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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our hopes and dreams, from whom all blessings flow, thank You for Your presence and sustaining power. Strengthen our lawmakers during the rigorous demands of their day. Lord, manifest Your presence and inspire them with Your unchanging love. Help them to remember that greater than the leverage of force is the power of love. Remind them that love can mold wills, penetrate lives, and overcome obstacles. Lord, make our Senators instruments of Your peace and love in a hurting nation and world. Enable them to say with the Psalmist: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind, for Your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in Your truth."

We pray in Your loving 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, June 26, 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 remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, FISA.

Earlier this week, we were able to work out an agreement to consider two district court judges today. The Judiciary Committee is going to meet today to consider other judges, but we now have two we are going to approve sometime today, and they are William T. Lawrence of Indiana and G. Murray Snow of Arizona. When the Senate considers the nominations, there will be an hour for debate, equally divided and controlled, prior to the votes on confirmation of the nominations. These votes will occur sometime during the day. The second vote will be 10 minutes in duration.

Mr. President, I guess we have to learn from our experiences in life, and I try to do that. I was thinking, coming to work here today, what have I had that is comparable to what we have been doing here this week? And the best I could come up with is, when I was a boy, I would go with my dad and my family to gather wood. We would go up these washes, desert washes, and in these washes grows what we call cat's claw mesquite. That is the only place it grows, in these washes, the reason being that the seeds only germinate when they are pulverized, pounded

down these washes. So we would go down there in a pickup—four-wheel drives did not exist or rarely existed at the time—and invariably we would get stuck in the sand. Those back tires would spin—one of them especially—and sometimes it would take a long time. Those tires would spin. That vehicle was going a thousand miles an hour but moving nowhere. But as the day and time progressed, we would put brush under the tires and the rocks, and we would get out eventually.

Well, that is kind of where we are today in the Senate. All week long, we have been stuck in the sand, spinning our wheels. This is Thursday, and Thursday can be a magical day in the Senate, but it is not automatic. It is not automatically a magical day. We have many things to do to, in effect, stop spinning our wheels. We have four major pieces of legislation that need to be considered before we can leave for the Fourth of July recess.

FISA. I received a call this morning from the majority leader in the House, Leader HOYER, and he—a lot of people are responsible for getting this bill to this point, but I think all would acknowledge that his work on this was instrumental—and he, of course, would like us to finish this as quickly as possible. We are currently considering the motion to proceed to FISA. That is the legislative matter now before this body. I hope and I am convinced that we will be able to work out an agreement to move action on this bill.

Housing. Yesterday, the Senate overwhelmingly voted for the Dodd-Shelby bipartisan agreement. So it is not a matter of whether but when the housing legislation will pass the Senate. I hope we can reach an agreement before the end of the day as to how this bill is going to be finished. If we don't, I will just have to look for another opportunity to file cloture and this bill will be completed. As I have indicated to a number of Senators, both Democrats and Republicans, as we proved yesterday, when we have an opportunity, we

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



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