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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN THUNE, a Senator from the State of South Dakota.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, we acknowledge that You are our creator and sustainer. Without Your power, we can accomplish nothing of worth. Forgive us for our excessive dependence upon our powers and help us to seek Your wisdom.

Bless now these men and women chosen by the people of this Nation as they strive to make a positive difference in these challenging times. Remind them that they are not alone in their labors because You have promised never to leave them or forsake them. Help them to find shelter in Your love and in the knowledge that in everything You are working for the good of those who love You and are called according to Your purposes.

O God our fortress, bless this Nation that each citizen will strive to live for Your glory. We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN THUNE 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. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 15, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN THUNE, a Senator from the State of South Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. THUNE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning we will begin immediately to resume consideration of the budget resolution. There are now a little more than 32 hours remaining out of the statutory limit of 50 hours. The chairman and ranking member were on the floor all day yesterday to begin the amendment process, and we expect to have many amendments considered today with votes well into this evening. Once we get underway this morning, we will alert Senators as to the timing of the first votes. We have already alerted Senators that this will be an extremely busy week. We will complete the budget resolution this week for sure. That will require lengthy sessions into each evening as we progress through the week. We will expedite progress on the bill if Senators will cooperate by keeping their schedules flexible and staying close to the floor throughout the day. Again, it is crucial that Senators should arrive at the floor quickly, as votes are ordered, to avoid missing any important budget votes.

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. McCONNELL. 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2006

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 18, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 18) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for the fiscal year 2006 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2005 and 2007 through 2010.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time on the budget be equally divided between the majority and minority.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. 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. CONRAD. 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.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I yield 20 minutes off the resolution to the Senator from Montana.

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



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