

## SENATE—Tuesday, July 29, 2008

(Legislative day of Monday, July 28, 2008)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You have led us through our days and years. Show our lawmakers Your purpose for them and this land we love. As they devote themselves to the worthy task of freedom, supply them with undiminished strength and uncommon wisdom. May they contribute wisely to the security of our Nation and world, as they strive to do Your will on Earth as it is done in Heaven. Lord, encourage them as they encourage one another, and may they work together for the common good. Give them the wisdom to always do the right thing, to be faithful, kind, and humble.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER 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. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, July 29, 2008.

To the Senate:

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

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER 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.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the next 30 minutes.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my colleagues and I be allowed to speak in a colloquy in the 30 minutes we have been allocated.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

### HIGH GAS PRICES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, \$4 gasoline is the subject before the Senate. It has been the subject before the Senate since the week before last. I am very encouraged that yesterday the majority leader indicated we might be able to move from talking to acting; in other words, to begin to offer amendments, debate on those amendments, and come to a result which would help lower gasoline prices.

Each week, for the last several weeks, I have been reading to the Senate e-mails and letters I have received from Tennesseans who have been hurt by the high price of gasoline.

For example, Jason from Friendsville, TN, which is a Quaker town near where I live, is a firefighter with the Blount County Fire Department. He says that currently five of their sta-

tions have only one person in them. They rely on volunteers for the rest of their support, but since gasoline is so high, response from volunteers has been very small, and they have to allow other jurisdictions to respond. He is not sure how he is going to be able to keep driving across town to help other people when he can barely help himself.

Gina from Elizabethton is a single mother who is spending about \$65 each week to drive to and from work. She can barely afford groceries because everything is so expensive. She says they have been living on noodles to get by. She is very concerned that Congress and the President are doing a lot of talking but not doing anything about the problem, and she says, "This country is in such a mess."

William of Riceville is on disability and his wife is unable to work due to health problems. Rising gas prices have made them choose between driving to the doctor or paying for their medicine.

Tina from Nashville is a single mother struggling to support her daughter. They can't even afford to go out to the movies on the weekend, she says, because gas and food prices have risen so much. She says that right now she is spending about \$200 each month on gas and prices keep going up, but her paycheck isn't going up at all.

Judy from Joelton is a 61-year-old grandmother struggling to support her daughter and granddaughter who live with her. The gas to take her granddaughter to kindergarten is costing \$115 each month, and they are struggling to keep her in school. Judy says she is scared for her family. She has never seen it this difficult to get by.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, these letters and e-mails from constituents in Tennessee be printed in the RECORD.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, as I mentioned earlier, the Senate could have, since the week before last, been bringing up amendments from the Democratic side and the Republican side with proposals for dealing with \$4 gasoline. Hopefully, the majority leader and the Republican leader are coming to a conclusion today which will permit us to start doing that. We don't expect every amendment we offer to be adopted, but we do represent millions of people who want us to try to solve the problem.