



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

No. 63

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK WARNER, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray:

Almighty God, our guard and guide, look with mercy upon our Senators in these challenging times. Draw them close to You and to each other in humility, so that they will sincerely seek to find common ground. Spare them from arrogating to themselves the judgments which belong only to You. As they seek to confront history's surprises, may they lean not upon their abilities but put their ultimate trust in You. Prepare them to expect and celebrate the healing intervention of Your powerful providence. Remind them that You are waiting to bless them and have specific answers to their questions as they listen for Your voice.

We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK WARNER 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 28, 2009.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable MARK WARNER, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. REID. 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Kathleen Sebelius to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be up to 8 hours for debate prior to a vote, with a 60-vote affirmation required for confirmation. That is by agreement.

I would indicate we have a few speakers on our side but not 4 hours worth. In fact, if we get up to an hour, it will be a surprise to me. So we will yield back a lot of that time.

At 12 noon we will vote on passage of the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 today for our weekly caucus luncheons. Following the caucus recess, the Senate will resume debate on the Sebelius nomination, with the vote expected sometime later in the afternoon or evening.

Last night, the budget conferees filed a conference report accompanying the budget resolution. We expect to consider the conference report sometime tomorrow.

Finally, I expect the Senate to begin consideration of housing legislation this week. We have not finalized that with the distinguished Republican leader and members of his caucus, but I think we are getting very close. What we anticipate—I have filed, under rule XIV, the House-passed bill minus the bankruptcy provision. It is contemplated that the first amendment will be offered by Senator DURBIN, to put the bankruptcy provision back in the bill. Then after that, we would take a look at the bill to see if anything else needed to be done. But the Durbin amendment would include just the bankruptcy language. There are issues in this dealing with FDIC and other things we are told the banking community and financial world needs, and we will take a look at that. That is how we will get to that legislation. We hope to do that within the next 24 hours or something like that.

I have indicated to the Republican leader that the next nomination we are concerned about is Tom Strickland, the Chief of Staff of the Secretary of Interior. I had good conversations with Senator BUNNING last week. He has some questions he wants answered. He put that in writing to the Secretary. That has been all taken care of. Senator BUNNING said he was not worried about delaying the vote but he wants an opportunity to be able to speak in regard to him, and I think there are other Senators who feel the same way, so hopefully we can work that out.

Then we are going to the credit card legislation, which was reported out of the Banking Committee. That is something that will not be real easy to do, but polling numbers indicate that almost 90 percent of the American people want us to do something with credit cards so it is something we have to do.

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



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