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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Senator from the State of Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the guest Chaplain, Rev. Kim Swithinbank of Falls Church, VA.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Please pray with me.

Almighty God and Heavenly Father, we thank You for those who had the vision for this country as One Nation Under God. We thank You that it has become a home for people from many different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds and for the rich diversity of life and culture that flows therefrom.

However, we acknowledge, too, the challenge that this diversity presents to those who have the responsibility of governing and guiding this Nation. So we pray for this Senate and all its Members that they would be given wisdom in their decisions, the ability to hear and respond constructively to colleagues whose views may differ, and a true desire to serve all the people of this Nation.

Send Your Holy Spirit, we pray, to guide this Senate in Your ways of justice, compassion, and truth that they may exercise their duty of care for this Nation with integrity, imagination, and skill. We ask these prayers in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was unafraid to speak the truth, who had compassion for all people and who now reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER 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, May 20, 2003.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALEXANDER 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 there will be a period of morning business with the time equally divided between Senator CORNYN and the minority leader or his designee. Following morning business, the Senate will resume debate on the Department of Defense authorization bill. Two amendments are pending which relate to TRICARE. This morning, the chairman and the ranking member will be working on a time agreement as to when we may dispose of those pending amendments. Rollcall votes are, therefore, expected prior to the recess for the respective party luncheons.

Other Members who intend to offer amendments to the Defense authorization bill are encouraged to notify the chairman and ranking member in order to schedule consideration of their

amendments. Senators should expect rollcall votes on amendments throughout the day in order to make progress on this important bill. It is hoped that we can finish the bill either today or tomorrow. As a reminder, this week the Senate will consider the debt limit extension under a previous consent agreement.

Finally, I would add it is hoped that final action on the jobs and economic growth package from conference will be voted on this week. In fact, I want to notify my colleagues that it is my intention, as soon as we receive that conference report, to bring it to the floor. An agreement is being reached between the two Houses on this conference report. I am very optimistic that we will be able to address that this week.

We will have a very busy week with the Department of Defense authorization, the jobs and economic growth conference report that I just mentioned, the debt limit, and we are working to make progress on unemployment insurance which has to be addressed also this week. That expires on May 30. Thus, we are responsible for acting on that as well this week.

MEDICARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I have a few opening comments I wanted to briefly mention on an issue we are going to be talking about and debating on the floor during the last 2 weeks of next month; that is, Medicare and prescription drugs. At this point, let me make those comments, and then we will proceed with the schedule as planned.

It was in 1963 that President John F. Kennedy said, when leading the fight to enact Medicare at that time:

A proud and resourceful nation can no longer ask its people to live in constant fear of a serious illness for which adequate funds are not available.

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



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