

SENATE—Wednesday, June 18, 2008

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Father Claude Pomerleau from the University of Portland in Portland, OR.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Merciful and gracious Father, may this day begin with an attentive, abashed silence in which we stop and humbly consider the many gifts You give us, the immeasurable mercy of Your love, the many opportunities we have to witness and celebrate Your creation.

We thank You for the challenges of this day. We thank You for the brains and hearts You give us to bring to bear on cruelty and brokenness. We thank You for the creativity and compassion You give us, so that we may craft policies that heal and elevate, that make room for the peace and joy that are Your greatest gifts to all.

Lord, be with us today. Be in this room, walk with us, strengthen our hearts, deepen our mercy, open our ears, overcome our weaknesses, guide our dreams, make us the instruments not of the small matters of men and women, but of the endless love that is You.

Most of all, today help us remember that our greatest charge is to craft a world in which the children of this Nation, and the children of every nation, can find the love and hope they deserve.

With humility, we bow before You and ask Your hand on our work. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 18, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PATRICK J. LEAHY, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LEAHY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Vermont.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this is a proud moment for our family. I commend our guest Chaplain, Father Pomerleau. For years I have called him "pere frere," which is French for my father brother. Father Pomerleau is my brother-in-law. He is the brother of my wife Marcelle Pomerleau Leahy.

It was in 1965 when Marcelle and I and Father Pomerleau's parents, Phil and Cecile Pomerleau, went to Rome for Father Pomerleau's ordination to the priesthood. I remember the thrill of our first trip abroad, but it was for such a special occasion. He said mass, his first mass, in the catacombs in Rome, something we will never forget.

Father Pomerleau received his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. He is a Holy Cross priest. They are the ones who run Notre Dame. He received his masters there and got his masters in theology from the Gregorian in Rome and his doctorate from the University of Denver. He has been the rector of Saint George's in Santiago, Chile. He has been a professor at the University of Chile, presently a professor at the University of Portland, and is the religious superior for the order there.

I can go on forever reciting the long list of his accomplishments. More the way we think of him is this Sunday on Father's Day, he joined Marcelle and myself at our home, one of our sons, our daughter, son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren. We were watching the little grandchildren climbing into his lap saying: Uncle Claude, Uncle Claude, will you read us a story? That was part of his pastorage, too.

I am proud to have been able to introduce him. I thank the distinguished leader for letting me have this time.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to consider H.R. 6049, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. There will be a period of morning business today from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., with the majority controlling the first hour and the Republicans controlling the next hour. Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each during morning business.

Today we expect to be in a position to return to the House message to accompany H.R. 3221, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act.

Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent to speak in leader time. The majority leader, Senator REID, is attending a funeral service for Mr. Tim Russert.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this month the Senate Democrats have tried to confront many problems which face families across our Nation. From lowering taxes and addressing high gasoline taxes to ensuring quality health care for America's seniors and providing a helping hand to American workers who have been unemployed for more than 6 months, time and time again, the Senate Republicans have refused to give us an opportunity to address these issues. Republican obstruction has gone so far in the Senate that they will not even allow the Senate to debate legislation anymore, refusing to admit that these important concerns are worthy of Senate debate.

Yesterday, a new record was established in the Senate, one of dubious worth in the history of our Nation. But the Republicans have engaged now in 77 filibusters. The record previously for any 2-year session was 57. We still have another 6 months to go. The Republicans have now broken the record for the number of filibusters.

What is a filibuster? It is an effort to stop a bill, to stop a nomination, to stop debate, to make certain that the Senate will not engage in even debating the issues which the American people consider to be most important in their lives. And the Republicans have now broken the Senate record again with 77 filibusters.

It may not be news that they have broken the record. We knew this was coming, and I am sure their goal is probably 100 or more filibusters. So