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Senate

The Senate met at 9:31 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our judge and redeemer, who orders our steps and directs our paths, use our Senators today as instruments of Your will. Commission them to meet the perils and possibilities of our times, humbly and courageously. Lord, deliver them from insulating privilege that obscures humanity's needs, as You keep them from pride that scorns to do the servant's task. Make them Your agents to restore those who are broken in body and spirit. Empower them to be messengers of hope to those from whom hope is gone. Use our lawmakers to bring a new day of justice and peace to our Nation and world.

We pray in Your omnipotent Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader time, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act, H.R. 2419. There will be 90 minutes for debate on the conference report.

I might add in passing that Senators worked until about 11 o'clock last night on this important piece of legislation.

The Senate will vote on any motions relating to the conference report prior to a vote on its adoption. Senators should expect the first vote of the day to begin about 11:05, 11:10, depending on how long Senator MCCONNELL and I take. Upon disposition of the conference report, we expect to begin the process of appointing conferees to the budget resolution conference. Senators should expect rollcall votes to occur throughout the day.

I would note that there is a 1 p.m. filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the collective bargaining legislation, H.R. 980.

As I mentioned last night, when we finish adoption of the conference report, it will be up to Senators JUDD GREGG and KENT CONRAD to determine how many motions will be filed to instruct conferees. Other Senators can do that, of course, but it would have to be through the two managers. There is a

total of 10 hours on that. We would hope that time could be shortened significantly. We are going to finish that tonight, the appointing of conferees.

I have spoken to Senator DORGAN. We have the media cross-ownership matter that he has proceeded forward with under a statute Senator Nickles and I passed in the early 1990s. The statutory time limit on that is 10 hours. Senator DORGAN told me last night that he would take 1 hour. I would hope others wouldn't take much more time than that. That being the case, there is an opportunity to finish that tonight. I hope that is the case. Otherwise, we would finish that tomorrow.

Tomorrow, we have scheduled now a cloture vote on the collective bargaining matter we worked on this week. As I indicated last night, we are going to see if Senators KENNEDY and GREGG can work something out on that, along with the comanager of the bill, Senator ENZI. If they can give us some way to proceed to complete that, maybe we can work out a unanimous consent that we wouldn't have to do the cloture vote. I think the ability to do that is somewhat slim, but I never give up hope. It might be possible.

The point being, we have a lot to do. We are going to work late tonight unless there is some agreement that shortens the time significantly on the appointing of conferees and the cross-ownership issue dealing with the Dorgan proposal. I think that is what we have ahead of us.

The reason I am making sure we complete everything this week, the House is going to pass, sometime today, the supplemental. We have no votes on Monday. I would hope we could start maybe on that issue on Monday because we would like to do some other things next week. But that is a big issue to deal with. The House can jam things through, as we all know, because they have different rules than we do. But over here we have to follow our rules, which are not 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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