



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007

No. 59

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, April 16, 2007, at 2 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Lord of humanity, forgive our foolish ways. We have tried to enjoy freedom without duty and have attempted to receive forgiveness without true repentance. Forgive us. We have received without gratitude and without giving in return. Forgive us. We have sought for victory without wisdom or sacrifice. Show us the folly of our ways. Transform our contrition into exemplary living for Your glory.

Today, bless our Senators as they labor for You and country. Create in them hearts fit to be filled with Your presence and minds ready to think Your thoughts. Go before them to show the way.

We pray in Your merciful 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 12, 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning there will be a period of 60 minutes for morning business. The majority will control the first 30 minutes and the Republicans the second 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to S. 372, the Intelligence authorization bill, and vote soon thereafter on a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. I have been advised that the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Senator ROCKEFELLER, will be on the floor and will speak prior to the vote.

Later today, I will have more to say about the schedule for the remainder of

this week. A lot will depend on what happens in the motion to proceed on the Intelligence bill.

FIRST 100 DAYS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last November, the call for change in Washington rang out from coast to coast. The Presiding Officer was one of the results of that historic vote on November 7, which has been good for the people of the State of Maryland and for the people of this country. The American people called for us to put partisanship aside in pursuit of common ground, to end the culture of corruption, to cast away the rubber stamp, and, most importantly, to change the course in Iraq. This Congress has heard that call. As we reach our 100th day, we are well on our way to delivering a government as good and honest as the people it serves.

From the very first day, we knew all our progress would depend on renewing the people's faith in the integrity of Congress. And just as an aside, Mr. President, I would note that while I am not much of a poll watcher, it was brought to my attention earlier this week that the polls showed the American people are much more supportive of the Congress than they were just a few months ago. A lot of that is as a result of what we have been able to do here.

Our first order of business was passing the toughest lobbying ethics reform legislation in the Nation's history, and we have done that. We voted to give working Americans a much deserved and long overdue raise in the

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S4399

minimum wage. We passed a continuing resolution that enacted tough spending limitations, and earmarks were eliminated. We passed every single recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, after they languished in the Congress for years with nothing being done. We passed a responsible pay-as-you-go budget that cut taxes for working people and invested more in education, veterans, and health care. And I might say that as a result of Senator JOHNSON being incapacitated for the next few weeks, we were able to pass that budget even though the margin here was 50 to 49. We had two brave Republicans to join with us on this very sound budget, which we appreciate very much—Senators SNOWE and COLLINS—and it was done even though in the past the Republicans couldn't pass the budget with a much larger majority than we have.

Yesterday, we passed legislation offering the promise of stem cell research in a responsible, ethical way, with 66 votes—or actually 63, but three Democratic Senators were unable to be here. They would have voted for that. So 66—1 short of being able to override the promised veto of the President. I think it is very possible we will get this bill, and it will be the first to override the President's veto. I think we can do that. There must be another Republican who will step forward, in a profile in courage, and vote with us and give hope to millions of Americans.

In the weeks ahead, we will turn our focus to reducing drug costs for senior citizens. That is going to be a battle because the wealthy, strong, powerful pharmaceutical industry has hired nearly every lobbyist in town—those with Gucci shoes and chauffeur-driven limousines—and they have been flooding this Capitol to prevent the American people from having the benefit of Medicare being able to negotiate for lower priced drugs. The big HMOs, the health care providers, and the insurance companies can but not Medicare. What does that say? It says the pharmaceutical industry is way too powerful. But we are going to have a shot at it. We will see how much power the pharmaceutical industry has over the Senate. On this side of the aisle, they have very little power, but we will see how much power they have over on the other side of the aisle. So we are going to try to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower priced drugs.

We are going to do our very best to develop a new strategy for energy, and we are going to act as quickly as we can to see what we can come up with regarding comprehensive immigration reform. We passed something here last year. We did it without the help of the President. With the help of the President this year, maybe we can do better. I certainly hope so. He says he wants to help, but actions speak louder than words.

