



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 146

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2000

No. 72

Senate

The Senate met at 12:03 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

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

Almighty God, You give the hour and provide us with power; You bless each day and show us the way; You plan our week and reveal Your truth to those who seek. We pray for the Senators as they confront the busy schedule of the week ahead. Help them to trust You. Care for their families and loved ones. Lift the burdens they carry. Give them the assurance that they are never alone. You are the unseen presence in every moment, during every conversation, before each decisive decision, and throughout each meeting. Remind them of Your availability, Your affirmation, Your assurance. May this day and all the hours of the week ahead be as one constant conversation with You, a flow of prayer as natural as breathing out tension and breathing in Your strength. You are Sovereign of this Nation, Lord of this Senate, and Saviour of our lives. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SLADE GORTON, a Senator from the State of Washington, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period for morn-

ing business until 2 p.m., with Senators DURBIN and THOMAS in control of the time. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense appropriations bill. Amendments to the bill are expected to be offered and debated during today's session. Any votes ordered with respect to those amendments, however, will be scheduled to occur on Tuesday at a time to be determined. As a reminder, all first-degree amendments to the Defense appropriations bill must be filed by 3 p.m. today.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

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 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each. Under the previous order, the time until 1 p.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee. For that time, the Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

LOCAL TELEVISION AMENDMENT TO THE INTERNET NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an amendment I filed this past week to H.R. 3709, the Internet Nondiscrimination Act. This amendment has a twofold purpose. First, it highlights the need to act on S. 2097, the Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000. This critical legislation passed the Senate by a unanimous, 97-0, vote on March 30 of this year. The House version of this bill, H.R. 3615, also passed by an overwhelming 375-37 margin. Yet here we are 2½ months later with no effort to move this bipartisan legislation forward toward enactment.

In the meantime, the other body has considered an extension of the Internet tax moratorium for an additional 5 years. I supported the original Internet Nondiscrimination Act which created a 3-year moratorium on new taxes on the Internet while we considered the various ramifications of e-commerce taxation issues.

That original moratorium does not expire until next October. Yet here we are 16 months in advance of that expiration preparing to consider an additional 5-year expansion. Not only that, but with this new legislation, we renege, frankly, on a promise made under the 1998 act which grandfathered existing State taxes on Internet services. That agreement was essential to securing the overwhelming support which S. 442 ultimately received.

I believe we should not be placing taxes on access to the Internet, but that is not the issue. The issue is the implementation of already existing sales tax responsibilities. Sales tax is a critical component of State and local revenues, especially in States such as South Dakota that do not have an income tax. More than half of our State budget derives from the sales tax. That is the money that goes to education,

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S4937