



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2003

No. 176

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2004, at 12 noon.

Senate

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2003

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.
Eternal Spirit, Who directs the paths of all who love You, in this season of

peace on Earth, we thank You for Your Word and for the eternal truths that guide us day by day. Thank You, Lord, for another day with opportunities to make a difference in Your world. Thank You also for the sureness of Your presence that brings us peace in the midst of this world's turmoil. Lord, teach us to turn to You so that Your thoughts can become our thoughts and

Your ways our ways. Be for our Senators a refuge and a fortress and may they put their trust in You. Help each of us to depend upon Your strength as we navigate life's challenging seas. May we trust the wonderful laws of sowing and reaping, knowing You will bring us an abundant harvest. We pray this in Your great Name. Amen.

NOTICE

If the 108th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 9, 2003, a final issue of the Congressional Record for the 108th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Monday, December 15, 2003, in order to permit Members to revise and extend their remarks.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT-60 or S-410A of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Friday, December 12, 2003. The final issue will be dated Monday, December 15, 2003, and will be delivered on Tuesday, December 16, 2003.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the Congressional Record may contain subject matter, or relate to any event that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at <http://clerkhouse.house.gov/forms>. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT-60 of the Capitol.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

ROBERT W. NEY, *Chairman.*

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



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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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I welcome everybody back from a short recess over the Thanksgiving holiday. I hope everyone did have a safe and a restful period after a very busy 3 to 4 weeks just prior to that. I hope everybody had an opportunity to spend good time, quality time with family and friends.

As I announced before the break, we have returned today with the hope of completing our work on the appropriations process. Chairman STEVENS finished the negotiations on the omnibus measure, and that conference report was filed in the House of Representatives before we departed for Thanksgiving.

Today, we hope to take up that conference report and dispose of it, although I understand this will not be possible. I will be discussing momentarily other options with the Democratic leader and will likely be propounding a unanimous consent request for consideration of the omnibus bill here later this morning.

We will not have any rollcall votes today, but in addition to any agreements we may reach here on the omnibus measure, we would like to also consider other legislative and executive matters that can be cleared over the course of the day. Specifically, there are a large number of important executive nominations that are pending on the calendar that I hope we will be able to address. Again, I will be working with the Democratic leader to proceed to any of these noncontroversial nominations before we conclude our business today.

At this juncture, I will be happy to yield to the Democratic leader, and then likely we will go into a period of morning business, and we will have a discussion about the further plans for the day.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democrat leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I join the majority leader in welcoming our

colleagues and our staff. I, too, hope they all had a good Thanksgiving holiday, and I appreciate the work that has been done at the staff level over the course of the last couple weeks as we have prepared for this day.

I look forward to our discussions in the next couple of minutes with regard to how we might proceed. I have a more extensive statement with regard to the omnibus appropriations bill that I will make at a later time.

Obviously, there are some executive nominations that we believe could be addressed. We have been working together to find how we might move a large number of them today, and I hope before the end of this day we will have completed our work on that as well.

I look forward to working with the majority leader and our colleagues in the hope we can make this a very productive day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the Democratic leader and I will be in discussions over the next several minutes, but I suggest we go ahead into morning business at this juncture.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 (Mr. ENZI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
CONFERENCE REPORT TO AC-
COMPANY H.R. 2673

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2673, the omnibus appropriations language; further, I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object—and I will have a lengthier statement—I ask unanimous consent, instead, that later today, at a time to be determined by the two leaders, the Senate proceed to the consideration of a resolution to correct the flaws in the omnibus appropriations bill by: Reinstating the Senate-passed provision to prohibit the administration's plan to

abolish overtime for 8 million workers; reinstating the Senate-passed provision on media ownership; striking the House language blocking the implementation of country-of-origin labeling; striking the provision that weakens the background check requirements of the Brady bill; striking the provision to impose a voucher system on the DC public school system; striking the provision to allow the contracting out of over 400,000 Federal jobs and reinstating the House-passed language; and striking the provisions imposing arbitrary across-the-board cuts to education, Head Start, veterans health care, highway construction, and other needed programs. I further ask consent that the resolution be subject to 1 hour of debate equally divided, that no amendments or motions be in order, and that after the expiration of the time, the bill be agreed to and sent to the House of Representatives. Finally, I ask consent that upon approval of this correcting resolution by the House, the omnibus appropriations bill be agreed to by the Senate, and that it be sent to the President for his signature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the leader so modify his request?

Mr. FRIST. I object to the Democratic leader's request.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, then I object to the request made by the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, both requests have thus far been objected to; am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the conference report to accompany the omnibus bill, provided, further, that there be 5 hours for debate to be equally divided in the usual form. I further ask consent that following the use or yielding back of debate time, the Senate proceed to a vote on the adoption of the conference report, with no intervening action or debate.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I am not surprised by these objections. I think that a number of colleagues, including the distinguished Senator from West Virginia and others on their side, have been very open and forthright with their intent to object to this legislation.

The conference report was filed before Thanksgiving, and it was my hope that over the intervening period of time people would have had the opportunity to review the language before we proceeded. I hope they have taken that opportunity to do so.