisions in the bill that expand and extend the child tax credit to millions of working families. I am joined in offering this amendment by Senators LINCOLN, JEFFORDS, CHAFEE, DEWINE, KERRY, DODD, ROCKEFELLER, COLLINS, DOMENICI, SMITH of Oregon, and WELLSTONE.

The RELIEF Act doubles the maximum child tax credit from \$500 to \$1,000 per child and extends it by making it partially refundable for 15 cents on every dollar earned above \$10,000. These provisions were incorporated in the bill during the Senate Finance Committee markup on a bipartisan basis and, together, these provisions will extend the benefits of the child tax credit to more than 55 million children nationally, as well as 37 million families. Without refundability, almost 16 million of these children would not be eligible for an increased benefit. The overwhelming majority of these children—almost two-thirds—live in working families.

This amendment demonstrates our commitment to the child tax credit provisions in this package. I urge support of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time in opposition?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know of no opposition to this amendment. We yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 159 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Akaka	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allen	Durbin	Miller
Baucus	Edwards	Murkowski
Bayh	Ensign	Murray
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Fitzgerald	Reed
Bond	Frist	Reid
Boxer	Graham	Roberts
Breaux	Grassley	Rockefeller
Brownback	Gregg	Santorum
Bunning	Hagel	Sarbanes
Burns	Harkin	Schumer
Byrd	Hatch	Sessions
Campbell	Hollings	Shelby
Cantwell	Hutchinson	Smith (NH)
Carnahan	Hutchison	Smith (OR)
Carper	Inhofe	Snowe
Chafee	Inouye	Specter
Cleland	Jeffords	Stabenow
Clinton	Johnson	Stevens
Cochran	Kennedy	Thomas
Collins	Kerry	Thompson
Conrad	Kohl	Thurmond
Corzine	Landrieu	Torricelli
Craig	Leahy	Voivovich
Crapo	Levin	Warner
Daschle	Lieberman	Wellstone
Dayton	Lincoln	Wyden
DeWine	Lott	
Dodd	Lugar	

NAYS—4

Enzi	Kyl
Gramm	Nickles

NOT VOTING—2

Helms	McCain
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The amendment (No. 741) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 769, AS MODIFIED

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 769 and ask unanimous consent to modify it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. Without objection, the amendment is modified. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. NELSON] proposes an amendment numbered 769, as modified.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide a circuit breaker for tax cuts if debt levels are not reduced as provided in the budget resolution for fiscal year 2002)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . CIRCUIT BREAKER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In any fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2004, if the level of debt held by the public at the end of that fiscal year (as projected by the Office of Management and Budget sequestration update report on August 20th preceding the beginning of that fiscal year) would exceed the level of debt held by the public for that fiscal year