

Commission on Systemic Interoperability: Frederick W. Slunicka of South Dakota.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 6,  
2004

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 6. I further ask that following the prayer and the pledge, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then begin a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee, and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee; provided that at 11 a.m. the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 462, S. 2207, the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act of 2004.

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

AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMITTEES  
TO FILE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the adjournment of the Senate, it be in order until 4:30 today for committees to file reported matters.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, tomorrow, following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act of 2004. There will be no rollcall votes tomorrow, but I do encourage all Members who wish to speak on this important legislation to come to the floor during tomorrow's session.

The next rollcall vote will occur on Wednesday at 2:15 p.m. The vote will be on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act.

As a reminder, a few moments ago I filed a cloture motion on the motion to recommit the FSC/ETI JOBS bill. If cloture fails on the motion to proceed to the Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act, the cloture vote relative to the FSC/ETI JOBS bill will occur immediately thereafter. Therefore, Senators should expect the possibility of two back-to-back rollcall votes on Wednesday at 2:15 p.m.

In addition, the pension equity conference report is at the desk, having passed the House at the end of last week. I will be asking the Democratic leader to allow us to schedule a vote on that conference report this week prior to adjourning for the recess.

Finally, I add that the indecency legislation will be reported today by the Commerce Committee, and we will be looking for an opportunity to get that bill finished this week as well.

As my colleagues can tell, we have a very busy week, even though it is short. We are honoring Passover as we go into the Easter holidays. Again, it is a short week, but we are in session today, tomorrow, and the next day, and we will be voting on Wednesday and Thursday.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators HARKIN, MCCONNELL, and DOMENICI.

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

The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

DEBATING AND VOTING ON  
AMENDMENTS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I was listening with some interest to the unanimous consent proposed by the distinguished majority leader, and I thought for a minute I was back in the House of Representatives. I remember a time in the Senate when we actually introduced amendments, debated and voted on them. I thought that was what the Senate was supposed to do.

Over in the House, where I served for 10 years, they have a Rules Committee. The Rules Committee reports a bill out on the floor, and a lot of times they give them closed rules, which means you cannot add amendments. That is what I just heard propounded here. If, in fact, they get cloture, it is a closed rule. That is basically what it is.

I wish we can get back to a Senate where we debate and vote on amendments.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I want to take a little bit of time this afternoon to talk about the economy. We are all encouraged by the essentially positive job growth reported for the month of March. However, the same report noted that the overall rate of unemployment increased in March. Strange. There are major questions surrounding the quality of the jobs that were added. For instance, there was no increase whatsoever in manufacturing jobs. Indeed, for 43 consecutive months we have either lost manufacturing jobs or have seen zero job growth.

The good news on jobs appears to be largely concentrated in the services sector—jobs that generally don't pay well and many with no benefits. Meanwhile, long-term job losses have consequences.

On the 1st of April, 1.1 million jobless Americans lost their unemployment benefits. They expired because the President and the Republicans in Congress are adamantly refusing any extension of unemployment benefits. In no other comparable period on record have there been so many unemployed people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits literally overnight.

Think about it. Despite the scarcity of jobs, despite the fact the United States is currently in the longest period of secular job decline in our history, despite the fact that nearly 3 million private sector jobs have been lost in the last 3 years, despite the fact that more than 9 million Americans cannot find work, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of discouraged workers have dropped out of the labor market, despite all of these harsh realities, the President and his allies have slammed the door on any extension of unemployment benefits. I guess we can say: So much for compassionate conservatism.

In my State of Iowa, more than 8,000 people lost their unemployment benefits in the first 3 months of this year. Nearly 9,000 more Iowans will lose their benefits in the next 3 months if Congress doesn't act. This is a cruel, unnecessary blow to these unfortunate people. It is a blow to Iowa's economy, because extending unemployment benefits would have provided more than \$100 million in economic stimulus in my State alone.

When it comes to economic stimulus, this administration is all for economic stimulus when it involves tax breaks for people making more than \$200,000 a year, but it is adamantly opposed to economic stimulus when it involves people who have lost their jobs and have lost their unemployment benefits, or when it involves directly creating jobs.

What I mean by that is, the President now is threatening to veto the highway bill and, for my State alone, the more modest House highway bill would cost 12,000 jobs compared to what we passed in the Senate. The President is threatening even to veto that bill.

We are not talking just about statistics; we are talking about real people here, people who are hurting. One of those is Larry O'Brien of Cedar Falls, IA. He is 60 years old. He lost his job as a machinist when the Doerfer Engineering plant closed in October. He says he is not optimistic about his future when his unemployment runs out in 2 weeks. He already says he is not optimistic at all about getting a job. He has begun taking high blood pressure and stomach medicine every other day instead of daily. When the medicine is gone, he is afraid he won't be able to get any more. He is worried he will have to take a low-paying job with no benefits just to make ends meet—at age 60.

Larry O'Brien and millions like him are hurting. They are in real distress.