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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2000, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2000

The Senate met at 9:32 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:

Lord God of hope, help us to make this a day for optimism and courage. Set us free from any negative thinking or attitudes. There is enough time today to accomplish what You have planned. We affirm that we are here by Your divine appointment. We also know from experience that it's possible to limit Your best for our Nation. Without Your help, we can hit wide of the mark, but with Your guidance and power, we cannot fail. You have brought our Nation to this place of prosperity and blessing. You are able to bless us now in this pressured day of business if we trust You and work together as fellow patriots. Fill this Chamber with Your presence, invade the mind and heart of each Senator, and give this Senate a day of efficiency and excellence for Your glory. We thank You in advance for a truly great day, for You are our Lord and will show the way! Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWNBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, led the Senate in 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12 noon with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. is under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I claim some leader time at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. is under the control of the leader or his designee.

Is there objection? If not, the Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand my friend from Ohio wants to read the morning script. I was told that. I have something I wish to say. I want to use leader time. But I was told by the staff that there was something he wants to outline for today's activity of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, before my colleague speaks, it is our intention at this point to not only read some comments of the majority leader but also to begin some discussion today under the leader's half hour of time. Senator GORTON and I want to talk a

little bit about the education bill we will be taking up tomorrow.

That was our intention.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the leader not being here, I certainly agree to extend whatever time Senator GORTON and Senator DEWINE desire. I want to claim a few minutes of leader time.

Mr. DEWINE. I have no objection if my colleague wants to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, if the Senator from Nevada wishes to speak, the Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

MARRIAGE PENALTY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the reason I want to talk today is I think it is important for the minority to have its voice heard around here. The first of May is approaching, and we are again being called on to vote on the so-called marriage penalty bill. The majority will argue that if you support the marriage penalty, you must vote for cloture. That certainly is transparently false. Here is why.

This procedural vote has nothing to do with limiting the marriage penalty, which the Democrats support certainly just as strongly as the Republicans. In fact, the vote is another attempt by Republicans to shield their deeply flawed tax bill from scrutiny by the Senate and by the public. In effect, we are being gagged.

Republicans don't want to debate this bill because they don't want anyone to know what is really in it. In truth, it is marriage penalty relief in

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



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name only. Sixty percent of the measure on which we are going to vote today is for matters that have nothing to do with the marriage penalty. Sixty percent of the \$248 billion proposal goes to people who do not face a marriage penalty.

The majority likes to talk about relevance. I know a little bit about relevance, as I think most people do. Sixty percent of this bill is irrelevant to the marriage penalty.

The majority is seeking to cut off debate on this bill before it is even begun. Invoking cloture would also block Democratic amendments that propose better ways to eliminate the marriage penalty and to address other urgent priorities such as prescription drug benefits for seniors.

Democratic amendments say, yes, let's fix the marriage penalty for people who actually pay it. In fact, one of the amendments proposed by Senators MOYNIHAN and BAUCUS, the lead Democrats in the Finance Committee, says: There are 65 marriage penalty provisions in the Tax Code with one sentence; let's eliminate all of them. That is one of the things we are being prevented from bringing forward.

We want to move forward and start legislating the way this Senate has debated for over 200 years. We have agreed to say, OK, we are not going to go along with what the Senate has done for 200 years. We will play the game of the majority in an effort to allow our voices to be heard just a little bit.

Even though the Standing Rules of the Senate don't require it, we have bent over backwards to keep our amendments short. We have 10 amendments, and we have agreed to limit debate on those amendments to 1 hour each.

These are amendments by Senators MOYNIHAN and BAUCUS on the tax proposal. Senator BAYH, one of the most thoughtful Senators we have ever had in the Senate, has talked about another alternative.

We have amendments offered by Senator SCHUMER from New York dealing with the college tuition tax credit. We have one amendment by Senator DORGAN who represents the farm community. He wants to do something about CRP in the tax bill. These are amendments that should take several hours if they were debated properly. We are willing to take a half an hour and have the majority have a half an hour. That seems fair, but we have been prevented from doing that.

