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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, our loving Heavenly Father, thank You for Your gracious care of each of us. Your loving hand is upon us seeking to assure us and direct our steps. Help us to be sensitive to every guiding nudge of Your direction. We face great challenges and even greater opportunities. Help us to be positive, creative thinkers today. Keep us from quickly making up our minds and then seeking Your approval for our decisions and actions. We do not have all the answers, so give us a spirit of true humility that constantly seeks to apply Your truth to the issues before us. Save us from the frustration and exhaustion of rushing up self-determined paths without Your guidance. Give us insight to see Your path and the patience and the endurance to walk in it with our hands firmly held by Yours. You have promised never to leave or forsake us, so we walk on with hope in our hearts. In the name of the Way, the Truth, and the Light. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able majority leader, Senator LOTT, is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. For the information of all Senators, this morning the Senate will resume consideration of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. There is a pending committee amendment which I understand will need a short-time limitation for debate prior to a vote. I hope we

will reach a consent agreement shortly with respect to that amendment so that all Members can be notified as to when the first rollcall vote can be expected.

Additionally, I ask for the cooperation of all Senators who have amendments to this measure, to be available during the day so that we may dispose of those amendments and complete action on the VA-HUD appropriations bill during today's session. Also, the Senate may consider a resolution regarding the current situation in Iraq. Therefore, Senators should be prepared for rollcall votes throughout the day. As a reminder, the Senate will recess between the hours of 12:30 and 2:15 for the weekly policy conferences to meet.

Mr. President, I do wish to commend the distinguished Senator from Maryland for her work yesterday. I know she and the chairman of the subcommittee, the Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND], did some preliminary statements and disposed of some work that could be accomplished, and that is very positive. I appreciate their time.

I think it is only fair and respectful of the two leaders of this subcommittee that the Members come over here and offer their amendments and let us do our work. I hope that the two Senators who have worked so hard on this good legislation do not have to stand here and look at each other without some action taking place. As pleasant as that may be, I know instead they would like to be dealing with Senators who have legitimate amendments that may be offered.

I understand there are three or four serious amendments that have to be offered and debated and probably voted on. Some others hopefully can be worked out. But we must keep our eye on the ball. The thing that we have to get done this week and for the next couple of weeks is these appropriations bills. It is the Senate's responsibility. Right after this bill, we will go in short

order to Interior appropriations and then Treasury-Postal Service next week, and hopefully then I guess the Commerce-State-Justice appropriations bill, and finally Labor-HHS.

It is my intent, with the cooperation of the Democratic leader and all of our colleagues, to get through all of these appropriations bills in an expeditious manner. In order to do that, we are not going to be able to bring up a lot of other bills that do not have very tight time agreements, maybe not even if they do have time agreements. Until we complete these appropriations bills, I am going to do everything I can to limit the distractions, including issues that may cause us to start tangling with each other unnecessarily, so that we can hopefully have a spirit of cooperation and dedication in getting this work done.

I want to reiterate what I read in my opening statement. We did not get a response until 6:30 Monday afternoon in terms of some language perhaps that we could work out on the Iraqi situation. The appropriate Senators now are involved. Staff members are working. We hope we can get something worked out. We cannot give 2, 3, 4 hours to a resolution of this nature. Hopefully, we can come to something that is agreed to and bipartisan, and we can just have a vote that would be unanimous and move forward. But I am working in good faith to try to accomplish that.

I want to plead again to Senators. Come on over and do the work. These two Senators were jerked around considerably before the recess because they were ready to go, and we indicated that we were going to go to their bill before the August recess. We did not get to it. But now we are here, and they are doing good work. Let us give them our cooperation and get this bill done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI addressed the Chair.

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



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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the majority leader for his very kind words about the way we have tried to move the bill. We, too, urge our colleagues to come over, particularly those who now have an amendment that they wish to bring to the floor. We were open for business yesterday, did 4 hours of very good, yeoman work. I think both sides of the aisle want to move the bill. We would like to concentrate on the major amendments, space station and veterans health care, and if others would just come over and discuss them with us, we believe we can iron some of them out and move ahead.

I thank the leader.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3666, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3666) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Bond amendment No. 5167, to further amend certain provisions relating to housing.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think the parliamentary situation in which we find ourselves is this particular provision dealing with the Bion Program in NASA was included in the House bill. The committee amendment struck the House prohibition on those activities.

