

morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume consideration of S. 386.

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

#### PROGRAM

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, tomorrow, the Senate will resume consideration of the Fraud Enforcement Recovery Act, and rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day in relation to the pending amendments. Earlier today, the majority leader announced if the Senate is unable to complete action on the bill tomorrow, the Senate would remain in session through the weekend.

In addition, the Senate will turn to the consideration of the House message to request a conference with respect to the budget resolution when it is available. Senators should expect rollcall votes in relation to motions to instruct the conferees during tomorrow's session.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order following the remarks of Senator DURBIN.

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

#### LADDA "TAMMY" DUCKWORTH CONFIRMATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Alaska for yielding to me and I also thank him for reading into the RECORD the approval of the nomination of Tammy Duckworth as Assistant Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Veterans' Administration. She is going to have an exceptional responsibility as the chief communicator for the VA, but I cannot think of a better person to fill that job.

Tammy Duckworth's life is one of service to her country. She was born into a military family. The daughter of a marine, she is a second generation Purple Heart recipient.

Tammy started her own military career by joining ROTC in graduate school. She was commissioned in the Army Reserve in 1992. After completing helicopter flight school, she joined the Illinois National Guard in 1996.

In 2004, Tammy was a doctoral student when she made a personal request to be deployed to Iraq. On the afternoon of November 12, 2004, she was on her last mission of the day flying a helicopter for the Illinois National Guard in Baghdad. Her Blackhawk helicopter was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade that ripped through the cockpit and hit Tammy in the legs. Not realizing the degree of her injuries, she

tried to assist her copilot in landing the damaged aircraft.

Once on the ground, her crew loaded Tammy onto a second helicopter. Tammy's next memory was waking up at Walter Reed with her husband, Bryan Bowsbey, also a member of the Illinois National Guard, by the side of her bed. She learned then that the incident in that helicopter had cost her both of her legs and shattered her right arm.

Well, 10 weeks later, after that horrendous experience, I met Tammy Duckworth. Each year, the President gives a State of the Union Address, and it has been my tradition to invite Illinois soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines who are recuperating in local military hospitals as my guests. That year, they told me there was a MAJ Tammy Duckworth from the Illinois National Guard who would join me. I will never forget it. She was in a wheelchair and in full dress uniform, with both legs missing, her arm in a sling, and her husband behind the wheelchair, and she had a big smile on her face. She came in and introduced herself. We got to know one another and spoke. We left my office then and went to an adjoining office for a press conference, where I introduced my guest to the Illinois press.

A number of people showed up from the Illinois media, and one was a friend of mine, a reporter for the Chicago Sun Times, Lynn Sweet. Lynn asked a hard question—an important one, but a very hard question for someone who is a disabled veteran having lost both of her legs in combat just a few weeks ago. Lynn asked of Major Duckworth: What do you think of those people who object to this war and complain that we never should have been in this war in the first place? What do you think of those who protest that this war should not have ever started?

Tammy paused for a moment and said: Isn't that why we are fighting this war, so that people in America can express their point of view regardless of whether they agree with this Government or not?

I was breathless at the end of that. I thought I cannot believe that answer from a woman who has been through what she had been through. I caught my breath and said: Are there any other questions? No. Afterward, I told Tammy that was the most amazing answer I can ever recall hearing from anybody. We had a good evening. I took her down to the Senate dinner before the State of the Union Address and introduced her to many colleagues, including JOHN MCCAIN, TOM HARKIN, DANNY INOUBE, and many others. She was my guest at the State of the Union Address. I kept in touch with her.

Tammy went through rehab. The Walter Reed Military Hospital did an extraordinary job fitting her with computer-assisted legs so she could walk with crutches. She made a miraculous recovery. I kept in touch for the next several months, and when I visited

Walter Reed, a lot of those buff marines, who had lost a limb, said every time they were grunting and groaning and weren't sure they could go forward, somebody would say, "Come on, Tammy," and they would keep pushing forward. She became an inspiration to everybody. At the time, she was the most seriously injured woman veteran in the Iraq war.

I kept in touch with her, and a few months later I called her with a rather bold suggestion. I said: Tammy, have you ever thought about running for office? She said: Never. I said: Would you consider it? We have a vacancy in a congressional seat in Illinois where you live. She called me back and said: Bryan and I have a lot of questions to ask. I said I would be glad to try to answer them.

At the end of the day, she became a candidate for Congress—just 13 months after she had been shot down over Iraq. She ran a spirited campaign. She did not succeed, but she brought together the most amazing group of friends and supporters and volunteers I had ever seen. She was asked to head up the Illinois Veterans Affairs Department, where she did a terrific job. She started several first-in-the-Nation programs in that department: the Illinois Warrior Assistance Program, requiring additional screening for PTSD and traumatic brain injury; the GI Loan for Heroes Mortgage Loan Program; the VetsCash grant program, which provided over \$5 million in grants to service organizations; and Veterans Adaptive Activities Day, bringing together Illinois organizations specializing in adaptive recreations and sports.

Tammy is so self-sufficient and independent, it is hard to believe. She has her own pickup truck, which she likes to motor around in, which is all set up for her to use. She is so independent that the time came when her husband was activated to serve in Iraq, and instead of asking for special consideration because she would have been left alone in her rehabilitative state, she said: He wants to serve, and he should. He left for a year, and she kept things together while he was gone. She did a great job in the process.

When President Obama was elected, he called on Tammy to bring her ethic and record of public service to Washington. I know she is going to do a great job.

She was an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran. She knows the difficulties servicemembers can face in the battlefield. As a recipient of VA military care at Walter Reed, you can bet the patients won't have a stronger advocate in the VA and for the VA facilities themselves. She uses them today and understands the frustration bureaucracies can create. She will be a real fighter for veterans. She has the perspective of somebody who has worked with and for veterans and is one herself.

As the spouse of a servicemember who deployed to combat, she certainly