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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 13, 2010, at 2 p.m.

Senate

(Legislative day of Thursday, March 25, 2010)

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal and blessed God, amid the earthquakes, wind, and fire of this turbulent world, we thank You for seasonal reminders of new life and resurrection. Give our lawmakers the wisdom to wait until they hear Your whispers of healing and hope. Give them sensitive hearts to listen, teachable minds to learn, and humble wills to obey. When doubts assail them, may they remember that no night is endless but always followed by a new day. Inspire them to put all their plans in Your hands, trusting fully in the power of Your love.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 26, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with the time until 12:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between myself, Senator STABENOW, and Senator COBURN or our designees. Today we will continue work on reaching an agreement to consider the unemployment and COBRA extension legislation. The majority leader also asked me to alert Senators that Senator LEVIN will come to the floor this morning around 10:30 to ask unanimous consent to confirm the nomination of BG Michael J. Walsh to be Major General for the Army.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with the time until 12:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the Senator from Michigan and the Senator from Oklahoma.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this morning Senator COBURN and I have agreed that the majority will take the first 30 minutes, and there will be additional agreements from there. We certainly will be going back and forth between both sides this morning, since the time is equally divided. We will proceed this morning.

Senator HARKIN is here. I am going to yield time first to Senator HARKIN. Senator HARKIN is our leader, of course, on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. He has been a champion of the health insurance reform bill we passed, as well as the new assistance for families for college loans and Pell grants.

He has been a champion for working men and women on so many issues. It is not a surprise that he is here today fighting on behalf of working men and women who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and are

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

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