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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, You are our dwelling place in all generations. Keep us this day from a moral casualness that leads away from ethical paths. Help our Senators to labor to please You, their most important constituent. Give them wisdom to avoid even the appearance of evil as they strive to live for Your honor. Make them fervent in their pursuit of spiritual fitness so that they will love You with passion and strength. Keep them from vacillating ways and lead them in Your righteousness.

As we take refuge in Your providence, use us all as instruments of Your grace to bring relief to a suffering world. Continue to sustain our military men and women in harm's way.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON 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, April 5, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ISAKSON 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. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning, we are returning to the border security bill which has been pending since last Wednesday. Last night, the minority leader filed a cloture motion on the chairman's substitute amendment. I was a little surprised when I heard this happened, although I was not on the floor when it was filed. I certainly understand the rules that permit the minority leader to file this motion. I know it is a rare occurrence when the minority leader files such a cloture motion, and at this point he did on the bill. I believe we can make real progress on addressing the amendments if we allow them to come forward, debate them openly, and then vote on them. We do still have the first amendment which was offered to the bill last week pending before the Senate; that is, the Kyl-Cornyn amendment on which we voted on the motion to table last night, 0 to 99—a unanimous vote. The motion had been made and it was not tabled; therefore, it is the pending amendment. We have three other amendments Senators have offered and debated, but we have not been given the opportunity to vote on those.

As I said at the outset of the debate last week, my intention was to give ample time to have amendments come forward, to debate, to fully understand

what is in the Judiciary bill, to modify the Judiciary bill by debate and amendment. I encourage Members to come to the floor to do just that, to offer their amendments. Members show up, and then there is an objection to even offering the amendments from the other side. I specifically set aside these weeks for the Senate to debate this particular issue, the border security and immigration issue, because it is one that is important to the safety of the American people, the security of the Nation, and fairness to immigrants. We are a nation of laws, and we are a rich nation of immigrants. Both of those principles need to be respected in the debate, but we can only do so by making sure that the laws we pass are upheld and that we address the people who have broken the law. That can be done in a comprehensive bill, and we have to have debate and amendment.

The debate over security on our borders and handling immigration has generated a lot of ideas. The debate has matured, and we have had good debate on the floor. Now we have the attention of all 100 Senators and people around the country looking at what we do. They expect us to legislate, to address the very real problems that are out there today, and that requires debate and amendment.

If you look at other large bills we have done, the Medicare prescription drug bill, we had 128 amendments considered; the Energy bill, we had 60 or 70 amendments considered; on the highway bill, 47 amendments; bankruptcy reform, 61 amendments. It is important that we debate these amendments and act on them. We just can't sit on the side lines; the problem is too big, too important. It is growing. An estimated 3 million people crossed our southwestern borders illegally last year, and we don't know who they are. We don't know what their intentions are. We need to bring a rational, fair framework to assist a system that is just flatout broken. That is our responsibility.

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



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