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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, place Your judgments in the Earth so that the world's inhabitants will learn righteousness. Today, give our Senators a strong and vivid sense that You are by their side. In their downsitting and uprising, make them aware of Your presence. By Your grace, Lord, let no thoughts enter their hearts that might hinder communion with You, and let no word leave their lips that is not meant for Your ears. Surround them with the shield of Your favor and give them mutual trust and loyalty for their relationships with one another.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business for an hour. The Republicans will control the first half, and the majority will control the final half. Following that morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the immigration bill.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. for our weekly caucus

meetings. At 3 o'clock there will be four rollcall votes in relation to amendments to the immigration bill.

Mr. President, I would simply add on that, I have had a number of calls already this morning saying: You cannot have the votes then. I have this. We have meetings. We would like to have the votes at 4 o'clock.

This bill, we have to move forward on it. I was very happy we were able to get consent to have these four votes starting at 3 o'clock today. Time is of the essence on this legislation. I have been patient. We have all been patient waiting to see what amendments people want to offer. I want to make sure that on some of these major issues people have had the time to work through them. We know some of the issues are difficult. I have been told Senator HOEVEN and Senator CORKER are trying to work with the eight bipartisan Senators to come up with something they believe is important for them to vote on. I have no problem with that, but I am just telling everybody, as I have now for quite a long time, that we are going to either file cloture on this on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. We have to move forward on this legislation.

So I urge people to work together to come up with whatever amendments they believe are important. Of course, we are all looking at this major issue. I have talked to the Republicans' Gang of 8 and the Democrats' Gang of 8. They are working on something dealing with border security. I am not telling anyone what to do other than to do it as quickly as you can.

The time has come to make decisions on this important piece of legislation. We say we have been on it 2 weeks. We have really been on it longer than that. That first week after the break there were meetings going on all over this Capitol on what we should do with immigration.

So I would hope people understand that this may not be one of our normal

weekends where we shoot out of town to go back to wherever we come from. We have to move forward on this legislation.

BUDGET CONFERENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I talked yesterday at some length on the budget. It is important. We are approaching 3 months where we have not been able to go to conference on this budget. This is so extremely important. I spent yesterday morning at the NIH. I was not able to meet with all the heads of the Institutes, but I met with four of them, plus Dr. Collins, who runs the NIH, the National Institutes of Health.

I will have more to say about this later, but South Africa, England, France, India—China is increasing their spending by almost 25 percent for programs just like we have at NIH. What are we doing at NIH? We are cutting spending. They have been flat-funded since about 2004. With the stimulus bill, which is now going on 5 years ago, we gave them a shot in the arm because of Senator Specter. But that money has long since been gone. They are headed downhill, and they have been for several years now. These wonderful scientists we have there are leaving.

One of the scientists from the University of Michigan, who, by the way, is best friends with my chief of staff, is basically staying away from NIH because you cannot have—and he is an expert, one of if not the leading expert in the world on melanoma. He is not making application for NIH grants anymore because they cannot do scientific research when it is only available for a year or two. So I hope we can move forward on this budget conference and get something done on this to set the Nation's financial problems in the right direction. We are not going to get anything done unless we are able to get something done on the budget. We cannot do this.

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



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