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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, You have said that the truth will set us free. We thank You that Your idea of freedom leads to harmony and not discord, to consensus and not conflict.

Liberate our lawmakers from deceptions that distort and misrepresent facts. Teach them the fine art of conciliation, and inspire them to choose rational roads instead of emotional dead ends. May they commit their time, effort, and resources in formulating policy which is in accordance with Your will.

Lord, lift them above partisan rancor, and give them the power to walk in Your light, to act in Your strength, to think with Your wisdom, to speak with Your truth, and to live in Your love. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN 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. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 28, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1591

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous order with respect to the timing of the three rollcall votes this morning be modified to provide that the votes be delayed until 11:45 a.m., under the same sequence as previously ordered and the other provisions as previously ordered; that following the 60 minutes of debate, the amendments be set aside and that Senator COBURN then be recognized to debate his pending amendments and that all other provisions remain in effect.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, as indicated, we are going to have a change of schedule, but it will work out just fine. I have spoken with the distinguished Republican leader. We are going to do what we can to finish this bill today. It is extremely important. It will give the House and Senate 2 full days prior to the recess to have this important bill worked on in regard to the conference that must take place. Hopefully, the first day or two that we get back after the break, we can have a conference report to vote on. I hope we can do that. That would be extremely important if we could.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 997 AND S. 1001

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before I turn to my distinguished Republican colleague, it is my understanding that there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bills by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 997) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

A bill (S. 1001) to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills, en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the first vote will be with respect to the Wyden county payments amendment, then the Burr county payments amendment, followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the bill. Members have 10 minutes to file amendments.



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