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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Spirit of God, descend upon our hearts and bless the Members of this body in their ministry of legislative work. Give them the ethical and spiritual insight to see beyond the faulty and superficial so that they will accomplish Your will on Earth. Lord, turn their weights into wings by increasing their strength and gladdening their spirit. Open doors of opportunity for them to render service that will empower the powerless and unshackle the oppressed. Make them eager to extend the helping hand of kindness and friendship that will send rays of hope far down the future's broadening way. Give them Your wisdom to make creative decisions and Your power to offset the pressures of the demanding life they are called to live.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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 letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 22, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico 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, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill. The time until 12 is for debate on the Thune amendment, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators THUNE and DURBIN or their designees. At 12 today, the Senate will proceed to a rollcall vote in relation to the Thune amendment. Under an agreement reached a couple of days ago, there will be 60 affirmative votes required for the adoption of the amendment.

As a reminder to all Senators, there will be a live quorum at 2 p.m. today for the Court of Impeachment of Samuel Kent. Senators should be in the Chamber at that time. There will be a delegation from the House that will appear at that time.

Additional rollcall votes are expected throughout the afternoon as the Senate considers amendments to the Defense authorization bill. Yesterday, the managers, Senators LEVIN and MCCAIN, asked for an 11 a.m. filing deadline for first-degree amendments. We hope this will be accomplished with a consent agreement this morning.

I will later today meet with the distinguished Republican leader and make some decisions as to how we will finish our work the rest of this week and the next 2 weeks and to find out if we will have to work any weekends. We have a number of things we are required to do. I gave the Republican leader last week an idea of what I think we need to accomplish. Without going into detail now, I will be meeting with him later to see if we can figure out a way to do it as easily as possible. We have two weekends until the August recess. I hope it is not necessary that we work weekends, but it is certainly possible. I hope we can end when we need to end. We have some things we have to do before we leave. I hope that can be accomplished. I am confident that with some cooperation it can.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the choices in this health care debate should be about which ideas contain the best solutions to fix a severely broken system. The choices in this health care debate should be about how best to lower costs while increasing quality of care and how best to bring security and stability back to health care. The choices in this health care debate should be about how to make it easier to stay healthy. But for some, the choice seems to be whether we should do anything, whether to act at all. This is a false choice. That is not a choice we have. Not acting is not an option.

A week or so ago, the Republican leader in the House of Representatives said:

I think we all understand that we've got the best health care system in the world.

Unlike the vast majority of Americans, he seems pretty content with the status quo.

Just this week, the junior Senator from South Carolina said that we just need to "get out of the way and allow the market to work." In other words,

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



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