All the while, during these first 100 days, as I mentioned, we retired the rubber stamp and restored Congress to

its rightful, constitutionally mandated role as a coequal branch of Government. The Bush administration is finally being held accountable for some of its failures—and I say some of them, whether the political manipulation at the Department of Justice, where we learned today that all the e-mails dealing with their so-called political computers appear to have been destroyed or hidden—just part of the manipulations of this very historic Justice Department, and I mean historic in the sense of being the most corrupt ever, the most inept ever. We have also been able to look at this administration for its failures at Walter Reed, the deplorable conditions at Walter Reed, and the tragic mishandling of the war in Iraq.

No message was more clear in November than the call for a new direction in Iraq. Yet, in the months that have passed, President Bush has only dug us deeper, deeper in this intractable civil war going on in Iraq. Now we hear the Army will be forced to put further strain on the troops by extending their tours of duty from 12 to 15 months. Next, the Marine Corps will have added time to their already strained forces.

Today, although you didn't read it in the paper because it happened since the papers went to print, a bridge in Iraq was blown up right in the city of Baghdad, with cars piled up off of that. They do not know how many are dead as a result of that. In the Green Zone, inside the Iraqi Parliament, a bomb went off today, killing members of Parliament. They do not know how many, maybe only a couple. We don't know at this stage. But many were injured right in the Iraqi Parliament.

Policing the civil war was never supposed to be the mission, and every day the price we pay grows worse and worse—3,300 American lives lost, tens of thousands more wounded, and about \$½ trillion spent. That is \$½ trillion that could go to health care for the 47 million Americans who have no health care and to look at what we are going to do about the children dropping out of school and to do something to provide monies for the Leave No Child Behind Act, which could help education around our country. This \$½ trillion spent, yet no end in sight, according to our President, for the troops. More of the same.

It takes more than saying we support our troops to make it so, and in these first 100 days, this Congress put words to action. Our emergency supplemental appropriations bill gives the troops every single penny requested by the commanders on the ground, plus it gives more than the President requested. It provides a reasonable, realistic strategy to draw them out from the crossfire of another country's civil war, and it provides funds that the President's budget left out to make right the unconscionable situations at Walter Reed and other VA medical facilities, because our troops do deserve that support. The support of the Amer-

ican troops doesn't end when they leave Iraq; it must continue when they come home to American soil.

No single piece of legislation will bring this tragic war to a climax. The American people understand that, but they elected us to lead the way, to chart a new course, showing President Bush the way forward, and in these first 100 days, we have done precisely that on the war in Iraq and the issues here at home.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to do the very best we can to change the direction at home and abroad.

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. There will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first 30 minutes controlled by the majority leader or his designee and the last 30 minutes controlled by the Republican leader or his designee.

The Senator from New York is recognized.

FIRST 100 DAYS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to join our distinguished leader, my friend, Senator REID, and to thank him and our whip, Senator DURBIN, for their leadership and commitment to this body and to the American people.

Last November, the American people asked us to do three things: No. 1, change course in Iraq; No. 2, make middle-class families' lives a little better; and No. 3, oversee an administration that is out of touch and has had virtually no oversight for 6 years.

Over the past 100 days, we have made significant progress. Change, accountability, and oversight have become more than words; they have become our mission. We are demanding the change in Iraq that the American people want. The President is ordering us to send him a blank check to continue to fund a failed policy, no questions asked. In fact, anyone who asks questions, their integrity is often impugned. That is because the President thinks the only way to support our troops is to rubberstamp what he wants.

We in the Congress are keeping faith with the American people. We have passed a bill that funds our troops and at the same time changes our mission from policing a civil war to focusing on counterterrorism. We have worked on resolutions that offer alternatives to the President's head-in-the-sand policy in Iraq. We have held hearings to ask