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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

### PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who with Your grace can use misfortune or prosperity to bless us, thank You for Your loving purposes that crown our years with goodness.

Thank You, also, for disasters averted and advancements made.

Help us to see, with faith's eyes, each blessing that comes disguised as adversity and every temptation that hides beneath the mask of prosperity.

Let Your love reach others through us, as we seek to be Your ambassadors in a hurting world.

Bless our Senators. May they grow to fear, honor, love and serve You in all ways. Be their protector and teach them Your paths. May their plans prosper as they stay within the circle of Your will.

Help each of us to choose between faith and fear, courage and cynicism, integrity and dishonesty, that we would choose the better way.

We pray this in Your loving Name.  
Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore 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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will conduct a period of

morning business for up to 1 hour, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the minority leader or his designee and the second 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1072, the highway bill. It is my expectation that following the final remarks of several Senators, Chairman INHOFE will move to table the Warner amendment on seatbelts. Therefore, Senators should expect the first vote to occur prior to noon today.

As a reminder, two cloture motions were filed yesterday in relation to the highway bill. Those cloture votes are scheduled to occur tomorrow. I also remind all Senators that under cloture rules, all first-degree amendments must be filed by 1 p.m. today.

If cloture is invoked on the substitute to the highway bill on Thursday, we will remain on that until disposed of. Members may have germane and timely filed amendments considered but the Senate will act on this measure this week. Members may use some postcloture debate. However, we will remain and complete action on this measure before the weekend.

### ECONOMIC GOOD NEWS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will take a moment to comment on the economic good news that does continue to roll in. After weeks of positive indicators, the latest economic reports show that the economy is steadily expanding. Specifically, new jobs are coming online and unemployment continues to fall. According to the latest payroll survey, 112,000 new jobs were created in January, the largest monthly increase since December of the year 2000. Fully 366,000 new jobs were added over the last 5 months.

The national unemployment rate continues to decline. In general, the unemployment rate reached a level of

5.6 percent. That is the fastest 7-month decline in over a decade. In fact, unemployment is now lower than it was, on average, during the 1970s, during the 1980s, or the 1990s. It is still too high and we will continue to work aggressively to lower that unemployment rate. However, with the fastest 7-month decline in a decade, the trends are moving in the right direction.

The Council of Economic Advisers has other good news. On Monday, the Council released the latest economic report of the President. They anticipate the economy will create millions of new payroll jobs by the end of the year. They also emphasize that America is on a path to higher sustained output for years to come.

A survey released in January by the U.S. Institute for Supply Management found, for December, new orders booked by industry increased at their best rate in 50 years. The bottom line is the economy is growing, America is moving in the right direction. Contrary to its critics, President Bush's tax cuts are working.

By passing the tax cuts, we were able to reduce the unemployment rate by nearly 1 extra percentage point. We have increased the number of jobs available by as much as 2 million. And we have increased real GDP by as much as 3 percent. But there is still much to be done.

As we consider these positive numbers, we must also work to enact policies that help every American who needs a job to find a job. We must use the tools at our disposal to create the conditions which lead to job growth. That is one reason passing this highway bill is so crucial.

Every \$1 billion we invest in transportation infrastructure generates more than \$2 billion in economic activity. It also creates an additional 47,500 new jobs. Our roads, our ports, and our railroads are vital to America's economic success. Indeed, it is estimated that the highway bill will add a whopping 2 million jobs to the economy.

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



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