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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Lord of all time, keep us from being distracted from what's important today by the tyranny of the urgent. Help us prioritize the demands of this day. Give us the courage to live on what You will show us is on Your agenda. May we deem urgent what glorifies You, brings us into a deeper relationship with You, and serves the needs of people. Our desire is to live with an inner serenity about the pressures of the day. Rather than thrashing about to keep afloat, free us to float uplifted by the blessed buoyancy of Your power. Carry us by the currents of Your spirit. Guide us through the rocks in the river, some of which are hidden beneath the surface.

Lord, we want to be inner-directed people rather than those who are pulled in all directions. Make us so secure in You that we will have strength to discover and do Your will. Give us courage to say, "No" to some things and "Yes" to others on the basis of Your guidance in our minds and hearts.

We press on to this day with our only concern being that we might miss Your best in the busy schedule of the day. So now quiet any dissonance in us, overcome any resistance in our wills, and fill any emptiness in our hearts. Through our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able majority leader, Senator LOTT from Mississippi, is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Good morning, Mr. President.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 543, the Volunteer Protection Act. Debate on the motion to proceed will continue until 12:30 p.m., with the time equally divided between Senator COVERDELL, or his designee, and the ranking member, or his designee. From 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., the Senate will be in recess for the weekly policy luncheons. By a previous order, at 2:15 p.m., there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 543, the Volunteer Protection Act. If cloture is invoked, there will be 1 hour of debate, followed by a vote on the motion to proceed. As a reminder, a second cloture motion was filed last night on the motion to proceed to S. 543. Therefore, if cloture is not invoked at 2:15 p.m., there will be a second vote on Wednesday. Hopefully, cloture will be invoked today, and the Senate can begin consideration of this important bill.

I note again, this is debate on the motion to proceed on a bill that seems to me we would certainly want to pass in short order to provide some basic protection for volunteers who serve on boards of charitable organizations, volunteer organizations. That is the spirit of what we have seen in Philadelphia for the last 3 days, and yet, if you volunteer in America, you run the risk of being sued. Maybe we can work out some of the concerns that lawyers may have about this bill. But it seems like it is the fair thing to do.

We have other work we need to do. I am sure Senators would like to turn to the supplemental appropriations bill as soon as possible. We hope that bill will be ready for consideration Wednesday or Thursday, but we have to dispose of the Volunteer Protection Act first. There are other concerns that we think need to be addressed. So we will be working with the minority leader to see if we can come to some agreement

on how we can conclude these very important pieces of legislation.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 543, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 543) to provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.

The Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The time between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. shall be equally divided between the Senator from Georgia [Mr. COVERDELL] or his designee, and the Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] or his designee. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, just for clarification, we are debating, in essence, whether the other side will allow us to move to the Volunteer Protection Act. That is the beginning of something we describe in the Senate as a filibuster, an attempt to block consideration of the Volunteer Protection Act.

I will take a moment just to describe the cast of characters here. What we have is a community that can perhaps be best described as Little League baseball that is trying to find relief from our current litigious society because they claim and can substantiate

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



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