

SENATE—Tuesday, July 18, 2006

The Senate met at 9:45 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.

O God, our Father, in spite of the violence and the strife in our world, we pause to thank You for Your blessings. Thank You for the resiliency of the human spirit that often shines brightest during the darkest hours. Thank You for the examples of those who are willing to sacrifice even life itself for freedom. Thank You for the visions and ideals You have planted in the hearts of our legislative leaders and for their commitment to excellence. Thank You for the opportunity to labor for a world at peace and for those who toil for the day when we will study war no more.

Above all, we thank You for the blessing of Your love revealed by Your gift of salvation to our world. Accept this, our sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise.

We pray in Your holy 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 now be a period for the transaction of morning business until 10 a.m. with the time equally divided.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning at 10 a.m. we will resume debate on the stem cell issue with each 30 minutes alternating between the two sides. We have the designated times locked in with three votes occurring in a stacked sequence beginning at 3:45 today.

I thank the Members who were available yesterday for the debate. We had a good debate, an important debate, on the whole range of ethical and scientific issues which were introduced and talked about yesterday in that debate, and I am sure it will be constructive, with that same cooperative dialog and spirit today. We have a limited amount of time for closing remarks, so Senators should be on the floor of the Senate during their speaking blocks, and if there is any time available in those speaking blocks, that time will be appropriately allocated.

We will recess today as usual from 12:30 until 2:15 for the weekly policy meetings, and later on this afternoon, we will also begin work on the Water Resources Development Act. We have a time agreement which limits the amendments to the so-called WRDA—the Water Resources Development Act—and we expect to begin debate on some of those amendments this afternoon and evening.

Other items that may be considered this week include some circuit and district judges that have been reported by the Judiciary Committee. We mentioned the Child Custody Protection Act, and we have mentioned the Voting Rights Act. So we will have a busy week.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with respect to the debate time today regarding the stem cell legislation, I ask unanimous consent that the Democratic time be controlled as follows: From 10:30 to 11 a.m., Senators LAUTENBERG, CLINTON, and MIKULSKI each controlling 10 minutes; from 11:30 to 12 o'clock noon, Senators KOHL and LINCOLN each controlling 5 minutes, and Senators CARPER and JOHN KERRY each controlling 10 minutes; from 12:15 to 12:30, Senators FEINGOLD and SCHUMER each controlling 7½ minutes; and from 2:45 to 3:15 p.m., Senator MENENDEZ, 3 minutes, Senators FEINSTEIN, KENNEDY, and HARKIN each controlling 8 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Chair advise me as to the current state of business on the floor?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time until 10 a.m. is equally divided between the parties.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Speaking on the minority side, I would like to say that we face a historic vote today on stem cell research. This is a vote that millions of Americans are watching. People who are suffering from diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, spinal cord injuries, they can't understand why America, for the last 5 years, has shut down medical research that promises hope—hope for cures. They can't understand that the President of the United States made the decision—almost unprecedented in our history—to close down medical research. He didn't do it absolutely, and that is the curious thing.

If this is a question of being driven by moral values, I don't understand how the President could conclude that using existing stem cell lines, 78 of them, is permissible, but using 1 more is immoral. I don't follow his logic. Frankly, I don't believe it is logical.

What we have before us is an opportunity to move forward on stem cell research with very strict ethical guidelines. We have a choice: Will we take these thousands of stem cells—which, frankly, will be discarded as waste and surplus—will we allow that to happen or use them in a laboratory to give a 12-year-old girl suffering from juvenile diabetes a chance for a normal, happy life?

Will we use these stem cells to try to explore possibilities for the epidemics of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and Lou Gehrig's disease and finally have some avenue toward a cure? Are we going to tie our hands as a nation?

The Senate has a chance today to vote for the real bill: H.R. 810. That is the only bill dealing with stem cell research. There are two other bills we will be voting on, and honestly, they don't mean anything. They mean so little. One prohibits practices that are not occurring, and the other is just words—words that don't really lead to research.

What is really troubling is the President has sent us a message, and we received it yesterday. The President said,

with his Statement of Administration Policy, if H.R. 810, the real stem cell research bill, were presented to the President, he would veto the bill. This President, who calls himself a compassionate conservative, has a chance with the stem cell research bill to show his compassion for the millions of people suffering from disease, people who are clinging to the possibility of hope in medical research. I hope the President will reconsider. I hope he will not just dig in and say: That's it, I won't even think about it.

I hope the President will pray on this because he is a prayerful man, and if he does, I hope he will understand that throwing away these stem cells, discarding them, declaring they are medical waste, is a waste of opportunity and a waste of hope.

