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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. This morning our prayer will be led by our guest Chaplain, Max Lucado, Minister of the Oak Hills Church of Christ, San Antonio, TX.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Oh Lord, God of our Fathers. You are the God who is in heaven. You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can withstand You.—2 Chron. 20:6.

We declare Your sovereign strength and confess that all decisions of rulers, kings, parliaments, and Senators ultimately serve Your will.

Grant that these leaders may do just that; Bless them with faith and vision. Strengthen those who are weak. Heal those who are sick. Superintend the affairs of their families and finances. Quiet any fears. Remind them of Your unquenchable, unconditional love.

Set the compass needle of our hearts on You. Affirm us when we seek Your will; forgive and correct us when we don't. Speak to us about the brevity of this life and the beauty of the next. And, most of all, prepare our souls for the moment we meet You face to face.

By the source of mercy we pray. To You be the glory forever and ever. 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, the Senate will resume debate immediately this morning on the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. It is the first bill we are addressing coming back from our recess. We made significant progress on the bill on Tuesday and on Wednesday. I thank our colleagues for coming forward and offering their amendments. Today will be an important day as we wrap our hands around how many amendments we have so we can systematically address those and engage in debate and vote accordingly.

I inform all Members that rollcall votes will occur throughout the day today. It is our intention that we can set a vote on one or more amendments to occur this morning. Members will be notified when the first vote is scheduled.

I wish to make one final plea: That people come forward as soon as possible to talk to the managers and make it clear what their intentions are on the various amendments.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, while the majority leader is still on the floor, I would like to renew the managers' plea for amendments to come to the floor. There has been good cooperation with the distinguished assistant Democratic leader about moving toward the preparation of the list. If we are to finish this bill and get it completed before September 30, we are going to move ahead with expeditious diligence. If we do not get it completed by September 30, we are going to lose \$3 billion. This is a very tight bill as it stands at the present time.

There is always concern about what is going to happen on Friday. In my capacity as manager of the bill, it is my desire to move ahead and have substantive votes tomorrow morning. Our custom is to conclude by noon, but I believe we are going to have to do that

if we are going to finish this bill in a timely way.

There is word that there are 13 amendments ready to go today, which is good. But we may be a little slow getting out of the box here with amendments being ready to come to the floor as early as 10 o'clock. The Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON, is ready to go. But that may be a short amendment.

I think it would be advisable to work on into the evening with the stacking of votes tomorrow morning early. There might be an earlier departure, if we have a list, if we know where we are going, and if we see that there would be a conclusion, say, next Tuesday.

This is an issue where we have already been advised about the need to bring some Members in from the other side of the aisle.

We prefer not to schedule in accordance with the Presidential candidacies. But we understand that people can talk, and we want to work it out on a cooperative basis. That would be a Tuesday target to wrap it up completely. To accomplish that, we are going to have to go into the evening and have votes tomorrow morning—at least until midmorning, and perhaps until noon. At least that is as this manager sees it.

We did not complete as much work as we should have yesterday. The quorum call was on for a considerable period of time. As I have said repeatedly, that is sort of the bane of a manager's existence—trying to do third reading and go to completion.

The majority leader advised everyone on August 1—more than a month ago—to be ready with amendments. It is my hope that our colleagues will come forward with amendments so we can get a list and see precisely where we stand so we can accommodate a lot of conflicting and competing interests on schedules.

I hope we will proceed with amendments today. If we work into the

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



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