

SENATE—Monday, February 7, 2005

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, source of all life, today we offer You ourselves, thanking You for the opportunity to serve You and country. Forgive us for being silent when we should speak, for being useless when we could be useful. Watch over and protect our Nation's military. Give our warriors courage as they face the foe and skill in performing their duty. Bless our lawmakers. Give them steadfast hearts which no unworthy thought can drag downward and no tribulation can wear out. Teach them to serve You as You deserve, to give and not count the cost, to toil and not seek for rest, to labor and not ask for any reward except that of knowing that they are doing Your will.

Use each of us to build a world fit to live in. We pray in Your wonderful name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we have a period of morning business until 3 this afternoon, and at 3 we will begin consideration of S. 5, the class action fairness bill. The agreement reached

last week provides for debate only and requires amendments to be limited to the subject matter of the bill. I encourage Members to make their opening statements today so that we may begin the amendment process early tomorrow.

I thank the Democratic leader for his cooperation as we begin the class action legislation. We have a short list of possible amendments from the other side. I hope we can lock in an exclusive list at the earliest time to facilitate management of the bill. I don't want to encourage amendments, but I would forewarn all Senators, if they intend to offer an amendment to the class action bill they should notify their respective chairmen just as soon as possible and notify the cloakrooms as well.

In addition to beginning the debate on the class action bill today, we will also consider a resolution relating to the recent elections in Iraq. That resolution has been circulated, and we expect to have a rollcall vote on the resolution at 5:30 this afternoon. We hope to have that agreement locked in shortly, and we will alert Members accordingly when consent is granted for that vote.

I also would announce that the Homeland and Governmental Affairs Committee is expected to report the nomination of Michael Chertoff to be Secretary of Homeland Security. Clearly we will want to schedule that important nomination for floor action as soon as possible.

I yield the floor. I will have a few minutes on leader time shortly but would be happy to turn to the Democratic leader.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE LETTER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when President Bush was elected, he said that he wanted to be a uniter and not a divider. We took him at his word. The last 4 years have not worked out well. There has not been much unity in Washington, but a lot of divisive matters come before us and the tone has not been good.

The day after this last election when the President was reelected he called me when I was in Las Vegas and we had a very pleasant meeting on the telephone. He said he wanted to get along. He wanted to set a better tone in Washington.

This past Wednesday, the State of the Union Message was given. The President said the same thing there—he wanted to get along, to cooperate.

Today, the newspaper of Capitol Hill, "Rollcall," has a front page story: "RNC Turns Up Heat on Reid." It is a big story. It says among other things that they are sending out a 13-page research document, the RNC, the Republican National Committee, "a 13-page research document today to roughly 1 million people . . . detailing Reid's . . ."—what they don't like about me, saying what they want to do is just like they did to Daschle.

I don't think the President of the United States can say one thing and then do something else and get away with it. Is this how he wants to be a uniter, not divider? He cannot distance himself from the Republican National Committee. The Republican National Committee is his committee. He picks the chairman. He picks everybody there. He raises the money for it. It is the President's organization. He can't say one thing to the American people and to the Democratic leader of the Senate and then send out scurrilous letters saying that I am a bad guy, in great detail. I mean, is President George Bush a man of his word? Is what he is telling the American people just a charade?

Last Wednesday, just a few days ago, as I have mentioned, he said that he was going to reach out to the Democrats. This is a strange way to reach out.

Mr. President, I call upon you to repudiate this document, to tell the Republican National Committee don't mail it. Tell them not to send it. We haven't dealt with one piece of legislation here on the Senate floor, yet they are sending out, to a million people, what they think is to have REID roughed up a little bit.

What politics is all about, what government is all about, is honesty, integrity—not phoniness. Why didn't he stand and tell the American people last Wednesday that one of the first items of business we were going to do in Washington is send out a hit piece on the Democratic leader? If he is honest with the American people, why doesn't he just call it the way it is? It is going to be politics as usual, directed from 16th and Pennsylvania Avenue. Honesty, integrity and truth—if those are the watch words of this President, he will repudiate what his Republican National Committee is doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine is recognized.