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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. 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.

Gracious God, in whose presence the dark night of anxiety is dispelled by the dawn of Your peace, thank You for guiding us beside still waters. Lord, we do not ask for faith for the whole of life but for enough trust to live one day at a time.

Draw our lawmakers near to You so that they may see the beauty of Your purposes and discern Your plan. Purge their thoughts and speech that no unworthy communications may proceed out of their mouths. Lord, teach them new truths today, so that they may soar on the wings of Your joy and light.

We pray in Your great 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, May 14, 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 Sen-

ator 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

RESTORING AMERICAN FINANCIAL STABILITY ACT OF 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 3217, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3217) to promote the financial stability of the United States by improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, to end "too big to fail," to protect the American taxpayer by ending bailouts, to protect consumers from abusive financial services practices, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Dodd/Lincoln) amendment No. 3739, in the nature of a substitute.

Brownback modified amendment No. 3789 (to amendment No. 3739), to provide for an exclusion from the authority of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for certain automobile manufacturers.

Brownback (for Snowe/Pryor) amendment No. 3883 (to amendment No. 3739), to ensure small business fairness and regulatory transparency.

Specter modified amendment No. 3776 (to amendment No. 3739), to amend section 20 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to allow for a private civil action against a person that provides substantial assistance in violation of such Act.

Dodd (for Leahy) amendment No. 3823 (to amendment No. 3739), to restore the application of the Federal antitrust laws to the business of health insurance to protect competition and consumers.

Whitehouse amendment No. 3746 (to amendment No. 3739), to restore to the

States the right to protect consumers from usurious lenders.

Dodd (for Rockefeller) amendment No. 3758 (to amendment No. 3739), to preserve the Federal Trade Commission's rule making authority.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak about the visit this week by Afghan President Karzai and many of his ministers, as well as the policy that is unfolding all these many months in Afghanistan.

I rise in the midst of a debate we are having in the Senate on financial reform and continuing efforts and strategies to be put in place to create jobs. Even in the midst of all those domestic concerns that are economic in nature—and we are still very concerned about and working on the problems of those who are out of work—we need, in that context, to also be concerned about what is happening in Afghanistan. So I wish to discuss President Karzai's visit and, as I mentioned, the visit, as well, by other Afghan government officials.

The other reason I rise in connection with that topic is to talk about the continuing threat our troops face from improvised explosive devices known by the acronym IEDs. They continue to pose a threat to our troops, and we have to continue to be concerned about the nature of that threat.

In a broader sense, when it comes to this policy, we have to get this right. We have to make sure our government is continually focused on getting this strategy right in Afghanistan, as it relates to security, governance, and development—all aspects of the strategy, working with our coalition partners in doing that.

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



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