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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today, once again, we are pleased to have as our guest Chaplain the Reverend Charles V. Antonicelli, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Washington, DC.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise Your name today. With the Psalmist we proclaim, "Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God while I live."

We thank You for the gift of life and for the talents and abilities You have given us. Help us, Lord, to put them to good use so that Your glory might shine through us.

Bless the men and women of this Senate as they seek to do Your will this day, bless their staff members who do so much work behind the scenes, and bless the pages who serve in this Chamber. Help them all to know the importance of their work here and let them know Your goodness to them.

We ask this in Your holy 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. FRIST. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period for morning

business until 10 a.m. At 10 a.m., the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, the prescription drug benefits bill. Chairman GRASSLEY will be in the Chamber at that time and will be prepared to offer the necessary changes to the legislation. It is then hoped we will begin an orderly consideration of amendments.

I know there are a number of Members on both sides of the aisle considering offering amendments. I encourage Senators to work with the chairman and ranking member, the managers of the bill, to schedule consideration of those amendments. As amendments are offered, we will begin scheduling votes in order to make progress on this bill over the course of this week.

As I had laid out previously, we will finish the legislation prior to the July 4 recess. I look forward to substantive debate as we go forward in addressing this bill.

We will have rollcall votes throughout today's session. For the information of all Senators so they can plan for the next week and a half, we will have votes on Friday and next Monday on this bill. We have had two good days of substantive opening statements where Members have been allowed to discuss their views on this important program of Medicare, how we can best strengthen it, how we can best improve it, and at the same time add a substantial prescription drug benefit in a way that can be sustained over the next 10, 15, 20 years, where we know there is going to be this unprecedented demographic shift of doubling of the number of seniors over the next 30 years.

So I am very pleased with the bipartisan progress we have made to date. I am pleased that we will be able to go with amendments early in the course of today and look forward to addressing a number of those amendments over the course of the day.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. As we all knew yesterday, the problem with not having amendments was that CBO had not completed scoring on the Medicare bill. It is my understanding there is scoring on the bill and Senators GRASSLEY and BAUCUS will offer either some technical changes or maybe a substitute to comply with mistakes made by staff during the very busy weekend they had.

Is that the understanding of the leader?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, that is generally my understanding. Again, for our colleagues, in order for the process to start and to allow us to really begin the amendment process, we have to have what is called a scoring from CBO. We were in touch with them at 8:30 and 9 this morning. It is my understanding we will have that scoring, but before I can say anything further with absolute certainty, we will know something in the next 30 minutes or so. Once we get that scoring that is both in the aggregate but also line by line—and we did not have a line by line at 7 this morning, and people are working around the clock on it, but once we have that line by line, we will be able to go directly to the managers' package and then also directly to the amendments. I am very hopeful that at 10 this morning that process will start.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the leader, now that we have had people make a lot of opening statements, we are waiting to offer amendments. Senator STABENOW is going to offer our first amendment, following whatever the managers decide to do with their opening amendments.

So we are anxious to go to work, and hopefully we can do that as soon as possible. However, as we all know, it cannot be done until the scoring is complete. Otherwise, a point of order

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



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would be available against any amendment. So we look forward to getting into this as quickly as we can.

Mr. FRIST. Again, all of this demonstrates that everybody is working as hard as they can to address this situation in a reasonable, step-by-step fashion. So I am very pleased with where we are today. Both sides are very anxious to begin the amendment process, which is very good because all too often people push their amendments off until the last minute and we have many amendments flowing. In this particular case, we have encouraged people to come forward and let the managers know what amendments they plan to offer and then talk about the amendments so they can adequately plan. Indeed, that is under way.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will begin a period for morning business until the hour of 10 a.m., with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from the great State of New Hampshire.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that at 10, I be recognized to speak on the prescription drug/Medicare reform bill for up to half an hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was listening to someone else speak. What did my friend from New Hampshire say?

Mr. GREGG. I am seeking the right of recognition at 10 to speak on the Medicare bill for half an hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. My only question would be, and I say to my friend, I do know that we have Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI who asked to be recognized as in morning business, and if we do not go on the—well, I really do not see any problem with having debate on that.

Mr. GREGG. How long does Senator MIKULSKI wish to speak?

