The Senate met at 9:45 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.

Ever loving and eternal God, source of the light that never dims and of the love that never fails, help us to live in faithful expectation of Your triumph in our world. Fill us with hope that we will not become discouraged because of setbacks. Take away doubts that disturb us and worries that distract us. Empower our Senators to be instruments of Your purposes. Make them content to faithfully serve as they live in peace with others. Give each of us the peace that passes understanding.

We pray in Your loving 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME
The President pro tempore. Under the previous order the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS
The President pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The President pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE
Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will begin a 30-minute period of morning business. When that time has expired, we will begin consideration of the House message to accompany the Reid amendment.

Last night the agreement we entered allows for up to 7 motions to instruct conferees. Several Members spoke to these motions, debating their motions yesterday. Today we will vote on those, prior to lunch.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE
Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that at 11:45 this morning we proceed to three consecutive votes, first on the Baucus motion to instruct, to be followed by the Carper motion, to be followed by the Harkin motion; provided further that there be 2 minutes equally divided for debate prior to each of the votes; finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the third vote the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 for the policy luncheon to meet.

The President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, therefore, Senators can expect three votes beginning at 11:45 today. The remaining motions will be debated this morning and this afternoon, and those votes will be scheduled for Thursday afternoon at approximately 3:30.

Today we expect the PATRIOT Act conference report to arrive from the House. If we are unable to reach consent for a limited debate time, then I am prepared to file cloture on that conference report.

I do hope we can come to a consent for the debate time. If not, cloture can be expected. If that is the case, that vote would occur Friday morning. The Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations conference report may also be available to the Senate today. I will be consulting with my colleagues about scheduling that vote as well.

In addition to the items I have mentioned, there is a number of other legislative and executive items that remain. These include the Defense authorization conference report, the Defense appropriations conference report.

As I have said over the last several days on the floor, I urge all Members to remain available to adjust their schedules accordingly for the remainder of this week and into this weekend, and perhaps beyond as we schedule our final business of this year. We will make every effort to conclude our work as quickly as possible, but it will require the patience and cooperation of all Senators. As all of my colleagues understand, there is a lot of coordination with the House of Representatives with bills going back and forth.

I thank everyone for their help in advance as we move forward on these matters.

COMBAT M ETH ACT
Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I briefly speak to an issue that is important to me and important to the American people. As we continue our debate on the PATRIOT Act conference report, I call my colleagues’ attention to a special crimefighting provision that promises to thwart the No. 1 drug problem in America today, methamphetamine.

The provision is called the Combat Meth Act. It enjoys broad bipartisan support in this body. It is a part of the PATRIOT Act legislation.

In particular, I want to thank my colleague from Missouri, Senator TAL- ENT, for his tireless efforts in advancing this pressing issue. He has been focused on it, and he has talked to all of our colleagues about it. He very passionately expresses the need and the critical importance of this bill. He has
Haley’s case was so shocking that in August the State legislature passed Haley’s Law to drastically toughen child abuse penalties. This was an important victory for child abuse victims, but it didn’t get to the concurrent problem of meth abuse and addiction which led to this crime.

Local law enforcement—I heard it all over the State—is literally overwhelmed by the meth crisis. They are calling out for our help. They need us to pass the Combat Meth Act to restrict access to the cold medicines that contain pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, which are the key ingredients easily obtained today and used to manufacture methamphetamine. Once you have those ingredients, meth can literally be manufactured with a few pots and pans in a kitchen.

While some States, such as my home State of Tennessee, have passed laws restricting access to these products, other States have not acted. As a result, meth cooks can jump from one State to another State to get the over-the-counter ingredients they use to make this highly addictive drug.

Law enforcement and prosecutors tell me the single greatest impact we could have on reducing meth abuse is to require all 50 States to restrict access to the cold medicines containing the ingredients used to make methamphetamine. Data from States that have gone ahead and passed laws restricting access to these precursor chemicals proves that indeed to be the case. They work.

Oklahoma, for instance, passed a law last year and with this law has seen a dramatic reduction in meth lab seizures. Data from my own State of Tennessee—we passed a similar law earlier in the year—shows the same trend, a steady decline in seizures.

The Combat Meth Act will require all 50 States to do what Oklahoma and Tennessee have done. The Combat Meth Act is critical to containing and defeating the meth epidemic. We need one uniform standard to close the loopholes in the system so that producers can’t cruise from State to State exploiting our differences.

I again thank Senator Talent and Senator Feinstein for their leadership and for pushing hard to get this done. I urge my colleagues to pass the PATRIOT Act, which includes this much needed law. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for law enforcement across this land in odonts used for meth. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for towns and for communities and cities all across America. It is a victory for all of the innocent individuals and families who have been harmed by this dangerous and deadly drug.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The President.

SECOND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, last week I had the privilege of meeting pri-