



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2005

No. 134

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, most Holy, how precious and steadfast is Your love. We take refuge in the shadow of Your wings and find peace in the blessing of being Your children.

Your love has given us this day and the opportunities to serve. Your love has provided us with challenges that test us and make us stronger. Your love enables us to find freedom from guilt and hope for our future. Help us not to miss Your precious presence or forget to abide in Your peace.

Give the Members of this body strength for today's journey. May they approach challenges and opportunities with reverence and respect.

Help us all to comprehend more fully what it means to rest in Your love. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN ENSIGN 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, October 20, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENSIGN thereupon 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, in a few minutes we will resume debate on the Transportation, Treasury, and HUD appropriations bill. We had a full day yesterday, with amendments being offered and voted on and, therefore, we made very good progress. I believe the two managers are looking to wrap up the bill soon, and it is possible we could complete action on the bill during today's session. I strongly believe we can do just that.

We have several Senators coming to the floor this morning to discuss their amendments, and I hope the two managers can work with the amendment sponsors or schedule those amendments for votes. Senators should expect votes throughout the course of the day. As I mentioned all week, if we cannot finish the bill today, we will be voting on the bill tomorrow. But I would encourage people to allow us to finish today.

We will have done, after we complete this bill, 11 appropriations bills. I thank once again Chairman THAD COCHRAN for his tremendous leadership, as well as his entire committee, in leading forth on these appropriations bills. We do have one remaining bill, the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, and I plan on going to that bill following the completion of the Transportation-Treasury bill. I thank my colleagues

for the progress we have made over the course of the week, and on all these appropriations bills.

PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on a separate issue, today, several of my Senate colleagues and I will be hosting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and members of his Cabinet here in the United States Capitol.

I have met with President Abbas on several occasions, most recently during my trip to the Middle East in May and his visit to Washington later that month a few weeks after our visit there.

President Abbas is here to discuss ways to move the Middle East peace process forward, and how both sides can fulfill their obligations under the roadmap.

Less than 2 months ago, Israel completed its disengagement of settlers and soldiers from all 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank. The disengagement was conducted in a smooth and generally peaceful manner. This was a bold and courageous move by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Now President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority face the challenge of creating a secure and stable environment in Gaza. It is vital, it is critical that they succeed. The Palestinian people need to feel tangible improvements in their everyday lives, in their daily welfare, and they need to see that only peaceful dialog and negotiation can lead to a more prosperous future.

While coordination between the Israelis and Palestinians during the disengagement was not ideal, it did exist. Prior to the withdrawal, Israeli and Palestinian security officials worked to ensure a peaceful disengagement and to establish a basis for returning to the roadmap.

Recently, however, events in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have

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



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