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## Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Lord, You know what is ahead today for us. Crucial issues await our attention. Unmade decisions demand our concentration. And we know that the choices we make will affect us, others around us, our Nation and the world.

It's with that in mind that we say with the psalmist, "Show us Your ways, O Lord; teach us Your paths. Lead us in Your truth and teach us, for You are the God of our salvation; on You we wait all the day."—Psalm 25:4-5.

May we prepare for the decisive decisions of this day by opening our minds to the inflow of Your spirit. We confess that we need Your divine wisdom to shine the light of discernment in the dimness of our limited understanding.

We praise You, that we can face the rest of this day with the inner peace of knowing that You will answer this prayer for guidance. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able assistant majority leader, Senator NICKLES of Oklahoma, is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will begin immediately 1 hour of debate on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 25, the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. Members can therefore expect a cloture vote at approximately 12 noon today. Assuming cloture is not invoked, the Senate may then proceed to S. 1173, the so-called highway transportation bill,

ISTEA legislation. It is also possible the Senate will resume consideration of the D.C. appropriations bill if the two remaining issues can be resolved. The Senate may also consider any appropriations conference reports that may be available. Therefore, Members can anticipate additional rollcall votes throughout today's session of the Senate.

### BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 1997—CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under the previous order, there will now be 1 hour equally divided in the usual form, prior to the cloture vote on S. 25.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, am I correct that the 1 hour between now and the vote at 12 is equally divided?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to yield to the Senator from Arkansas such time as he may desire, and take this opportunity to come pre-side while he speaks.

(Mr. MCCONNELL assumed the chair.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Kentucky for yielding time.

Yesterday I voted to invoke cloture on the McCain-Feingold bill. Today I will oppose that effort.

I voted for cloture because I want campaign finance reform. I want an opportunity to amend McCain-Feingold, which I believe is a seriously flawed

bill. I want a chance to vote on a reform bill and I want to ban or limit soft money. But it is now clear that there is no consensus in support of McCain-Feingold, and if we are to have serious and meaningful reform, we will and must take a different direction.

I absolutely do not support the current version of McCain-Feingold. In my opinion, and I have expressed it both publicly and privately, McCain-Feingold contains provisions that threaten free speech and pose serious constitutional problems, especially in the area of issue advocacy. These groups, which play such an important part in the political process, regardless of their affiliation, deserve to play that important role. And we must not in any way place a chill on their right of free expression and their ability to criticize their public officials. There have been abuses, no doubt about that. But it is far better for us to err on the side of freedom and to err on the side of liberty and to err on the side of the Constitution than to take a chance of passing a misguided, though popular right now, reform bill that would in fact begin that erosion of those liberties and freedoms and the right of free expression that we cherish as Americans and that we always should.

It is clear there is no consensus on McCain-Feingold and will not be. It is equally clear that repeated cloture votes on McCain-Feingold is a part of a political strategy to portray opponents of McCain-Feingold as opponents of reform. As unfortunate as it is for the American people, the McCain-Feingold bill has become so politicized that even supporters of campaign finance reform, like myself, are disgusted with the political tactics that have been used in this debate. You have to question the sincerity of a strategy that disrupts Senate business and distracts the Senate from other important business such as ISTEA, the transportation funding bill, fast track, appropriation conference reports and judicial nominations, all of these vitally important

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



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