

SENATE—Monday, March 14, 2005

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

God of the ages, our God, great are the works of Your hands and of Your heart. You bless those who seek You. Forgive us when our self-will prevents You from doing in and through us all that You desire to see in our lives.

Bless the Members of this body and those who work to support them. Let no shadow of shame darken their faces. Keep them on the road of integrity. Deliver them from foolish pride and give them the courage to pursue and embrace truth. Remind them that we harvest what we plant, whether good or bad. Reward their diligence with bountiful blessings.

We pray in Your loving 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.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2006

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 18, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 18) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for the fiscal year 2006 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2005 and 2007 through 2010.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will immediately begin consideration of the budget resolution which was reported from the Budget Committee last week. There are now 45 hours remaining of the statutory 50-hour limit. The chairman and ranking

member are ready for opening statements, and then it is our expectation to begin the amendment process.

As we announced last week, we do anticipate a vote around 5:30 p.m. today in relation to an amendment. Once we get underway, we will alert Senators as to what amendment will be voted on this afternoon.

I also want to reiterate that this will be a busy week of Senate business. We will complete the budget resolution this week. We will obviously have lengthy sessions over the course of each day and likely well into the evening. I will be working with the Democratic leader to see if we can keep a steady pace throughout the week so that we can avoid what has come to be known as the vote-arama, if at all possible. I know the managers of the bill will be doing everything possible to continue to have this bill move in an orderly, systematic way. This will require the cooperation of all Senators, and we have asked all to keep their schedules flexible around the floor schedule.

We will need to keep the length of each rollcall vote to a reasonable limit. We again request Members to come as soon as possible to vote when votes are called. If not, we will have to cut off the time with which we have flexibly in the past allowed our colleagues to meander over. We have to keep the bill moving expeditiously.

I thank everybody in advance for what I know will be a busy week, and I look forward to completing our work prior to the start of the Easter break.

I particularly thank JUDD GREGG and Senator CONRAD for their hard work and leadership. They have worked very hard over the course of the last several weeks completing the work of the budget at the committee level at the end of last week. As I said earlier, we will complete action on the bill before we adjourn for the March recess.

The budget is a tough budget. It is an austere budget. It is a disciplined budget. That is what is appropriate at this point in time. It restrains spending. It cuts the deficit in half over 5 years. It extends the progrowth tax relief that has continued to fuel the economy. Some will say that it goes too far in terms of restrained spending; others will say it does not go far enough.

Budgets are never easy. This one is no different, but it is absolutely essential that we complete the budget this week. It provides the blueprint for just about everything else that occurs over the remainder of this session, most importantly the appropriations bills.

We have had good discussion among the leadership about focusing amend-

ments and making sure that amendments that are brought to the floor are done so in an orderly way but also that the amendments that are brought to the floor are, indeed, substantive amendments. We don't want dozens and dozens of amendments to be brought to the floor because typically all these amendments can be overlapping and repetitive of earlier amendments. It is that sort of disorganization and chaos we want to get rid of and focus on the important amendments, debate them under the time agreements we have.

I was just talking to the Democratic manager, and that orderly process that the two managers are talking about is one that would give some certainty as to when amendments would come to the floor. That is going to take planning right now and not having amendments come flowing in at the very end. I do believe that if we work together and keep our focus, we will take potentially a chaotic process and give it clear definition and clear order.

We will have a lively and spirited debate. Such debate was manifested in the committee last week, and it will continue on the Senate floor with the broader participation of all of our colleagues over the next 4 days. I look forward to delivering a blueprint that reflects our commitment to fiscal responsibility, to economic growth, and a bill that does keep America moving forward.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the staff of the Senate Budget Committee on the list I send to the desk be permitted to remain on the Senate floor during consideration of S. Con. Res. 18 and the conference report thereon and that the list be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE FLOOR PRIVILEGES LIST, 109TH CONGRESS

Amdur, Rochelle; Bailey, Stephen; Bargo, Kevin; Brandt, Dan; Cheung, Rock E.; Dempsey, Don; Duckworth, Cara; Esquea, Jim; Eyster, Sarah; Fisher, David; Friesen, Katherine; Green, Vanessa; Gudes, Scott B. (Staff Director, Full Access Pass); Haskell, Tyler; Havlik, Matthew.

Hearn, Jim; Howe, Matthew; Isenberg, Cliff; Jones, Michael; Kermick, Andrew; Klumpner, James; Konwinski, Lisa (General Counsel, Full Access Pass); Kuehl, Sarah; Lofgren, Michael; Lucia, William; Mashburn, John; Millar, Gail; Miller, Jim; Mittal, Seema; Monk, Kimberly.

Morin, Jamie; Myers, David; Nagurka, Stuart; Naylor, Mary (Staff Director, Full Access Pass); Nelson, Sue; Noel, Kobye; O'Keefe, Shannon; O'Neill, Maureen; Ortega, David A.; Osterberg, K. Gayle; Page, Anne; Pappone, David; Parent, Allison; Phillips, Roy; Posner, Steven.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.