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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

SENATE—Thursday, September 25, 2008

(Legislative day of Wednesday, September 17, 2008)

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by CDR Maurice Kaprow, Command Chaplain, Center for Information Dominance, Pensacola, FL.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Eternal and loving God, this morning, in this august Chamber of the Senate, we ask humbly for Your guidance and grace. As these men and women, duly empowered by their constituents, meet to deliberate the important issues facing our Nation and our world, we turn to You to help them complete their work. Grant them wisdom to fully understand the issues before them; grant them insight to truly know the implications of their actions; grant them confidence to feel that what they are doing is right; and grant them the courage to make those difficult decisions. Be with them today and every day as they fully ponder the affairs of state.

While we are here in the comfort and safety of this magnificent and historic Capitol Building, our thoughts turn to those brave Americans—young men and women from every part of our country—who volunteer to serve in our Armed Forces. They are soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, and coastguardsmen. Many of these brave souls are deployed far from home, in harm's way, as they do their part in maintaining freedom and our American way of life. Keep them safe and secure until they return to these shores ensconced into the waiting arms of their families and loved ones.

In Your Holy Name, I pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR 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, September 25, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the remarks of the leaders, if there be any, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. We will be in morning business until we receive the consolidated appropriations bill from the House. When we receive the message from the House of Representatives, we will turn to its consideration.

Meanwhile, we will continue to work with the minority on an agreement to consider the national defense authorization legislation. If we are able to reach an agreement on DOD authorization, we could turn to its consideration immediately.

For the information of all Members, we will have shortly, as I have indicated, the continuing resolution. It passed the House overwhelmingly yesterday, some 370 or 380 votes. We will receive that legislation and we will file cloture on it today for a Saturday cloture vote. Of course, with consent, we can do about anything around here. We can move the vote up and do it today or tomorrow. It is up to the membership. So that is one possibility.

We have the financial crisis situation. Significant progress has been made. At 10 o'clock, there is a meeting that will take place with the staffs of Democrats and Republicans. They have already started writing a proposed piece of legislation. As I have indicated, significant progress has been made. Hopefully, we can work something out on that legislation in the near future.

There are a number of other issues we are trying to move forward. There is some excellent legislation we have received from the House dealing with Amtrak and train safety. We hope we can work out a way to do that legislation.

Anyway, we will keep Senators closely advised. At this stage, it seems very clear, unless something happens, we will have to be in session on Saturday for a Saturday cloture vote.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

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

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