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Senate

The Senate met at 9:47 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.

Sovereign Lord, whose fairness is intertwined with everything You do, You will right all wrongs and reward all loving service and suffering for Your sake. Thank You for each blessing You have given us. Surely You have been good to us, O Lord. You have revealed Yourself through Sacred Scripture, condensing Your thoughts and making them intelligible to humanity. You have cared enough to communicate with us in a clear and accessible way. Forgive us for our reluctance to read Your word and to meditate with listening hearts. Refresh, nourish, and teach our Senators Your thoughts that they may discover Your will and pattern for living and serving. Guide them today and give them Your peace. Help each of us to prove our gratitude for Your kindness by selfless service to those who need our love and care. We pray 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, this morning the Senate will be in a period of

morning business for up to 1 hour. The first half of that time will be under the control of the minority leader or his designee, and the second half of the time will be under the control of the majority side of the aisle.

Following this period of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1637, the FSC/ETI JOBS bill. Under the agreement reached last night, today the debate until noon will be equally divided between both sides.

At noon, the Senate will conduct a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the FSC/ETI JOBS legislation. If cloture is invoked, we will go immediately to a vote in relation to the pending Cantwell amendment regarding unemployment insurance.

Senators can, therefore, expect up to two votes beginning at 12 noon today. Following those votes, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 for the weekly policy luncheons to occur.

I ask unanimous consent that if cloture is invoked, the time during the recess count under the provisions of rule XXII.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I thank all Members who have allowed us to proceed in this fashion. We have worked on both sides to organize today so we can bring the FSC/ETI bill to closure. I believe we will invoke cloture and we will be able to bring the bill to conclusion, hopefully, later this afternoon or early this evening.

As I stated yesterday, there will be germane amendments, and we will debate them and vote on those; thus, we anticipate additional rollcall votes over the course of the day.

I mentioned several weeks ago, and again yesterday, that we plan to begin the IDEA legislation following the completion of the FSC/ETI JOBS bill and, thus, we have a lot of work to do. I want to encourage people to consider that as we bring the FSC/ETI bill to closure.

I also want to mention a concern that I have with the Executive Calendar. Last week, we were able to confirm some of the pending ambassadorial nominations on the calendar. But still, as you look at the calendar, there are 89 additional nominations that are available for Senate consideration. As we all know, some of these are controversial and, therefore, delay is not unexpected. But the vast majority of these nominations, including many of the judicial nominations, should be cleared unanimously.

I want to take this opportunity to remind my Senate colleagues of our responsibility—the Senate's responsibility—to consider these nominations and to allow them to begin their very important work for the United States of America.

In addition to the 33 judicial nominations, there are 8 additional ambassadorships to countries such as Sweden, Brazil, South Africa, Northern Ireland, and others. So, again, I want to take this moment to bring all of this to the Senate's attention. My colleagues may come to me and ask why we are not moving. It is time to move in that direction.

I have heard the comments of the Democratic leadership regarding their concern with the nominations, and I know there are underway a number of consultations and discussions regarding this process. As we move forward, I urge my colleagues to allow us to consider some of the many noncontroversial nominations that are available so that we can fill these positions.

Mr. President, I also want to comment on last night's action by thanking my colleagues for their unanimous support for S. 356. This Senate resolution, which passed last night, condemns the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison and urges a full and complete investigation to make sure that justice is served, and served in a fully transparent way.

The resolution also expresses the Senate's support for all Americans who

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



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