We have a chance with this stem cell bill to give hope to people. I have gathered those in Chicago who are interested in the issue, and there are so many of them: Representatives of groups, a mother who wakes in the middle of the night two or three times to take a blood test on her little girl to see if she needs insulin; a couple sitting before me—I will never forget them—he is suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease. He is in his thirties. He has reached the point now where he cannot speak or move. She brings him to our meeting, and as she describes what they have been through, tears are rolling down his cheeks, realizing he can't do anything to help himself at this point.

Well, there is a chance—a chance, perhaps, for him but certainly for others—a chance for them, for those suffering from Parkinson's.

My colleague from Illinois in the House, LANE EVANS, is my buddy. We came to the House together in 1982. What a great guy. He is a Vietnam era Marine Corps veteran. He wins an upset victory in Illinois, comes in, he is a great Congressman, and then Parkinson's strikes. He had to announce this year he is ending his public career to continue this valiant battle against Parkinson's.

He said, when he came to the floor and spoke on behalf of this bill: This is not just about the right to life, it is the right to live, the right for him to live, the right for others to live.

I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this bill today with a strong vote. Say to the President: Please, in prayerful reflection, think about these people who are counting on us. Think about our chance to show that we are not just compassionate conservatives and compassionate progressives and compassionate liberals, we are compassionate Americans.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill, and I urge the President to reconsider his veto.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from Alaska on the Senate floor. I believe he would like to introduce some people.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF SPAIN

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, it is my high honor to introduce to the Senate a delegation from the Senate of Spain. Senator Rojo is the leader of this group, the President of the Senate of Spain. With him is Senator Lucas, Senator Anasagasti, Senator Caneda, Senator Garcia-Escudero, Senator Lerma, Senator Aleu, Senator Zubia, Senator Macias, Senator Mendoza, and Senator Cuenca.

Senator Rojo is the President. Senator Lucas is the Vice President. Senator Anasagasti is the First Secretary, and Senator Caneda is the Third Secretary. Senator Garcia-Escudero is the Spokesperson for the Popular Party, Senator Lerma is the Spokesperson for the Socialist Party. Senator Aleu is the Spokesperson for the Progressive Catalonian Parties, and Senator Zubia is the Spokesperson for the Basque Nationalists. Senator Macias is the Spokesperson for the Catalonian Coalition. Senator Mendoza is the Spokesperson for the Canary Islands Coalition, and Senator Cuenca is the Deputy Spokesperson for the Mixed Group.

Mr. President, we thought we had it bad. There are many parties represented here from our distinguished ally, Spain. I hope Senators will take a moment to say hello.

I explained to my colleagues that we are in a debate which is a prelude to a debate which will come up very soon.

RECESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I will ask the Senate stand in recess for just a few moments to say hello to our distinguished colleagues.

With the Senate's indulgence, I would like to announce we will have a coffee reception for the President of the Senate of Spain and his colleagues, the Senators from Spain, in the President pro tempore's room starting immediately. All staff and Senators are invited.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess so we can greet our distinguished colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:03 a.m. recessed until 10:04 a.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DEMINT).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is now closed.

FETUS FARMING PROHIBITION ACT OF 2006

ALTERNATIVE PLURIPOTENT STEM CELL THERAPIES ENHANCEMENT ACT

STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 10 a.m. having arrived, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 3504, S. 2754, and H.R. 810, en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 810) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

A bill (S. 3504) to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit the solicitation or acceptance of tissue from fetuses gestated for research purposes, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2754) to derive human pluripotent stem cell lines using techniques that do not knowingly harm embryos.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of stem cell research.

I plan to vote in favor of each of the three bills that we will be considering today. I call upon my colleagues to pass all three of these bills. I call upon the President to sign all of them into law.

Make no mistake about it. This is an important debate. We will cast important votes today.

Even with all the events taking place the world today, including the developments in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, it is my hope—and the hope of many others—that when the history of our time is written, the ultimate outcome of today's debate over stem cell research will have been a major breakthrough in our understanding of, and ability to promote, human health and prevent and treat disease.

I admire and respect President Bush tremendously for being the first President to dedicate Federal funds for stem cell research. As many may recall, in August 2001, the President announced that Federal funds would be used for research on 60 stem cell lines that were created from embryos that have already been destroyed. Unfortunately, many of these stem lines became contaminated so the cells could never be used for scientific research. I believe that H.R. 810 must be signed into law in order to make the President's policy work because in my view, the President already made the decision to use the cells. H.R. 810 just changes the guidelines for stem cell research by allowing embryos that would otherwise be discarded to be made available for research. I believe that by using these embryos for medical research, we are, in fact, promoting life.

One of the reasons why so many are so interested in this debate is that literally everyone either has, or knows, a