

SENATE—Friday, June 18, 2010

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable AL FRANKEN, a Senator from the State of Minnesota.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, creator and sustainer of humanity, teach us the way of salvation, show us the path to meaningful life, and reveal to us the steps of faith.

Today, use our Senators to fulfill Your purposes. Quicken their hearts, purify their minds, and strengthen their commitments. Show them duties left undone and tasks unattended, as You lead them through challenging seasons to a deeper experience with You. Let faith, hope, and love abound in their lives, as they seek to heal the hurt in our Nation and world.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable AL FRANKEN 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, 2010.

To the Senate:

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

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

PLAYING AND WORKING FOR AMERICANS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, within the next few minutes, in Johannesburg,

South Africa, before almost 80,000 people, the U.S. soccer team will begin its World Cup quest. They are going to be playing Slovenia, which has the fewest citizens of any of the participating countries. So I wish all the athletes representing our country success in today's match.

I also want to take a minute and talk about a Nevadan who is on our team. His name is Herculez Gomez. He is a graduate of Las Vegas public schools. He was, of course, an outstanding high school athlete. He played professionally here in America, but the team decided not to sign him—Kansas City—to anything he was satisfied with, so he went to Mexico to play. He became the No. 1 player in Mexico. He holds the record for scoring more goals than any person, as I understand it, who has played for another team in that country.

He is a great young man, and we are very proud of him. He is a great goal scorer, a terrific representative of Nevada and the United States in this tournament watched by billions of people around the world. He didn't play in our first game. He was standing on the sidelines. The coach had told him to go in, but soccer is an unusual game. It is not like a lot of sports. It is very difficult to substitute in a soccer game, and the referee didn't blow the whistle or stop the game, so he couldn't go in. But he will be in this game, I am sure.

I am a great soccer fan. I often boast about my youngest son, who played on three national championship soccer teams for the University of Virginia. Anyway, I watch soccer closely.

I wish the next remarks of mine could be as pleasant as those I have just given regarding Herculez Gomez. I wish we could have a lot more pleasant talk here in the Senate. But with what happened last night and what has happened for the last year and a half, it is very hard to be pleasant when you have people who are hurting in America.

Unemployment is something that is difficult to understand unless you have been unemployed. I have never been unemployed. I am very fortunate. From the time I was a boy until now, I have always had a job, even in the summers. I worked as a very young boy, starting when I was very, very young. But I have seen my dad trying to get a job and not able to find work. My father was a strong young man during the depression, and I heard him tell the story many times that he would go to a mine where they were going to hire some people, and they would line up the people who were prospective workers, and one of the bosses would

come out and he would go down the line and say: I will take you, I will take you, and I will take you. I guess how they looked is all they had to base it on. They had no applications. No one filed applications.

Well, even though it is not the Great Depression, we now have people going through the same thing my father went through. I heard on NPR this morning on the way to work that a woman has been out of work for a year and a half. She was hired once for 1 day. She has applied 150 different times. She keeps a notebook of the places she has applied and what happens to each of those. She is going to a job fair today, hoping something will happen and she can get a job.

The American people have had it with those who create messes and then refuse to take responsibility for cleaning them up. They are tired of the excuses. They are sick of the misplaced priorities that say one party's politics are more important than their jobs or families, their incomes and their savings.

If you want to know what we stand for on this side of the aisle—Democrats—look at our agenda this year. And our agenda has been so difficult because, without exception, everything we have tried to do has been stalled. The Republicans have made every attempt to divert our attention from what we want to do.

Here is what our agenda has been: making health insurance more affordable and health insurance companies more accountable. What kind of a country would we be if we had stood silently while 50 million of our fellow men and women had no health insurance? That is where we were. If you had a job, a good job, you might have had insurance, but that was no guarantee either. People were losing their insurance by the millions as time went on. So we did something that had to be done—health insurance.

We protected Americans' savings and seniors' pensions from Wall Street greed, making sure the American people were never again asked to bail out a big bank. Although we were stymied every step of the way, we worked to stop these people on Wall Street from doing again what they did to the American people.

During part of my career—in fact, for 4 years—I was chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission. Now, that isn't about hunting animals; it is a gambling commission. We call it gaming. We did everything we could to make sure people who came to Nevada and gambled on the tables in Las Vegas or