Mr. REID. She is in the Chamber. I did not see her behind me.

How long does the Senator wish to speak?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Speaking to the Senator through the Chair, my remarks are about 5 or 7 minutes. I might add, there is a crisis in national service with volunteers. Senator BOND and I have a legislative solution. That is why

we wanted to speak in morning business.

The corporation is blaming Congress when they, my colleagues would be interested to know, oversubscribed by 20,000 volunteers. So Senator BOND wanted to share our fix with the people. I could do this in about 5 or 6 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I do not see any problem at all having the Senator from New Hampshire begin his statement when the hour of 10 arrives. It is indicated that the two Senators will complete their statements prior to that time. I ask that following his statement, a Democrat, if one wishes to speak, be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. FRIST. Reserving the right to object, my understanding is it would be for debate only until the managers come back to the Chamber. May we have a general understanding that this is for debate only until the managers come?

Mr. REID. I understood from the Senator from New Hampshire that that was part of his request, that it would be for debate only.

Mr. GREGG. That was not a part of the request, but if the leader wishes, I will make that part of the request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from New Hampshire? If not, it is so ordered.

Who seeks time? The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Chair.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, what a mess we have at the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Congress has funded 50,000 AmeriCorps volunteers, as we have year after year. But, guess what. The corporation has enrolled 70,000 volunteers. It seems the corporation cannot count. As a result, there will be fewer volunteers this year.

Fortunately, because of a bipartisan collegial relationship on the VA/HUD subcommittee, Senator BOND and I are going to fix this problem for the volunteers and for the communities they serve. We are introducing something called the Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act, and, frankly, it gives AmeriCorps the fix it needs to straighten out the mess they created.

This bill is simple and straightforward. It gives the AmeriCorps Program the flexibility within the current funding for 2003 so there can be 50,000 AmeriCorps volunteers this year.

I have been reading in press reports, but most of all I have been getting

calls from constituents and other Senators who support AmeriCorps. What are they concerned about? They are concerned that it appears there will be cuts by as much as 15,000 volunteers. I am concerned about that, too, and the effects on our communities and the young people who serve them while earning a scholarship for college.

I believe the public has a right to know what happened. So I want to explain to advocates and my colleagues what is happening and why the corporation has cut AmeriCorps. Congress has not cut AmeriCorps. It is because there is a persistent pattern of mismanagement at AmeriCorps. The corporation has over-enrolled 20,000 volunteers. When you make a mistake of 20,000 it is not a mistake, it is mismanagement. Two thousand would have been a mistake; 20,000 is mismanagement. The corporation has violated the law, mismanaged taxpayers dollars, and created uncertainty for our volunteers and our communities.

In April, at the VA/HUD subcommittee, I called on the National Service CEO, Dr. Leslie Lenkowsky, to fix the problem. He promised he would do that by June 1. But, guess what. He called on May 30 and said he just could not do it. Then out came the shrinking of the number of volunteers, and out came the blaming on Congress. Instead of fixing the problem, he blamed Congress. I wish the corporation was as good at accounting as it is blaming. They had 10 weeks to get their act together and they did not do it.

I was very stern with Dr. Lenkowsky and the Board of Directors at the hearing. I must say I thank the Board Chairman, Mr. Stephen Goldsmith, for responding constructively to the criticism of myself and other Members of the Congress. They took it to heart. They are beginning to reform national service. They are doing due diligence. They are putting more time into the oversight than, frankly, Dr. Lenkowsky.

Dr. Lenkowsky is the Chief Executive. He has failed to respond to the situation, failed to respond to the subcommittee request, failed volunteers, failed communities, and in the schools I went to when you get that many "Fs" you just flunk out.

Today, I am asking Dr. Lenkowsky to resign. I am really sorry we have gotten to this point, but we cannot continue this. I think if we are going to have a national service program, we need to have a national service program that serves the Nation and follows the directives of the Congress.

We have worked on a bipartisan basis in this subcommittee year after year after year. We saved this program. It is usually zeroed out in the House. It is a gimmick to get us to rescue it. And now, once again, thanks to the leadership and constructive relationship with Senator BOND, we are going to strengthen AmeriCorps. Without our cooperation and leadership at VA/HUD, AmeriCorps wouldn't even be here. So