

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be notified of the Senate's action.

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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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### CONFIRMATION OF ALBERTO GONZALES

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for the affirmative vote in support of Judge Gonzales to be the next Attorney General of the United States. The final vote of 60 to 36 reflects a degree of bipartisanship.

Judge Gonzales takes on this heavy mantle of responsibility as Attorney General of the United States being very well qualified to do so. He has worked as White House Counsel, as we all know, for 4 years, and has worked closely with many, if not most, of the Senators who have had judicial nominations which have come to him. I put into the RECORD many laudatory, complimentary statements which were made about Judge Gonzales for his work as White House Counsel.

Regrettably, the incidents at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo—particularly at Abu Ghraib—are a major blemish. At Guantanamo the problem is still under investigation. Those incidents, realistically viewed, were not the responsibility of Judge Gonzales. His role was a limited one. It is up to the Department of Justice to provide legal opinions as to the scope of appropriate conduct, up to the experts in the Department of Defense, the CIA to formulate the questions. But 60 votes is good, sound support for Judge Gonzales. I am pleased to see his confirmation has been approved by the Senate. We have consented to the President's nomination.

In my capacity as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I look forward to working with Attorney General Gonzales.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes in morning business.

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

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### SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are embarking on a debate with respect to

the subject of Social Security. Last evening, the President gave a State of the Union Address and today is traveling around the country to talk about a very important issue, Social Security.

In many ways the issue is about values. There has been a great deal of discussion about values in this country, especially as it applies to political debates. I think the debate about the Social Security system is a debate about values.

Some months ago, a friend of mine died in a small community in North Dakota. I sent some flowers and called. He was a man in his eighties. He lived a great life. He was a wonderful person. I got a note from his wife. Here is what she said about her husband. She said: Oscar always helped his neighbors and he always looked out for those who did not have it so good. That is all she said. But what a wonderful description of someone's value system and of someone's life: He always helped his neighbors and always looked out for those who did not have it so good.

In many ways that prompted the origin of the Social Security program. In the 1930s, one-half of America's senior citizens were living in poverty.

When I was a young boy, my father asked me, in the town of 300 people where we lived, to drive an old fellow to the hospital. The man lived alone in a very small shack. He did not have any relatives. He lived alone, and he was quite sick. My dad asked if I would drive him to the hospital. The nearest hospital was 60 miles away.

I went over and picked him up and drove him to the hospital. He never made it back. But this old man, who was then sick and did not have very much, lived on Social Security. The only thing he had was a small Social Security check, but it was the difference for that man between not having money to buy food, not having money to live, and being able to survive.

I know—and my colleagues know—how critically important Social Security has been to so many of America's elderly. Yes, I am talking about the people who built this country. I am talking about the people who built America's schools and roads and worked in America's factories. They are the people who turned this country into the strongest economy in the world, a beacon of hope for all people. Then they grow old and retire, and they reach their declining income years. The question is, what is there for them?

The one thing that for 70 years has always been there for them is something called Social Security. No, it is not an investment program. It is an insurance program. The money that goes into the Social Security system comes out of paychecks in something called the FICA tax. The FICA is not for investment. The "I" stands for "insurance." Social Security has been a core insurance program. It provides insur-

ance with respect to benefits for those who retire. It provides benefits for those who are disabled, and it provides benefits for dependent children. For example, when the breadwinner of the house lost their life, dependent children received the benefits. So it is more than a retirement program, but it is also that. It is the risk-free portion of retirement. It is the piece that for 70 years the American elderly could count on. They would know it would be there no matter what.

Some have never liked it and have always wanted to take it apart. There was a memorandum leaked about 3 weeks ago from the White House that was interesting. It was from the chief strategist who is putting together this program to privatize a portion of Social Security. That memorandum said toward the end something that was very interesting. It said: This is the first time in six decades we have a chance to win this fight on Social Security. Of course, the whole implication of that is, we have never liked it, but we have had to bear with it. Now we have a chance to deal with it.

The administration, as announced by the President last evening, wants to make some changes. He says the Social Security system is in crisis. He predicted last night that at a certain time the Social Security system would be bankrupt. But it is not in crisis, and it will not be bankrupt. He is simply wrong.

Our colleague, former Senator Pat Moynihan, used to say: Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but not everyone is entitled to their own set of facts. I hope we can discuss this issue using the same set of facts, at least.

Let me begin by saying something most everyone would acknowledge. In the year 1935, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the law that created Social Security to protect our elderly from what he called "poverty-ridden old age," one half of the senior citizens in this country were impoverished. Now it is slightly less than 10 percent.

Has the Social Security program worked? Of course, it has. It has been a remarkable program that has lifted tens of millions of senior citizens out of poverty. It has worked over the years unflinchingly.

The President says it is in crisis. It is set to be bankrupt at some point. Therefore, let's make some changes. He says: Let's create private accounts with a portion of the Social Security system and invest it in the stock market.

What he didn't say last night was how he would do that. He would be required to borrow \$1 to \$3 trillion at a time when we are up to our neck in debt with the highest budget deficits in the history of America. He would borrow \$1 to \$3 trillion in additional funding, invest it in private accounts in the stock market, cut Social Security benefits at the same time, and say that somehow this is going to be better for our elderly. With great respect—and I