

REGARDING FLOOR PRIVILEGES
FOR DISABLED PERSONS RE-
QUIRING SUPPORTING SERVICES

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have been working this morning with all Senators, including the distinguished Democratic leader, to resolve a matter that emerged yesterday with regard to permitting access to the Senate floor of guide dogs and other equipment needed by disabled individuals. The resolution I am about to offer will allow the Sergeant at Arms to work immediately with staffers who have the need for guide dogs to be able to access the floor on a case-by-case basis. The resolution also calls for the Committee on Rules and Administration to consider a formal change in the Senate rules to address the situation. A permanent resolution is expected to be brought out of the committee before the full Senate so that we can have a formal rule on how matters of this nature will be handled.

Again, I thank all Senators involved for their thoughtfulness in addressing the matter immediately. I think it is the right thing to do, and I am pleased that with today's action, assuming we can get this agreed to, the Senate will address an inequity that has been brought before us and we will remove roadblocks in the way of individuals helping us to serve the American people in the Senate.

The chairman of the Rules Committee has been involved in this discussion, the ranking member. I believe we have touched bases on both sides, and I believe this is an appropriate resolution to an immediate problem but also one that can be addressed by the appropriate committee so that the rules will be a little clearer as to how this type of situation will be addressed in the future.

Before I ask unanimous consent, I wonder; I see the Democratic leader, if he wanted to comment. Would the Senator like me to yield for comment before we get unanimous consent?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I commend the majority leader for his expeditious handling of this matter. This has only recently been presented as a problem to the body, and I think the manner in which the majority leader is handling it represents sensitivity to the issue and a recognition for the need for some practical application of our current rules. And so I am very supportive of the effort that he and his colleagues are making in this regard, and I hope that we can see this matter resolved successfully today.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent then that an individual with a disability who has or is granted the privilege of the Senate floor may bring those supporting services, including service dogs, wheelchairs, and interpreters, on the Senate floor, which the Senate Sergeant at Arms determines are necessary and appropriate to assist the disabled individual in discharging the official duties of his or her position until the Committee on

Rules and Administration has the opportunity to properly consider the matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now send a resolution the desk dealing with the same subject and ask that it be appropriately referred.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution will be received and appropriately referred.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, it is my understanding there is to be a 1-hour morning business segment under the control of the minority leader; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for 5 minutes each.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent we begin the 1 hour reserved for the minority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield as much time as he may need to the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator.

BUDGET RESOLUTION DEADLINE

Mr. DURBIN. April 15, we all know that date; 40 percent of the American taxpayers file their returns within the last 48 hours as the closing day comes for filing personal income tax returns. This year, for about the third year in succession, I did my own tax return. I do not know how many of my colleagues in the Senate and House do that. But I think it is a good educational experience. Perhaps we should pass a law that every Member of Congress should complete their own income tax returns. It might urge us on to reform the system and make it simpler so that families across America will have a little easier time of it in paying their taxes and meeting their responsibility to this Nation.

When it comes to responsibility, there is also a responsibility in this Senate Chamber. April 15 is another deadline. April 15 is a deadline for passing a budget resolution. By this time we are required by law to have passed a budget resolution and started the appropriations process.

I have been on Capitol Hill, I guess this is my 15th year, and I do not think I have ever seen happen what has happened this year because now April 15 will come and go without even so much

as a real debate on a budget resolution. The President sent his version to Capitol Hill. I disagreed with some parts of it. But everyone had to concede that his approach to balancing the budget would in fact balance the budget. He met his obligation. He started the process. Of course, when it comes to Congress, that is not under the President's control, nor should it be. That is the control of the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate. The ball is on their side of the net. It is their time to put together a budget resolution and to spell out for the American people in very specific terms how can we reach a balanced budget.

Just a few weeks ago we spent 2 weeks, maybe 3, perhaps 4 weeks, in the Chamber here debating an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, an amendment which said Congress has no choice; it must balance the budget. I voted against it.

I did not think we needed to put into our Constitution an obligation which we all know we must accept. So many people on the other side, my friends on the Republican side, and a few Democrats stood up and said, "No, no, no, we need to have a constitutional imperative to force us to act." Little did I know that just a few weeks later they would prove themselves true. The Republican leadership has been unable or unwilling to come forward with their offering about balancing the budget.

The other night at the radio/TV correspondents' dinner the President had an interesting observation about how slow the pace is on Capitol Hill and, frankly, how boring it becomes as we go in, week in and week out, in the House and Senate, without addressing the real issues. The President said that the pace on Capitol Hill is so slow that C-SPAN, the television network which covers our hearings, has decided to play reruns from the previous Congress so people will keep up their interest on Capitol Hill.

It is an amusing observation. I do not believe it is necessarily true, but it does reflect on the fact that for some reason we cannot get started up here this year. For some reason, Republican leadership has been unable to come forward with their offering for a budget resolution. Why would that be? Why would a party that is so dedicated to a constitutional amendment to force a balanced budget have such a difficult time meeting its statutory obligation to produce that budget resolution on the floor?

The answer is fairly obvious: Because they have set up certain conditions for a balanced budget which they themselves cannot meet. They have suggested we should include tax cuts in any kind of balanced budget scenario. Coming out for tax cuts on April 15 may be the most popular thing a politician can do. But let's be very honest about it, as Senator Dole learned in the last campaign, just promising a tax cut is not enough. The American people have to understand it is attainable, it