

the Democratic leader or their designees to offer amendments from the respective list, and the Senate would then proceed to votes in relation to the amendments as provided for under the Budget Act, with 2 minutes for debate equally divided prior to the vote, with relevant second-degree amendments; provided that no later than 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26, the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of S. Con. Res. 23, with no intervening action or debate.

I further ask consent that immediately upon passage of the resolution, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res 95, the House budget resolution; further, all after the resolving clause be stricken and the text of S. Con. Res. 23, as amended, be inserted in lieu thereof, the resolution be adopted, and the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House, and the Chair then be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to thank all of our colleagues, especially colleagues on my side of the aisle who have a great deal of skepticism, I would say, about this particular proposal. I think it is equally clear that there is skepticism on both sides.

We have been through a good deal of debate over the last several days. I think we have made progress. This will accommodate adequate progress on both sides. I will say, as the majority leader and I have discussed on a few occasions, that this agreement requires a good deal of trust on both sides. We are trusting our Republican colleagues to work with us to accommodate the consideration of 40 amendments. They are trusting us that we will share with them those amendments, that we will be able to work through them, that they will have an opportunity to review them, and that we will complete our work at 4 o'clock.

So it does require cooperation and a level of trust that I hope will set a standard and example for other action we take later on. So I hope that our colleagues will continue to cooperate in the course of the next couple of days.

I have designated the ranking member of the Budget Committee and our extraordinary assistant Democratic leader. They have been tasked with the responsibility of determining these 40 amendments. So we will work over the weekend and we will, as this agreement requires, provide those amendments on Monday.

I appreciate very much the cooperation and the trust of the distinguished majority leader and the chairman of the Budget Committee. This certainly is the best way to accommodate the needs of both of our caucuses. I congratulate my colleagues for doing so.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will comment and then turn to the chairman of the Budget Committee. I want to briefly say this and close my re-

marks by expressing my appreciation to our caucus and to the chairman of the Budget Committee, and especially to the leadership on the other side of the aisle and the ranking member. As most people know, we have been negotiating and discussing in the last several hours how to bring to closure what we all know is a big challenge, given the number of amendments that we have before us.

We put our heads together and, after a lot of conversation and, as the Democratic leader said, basing a lot of what we are setting out to do over the next several days on trust, came up with an agreement that is not perfect on either side, but it is the best we can do to give some finite closure to this challenge.

In addition, we have had a very good week. It is late on a Friday night and our colleagues have worked very hard. Indeed, we had very good and productive discussions. We have done a number of amendments. I congratulate the ranking member and chairman in bringing those to the floor and having good debate today.

In addition to that, the resolution we agreed to sent a very important signal to our troops, our military, and our Commander in Chief: our gratitude, respect, and support.

So we have actually accomplished a lot this week. We were unable to fulfill what I had initially hoped, and that was to pass the budget resolution by late tonight. But given the fact that at this hour we still have many outstanding amendments, I am very pleased with the agreement. I thank the leadership and the chairman and ranking member.

Mr. NICKLES. If the leader will yield, I have a couple of comments. One, I appreciate the cooperation of the leader and Senator DASCHLE and Senator REID and Senator CONRAD. But just for the information of our colleagues, we are going to have a very tough couple of days, a lot of work to do on Tuesday and Wednesday. I urge our colleagues to be ready to go. I think the order called for us going into session at 9:30 Tuesday morning.

Today, we worked long and hard. We had about 15 rollcall votes, and I believe we accepted probably another 15 amendments, counting the last 7. It is going to be very challenging work. So I urge our colleagues to be notified of the fact that they need to be here at 9:30 Tuesday morning and expect a long day—a lot of votes on Tuesday and a lot of votes on Wednesday. It is going to take the cooperation of all Members for us to meet this ambitious goal. It will not be easy and it probably won't be very pretty. Hopefully, we will be successful in meeting our objectives. There is nothing in the unanimous consent agreement saying we have to agree to 40 amendments?

Mr. DASCHLE. No; we tried that, Mr. President.

Mr. NICKLES. I just wanted to make sure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first of all, the leaders have indicated there has to be trust on both sides. The chairman of the committee has shown himself to be trustworthy in these long, difficult negotiations this whole week. We had instances last night where I had to make a decision that could have disadvantaged our side and did it because that was keeping a promise. The chairman of the committee had to make a decision today that could have disadvantaged his side, but he did it to keep faith with the commitment that he made.

I want colleagues on our side to know the chairman of the committee has repeatedly demonstrated trustworthiness. That is important to the functioning of this body. We are going to have to really work together very closely to resolve these matters.

Let me say in conclusion to our colleagues on this side, we have 135 amendments pending. We only have 40 spots. That means Senators are going to have to give up what is their right to offer amendments. That is the most precious right any Senator has. So we understand why they guard that right with real fervor at times. But I hope people understand there is no way we can fit 135 into 40. It is going to take restraint, and it is going to take trust.

I think together over these next days we will demonstrate we are worthy of this body we serve and this country we love.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in wrap-up a little bit later tonight, we will be more specific, but for our colleagues, on Monday we will not be having votes, but we will be in session. We will talk about the day. We will not be voting on Monday. We need to have everybody here on time Tuesday because we will be voting in a vote-athon, as we have come to call it, starting early in the morning. We want people to make plans accordingly.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

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