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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the guest Chaplain, Bishop Steven E. Wright, National Chaplain for the American Legion, from Layton, UT.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Our Father who art in heaven, we humbly thank Thee for untold blessings poured out upon the people of this great Nation. From our earliest beginnings, we have placed our trust in Thy power to guide and defend us. We reaffirm that trust as we seek Thy strength, Thy wisdom, Thy inspiration, and Thy love to be upon our Senators in their deliberations and efforts and decisions this day.

We thank Thee for the valiant men and women of our Armed Forces, as well as for our veterans, and ask Thee to bless them and their families with safety and with Thy comforting love. We pray likewise for each individual and family unit, and ask Thee to particularly bless fathers and mothers with ability to instill virtue in its many forms in their children.

We express our love and gratitude for Thy tender mercies in all our trials and challenges, and do so with a concluding moment of silence, allowing each to offer the personal benediction of his and her own heart and faith.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia, 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 as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2006.

To the Senate:

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

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLEN 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.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will begin with a period for morning business for up to 60 minutes. Following that time, the Senate will resume debate on S. 2271, the PATRIOT Act amendments legislation. The debate will be equally divided until the hour of 12:30, and at 12:30 the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy meetings. When we reconvene at 2:15, there will be 15 minutes for closing remarks prior to the cloture vote, which is scheduled for 2:30. That cloture vote on the PATRIOT Act amendments bill will be the first vote of the day. We fully expect cloture to

be invoked, and therefore we have an agreement that the vote on passage of the bill will occur at 10 a.m. tomorrow, on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, in addition to the PATRIOT Act amendments bill, we will return to the conference report on the underlying PATRIOT Act. That conference report will require an additional cloture vote and we will have that vote on Wednesday afternoon.

I remind my colleagues that on Wednesday we will have a joint meeting with the House of Representatives in order to hear an address by the Prime Minister of Italy. That address will begin at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning, and therefore Senators are asked to gather in the Senate Chamber at 10:30 so we can proceed together at 10:40 to the Hall of the House of Representatives. I will have more to say about the remaining schedule for this week and the next at the close of business today.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON PENSION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, employer-sponsored pension plans have been a critical part of employment security for America's workers. Over 40 million Americans rely on these pension plans that promise a monthly retirement benefit for life. Increasingly, the retirement security offered by pension plans is at risk, and more and more employers opt out of offering pension plans because of increased costs and growing administrative difficulties. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the agency that insures workers' pensions, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, faces huge deficits as a result of the termination of

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



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