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Senate

The Senate met at 9:44 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Creator and Redeemer, we praise You today for Your goodness and for Your wonderful works to the children of humanity. You satisfy the longing soul and fill hungry spirits with goodness. Thank You for Your many blessings: for life and health, for grace and friendship, for praise and worship.

Equip our Senators for the challenges of this day. Empower them to seize the opportunities to make a difference in our Nation and the life of our world. May their best energies not be squandered in partisan politics. Instead, give each lawmaker the courage to understand what is right and the willingness to do it.

Give us all a faith that will discern the new things You are doing in our world.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM DEMINT 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, March 28, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM DEMINT, a Senator from the State of South Carolina, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. DEMINT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are not yet in morning business.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for not to exceed 1 hour, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the minority leader or his designee, and the remaining 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, seeing no one from the minority here at the moment, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed for a few moments in majority time in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO ERMA ORA JAMES BYRD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the King James version of the Bible tells us that shortly after the creation of man:

The Lord God said "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helpmate for him."

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.

It continues that "he took one of his ribs . . . and . . . made he a woman."

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.

The verse concludes:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Mr. President, for almost 69 years, ROBERT BYRD and Erma Ora James Byrd have been one—since their marriage on May 29, 1937. And today I rise to offer my heartfelt condolences to the Senator from West Virginia, ROBERT BYRD, on the passing of his dear wife.

Senator BYRD has served for nearly 50 years in the Senate as our cornerstone—a reminder of this body's mission and duty. Sadly, the cornerstone of the Senate has lost the keystone of his life. Erma Ora James Byrd went home to be with her Creator on this Saturday past, at the age of 88.

Erma Byrd was born in Floyd County, VA, and moved to the coalfields of West Virginia as a child with her family. Her father was a coal miner and came to the State to work.

As a Kentuckian—another State of coal miners—I was always moved to hear Senator BYRD proudly declare that he had, in fact, married a coal miner's daughter.

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



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