We could finish this bill in 1 day. The question is, Why will Republicans not stop casting blame and get on with the marriage tax penalty vote? Sadly, the answer is somewhere blowing in the wind. Republicans know Democrats have better proposals. Republicans also know that given a choice, the American people prefer the minority's approach. The American people say give us marriage tax penalty relief and a few other things such as prescription

drug benefits for senior citizens, who simply are desperate for some relief. The average senior citizen gets 18 drug prescriptions filled a year with no benefit at all from Medicare, and we need to get that benefit to them. That is what we are trying to do.

The majority, once again, is afraid, despite having the majority. They have a 10-Member majority in the Senate and they are afraid to cast votes on our amendments. That goes to other issues, too, not only marriage tax penalty. The majority never tire of using procedural maneuvers to block or delay on the issues the American people care about most.

The majority today is out of step with the American people on issue after issue, so this majority spends most of its energy plotting ways to disguise its own extreme agenda, scurrying to avoid responsibility for its continuing failure to take up the problems the voters sent us to address. That is why the majority constantly resorts to procedural devices such as cloture, or another favorite, the conference committee "deep freeze," like they have done on the conference report on bankruptcy. We have been prevented from going forward with the Export Administration Act, which the high-tech community is very desirous of moving forward. Why? Because certain members of the majority think we are still in the cold war and we cannot go forward with bringing high-tech industry into the modern world. That also takes into consideration our inability to go forward on the Juvenile Justice Act, which deals with gun safety for children, Patients' Bill of Rights, and a number of other things.

The majority leader said on February 3:

We're out of town 2 months and our approval rating went up 11 points. I think I've got this thing figured out.

He is right. Whenever the majority, the Republicans who control Congress, are out of the public eye they seem to be better off. It is when the public sees how out of step they are that they get into trouble. That is what is going on. No one should be deceived. We are ready to go to work right now. We are simply waiting for the majority to stop their foot-dragging and blame games, stop hiding their faulty legislation behind procedural votes and get serious.

When the majority works up the courage to have a real debate on these issues, to stand up and be counted on their ideas versus our ideas, we hope they will let us know. Until then, Republicans can file cloture as often as they like. It is a cynical and not very clever blame game. The Democrats are sick and tired of playing it, but we will continue to fight.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I would like to make the following announcement. Today, the Senate will be in a period of morn-

ing business until 12 noon. At noon, the Senate will proceed with a cloture vote on the pending amendment to the marriage tax penalty bill. As a reminder, second-degree amendments to the substitute amendment must be filed at the desk by 11 a.m. today. If cloture is invoked, the Senate will begin debate on the bill. If cloture is not invoked, the Senate will resume debate on the motion to proceed to the victims' rights constitutional amendment in anticipation of proceeding to that resolution today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the time that had been allotted to the leader, or his designee, be extended to 10:15 today.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I yield myself 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ACT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, next week we begin the debate on the Education Opportunities Act. I had the opportunity yesterday to come to the Senate floor and talk about one aspect of that bill. That had to do with the whole issue of supporting our teachers, attracting the best teachers to education. Today I would like to talk about a second component of that bill having to do with safer schools. Good teachers, safe schools: It is really getting back to basics.

We have a drug crisis in this country. Drugs are readily available and, tragically, children are using them. In fact, more children today are using and experimenting with drugs than 10 years ago—many, many more. Let's look at the facts.

According to the 1999 Monitoring the Future study, since 1992, overall drug use among 10th graders has increased 55 percent. Marijuana and hashish use among 10th graders has increased 91 percent. Heroin use among 10th graders has increased 92 percent. That is just since 1992. And cocaine use among 10th graders has increased 133 percent.

With an abundant supply, drug traffickers are looking to increase their sales by targeting younger and younger children, creating a whole new generation of addicts. Drug dealers are now targeting children not only in our urban areas but in every community in our land.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University issued a disturbing report earlier this year. It had to do with the rapidly rising rate of drug use among youth in the rural areas of our country. The figures are astounding. If anyone thinks it cannot happen in your community—"it can't happen in my community"—take a look at these figures.

Their study found that eighth graders in rural America are 34 percent