So, procedurally, the people who want to maintain the amendment will, after discussion, move to table the committee amendment, which is, I believe, the pending business. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BOND. Therefore, we can begin the discussion whenever the pro-

ponents wish. The tabling motion will come at the end of the discussion. We would like to make sure that everyone who wants to be heard on this issue has an opportunity. We do not yet have a time agreement. We talked about 2 hours last night. I would like to know from the proponents, and will be discussing with them, how much time we need. There are some on our side who wish to maintain the amendment.

I hope we can wrap up the debate in fairly short order this morning and then move to the tabling motion. But I reserve my comments on the issue until those who are proponents have an opportunity to present their views.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think that is a very good way to proceed. Hopefully, we can conclude this before 11:30 and then be able to move to the Iraqi amendment, so when we come back after the conference we can dispose of both of those and be then ready to continue to move the bill. That is kind of the way I see it.

Mr. BOND. I thank the ranking member for her very helpful suggestions. My view is we are now open for business for the next hour or so. We could have a very spirited debate on this important issue, and I hope then we will be in a position to resolve it.

I ask my colleague from New Hampshire if he is ready to proceed. If so, I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

EXCEPTED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ON PAGE 104, LINES 21-24

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, the pending amendment is a committee amendment to strike the language in the bill, as the Senator from Missouri has just indicated, that prohibits funding from being used for the so-called Bion 11 and 12 missions. The amendment will prevent the waste of approximately \$15.5 million on wasteful research involving sending Russian primates into space. Let me repeat that, because one may wonder why we are spending money to send Russian primates into space. I wonder that myself, but that is what we are talking about. What we are trying to do is prevent the waste of \$15.5 million of taxpayer money involving research—and it is wasteful research—sending Russian primates into space.

I would also like the record to reflect that Senators FEINGOLD, HELMS, KERRY of Massachusetts, D'AMATO, and BUMPERS have joined me in opposition to funding for this Bion Program. It is a bipartisan group of Senators, as you can tell, crossing the whole political spectrum. I believe Senator FEINGOLD will be speaking on the issue, if not others.

Just so there is no confusion, the language before the Senate passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 244 to 171. It appears on page 104 of the Senate bill. It reads as follows:

None of the funds made available in this act for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration may be used to carry out or pay the salaries of personnel who carry out the Bion 11 and 12 projects.

The pending committee amendment strikes this language. This is what we object to. I want to say at the outset, it is very important, I spent almost 6 years on the Science and Technology Committee in the House of Representatives before I came to the Senate. On that committee I do not think there is anyone who was a stronger supporter of NASA or the space program. I continued that support in my time in the Senate. This is not, and I want to make it very clear, it is not a NASA-bashing amendment. I am not asking these funds be taken out of NASA. I am just asking they not be spent on this particular project, the Bion project.

So let me make it very clear. This Senator has offered a number of amendments in the past to cut spending, and I am proud of them, but that is not what this is. I am not trying to take the money from NASA. I am trying to stop NASA from wasting money that NASA probably could find good use for in some other way.

I had hoped the committee would retain the Bion language, given that it passed the House by a majority of 73 votes. I felt it was reasonable that that language be retained. Frankly, I am disappointed it was not. We had 147 Republicans and 96 Democrats on the House side who supported the amendment to eliminate that funding.

There has been a great deal of criticism of the program from a wide variety of groups: the science community—it is interesting—the science community; not all in the science community, but many; taxpayer groups, those who wish to save tax dollars; animal welfare organizations; and, as well, interestingly enough, from people who had the courage to speak up inside NASA. So when we have NASA people, people within the science community, animal rights organizations, and taxpayer groups all together on an issue, I think it is worth the Senate's time to look at it very carefully.

This letter is from Tom Schatz of Citizens Against Government Waste, which strongly supports this amendment. He says here, this vote will be considered for inclusion in their 1996 congressional ratings. This is a group I have come to deeply respect because they have the knack for finding the most egregious examples of waste in the Federal bureaucracy. It is a very good group. Most Senators here are aware of this group and the very good job they do.

Mr. Schatz is very specific in his letter. I ask unanimous consent this letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the 600,000 members of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAW), I urge you to support the efforts by Sens. Smith (R-N.H.) and Feingold (D-Wis.) to eliminate funding