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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Gracious Father, whom to know is to love and whom to love is to serve, we ask for a fresh empowering of Your Spirit today. Renew in us the excitement of being partners with You in bringing Your best for America. We are here by Your divine appointment. Therefore, we need not fear; You will supply exactly what we need each hour of this day. Replenish our enthusiasm. May we do old duties with new delight. Revive our expectation. You have plans for us and the power to accomplish them. Regenerate our hope.

Make us hopeful people who expect great strength from You and attempt great strategies for You. Fill this Chamber with Your presence and each Senator and all of us privileged to be a part of the Senate family. Replenish our inner wells with Your peace that passes understanding. We claim Your promise through Isaiah, *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.* Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON 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, October 17, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

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

TERRORISM IN THE OFFICE OF SENATOR DASCHLE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I certainly do not have all the details, but we do know that more than 20 people in Senator DASCHLE's office have been infected with anthrax. The tests have come back positive.

Senator DASCHLE had a meeting at the White House early this morning, and he has been meeting with his staff since he came back. I have not had an opportunity to speak with him. My heart goes out to Senator DASCHLE. I have spent a great deal of time with him and know what a caring person he is and how much he cares about his staff. I spend a great deal of time with his staff as a result of working with him on matters relating to the activities of the Senate. He has a wonderful staff. Sometimes I feel they are my staff. I am very close to Senator DASCHLE's staff.

I can imagine the heartbreak he is experiencing as a result of these people going through this personal turmoil as a result of working for him. I know I

speak for the entire Senate when I say that our thoughts and our prayers go out to Senator DASCHLE personally, his lovely wife Linda, and his entire staff that this will be of short duration. We have been told the sickness they have will be of short duration. Certainly, the medicine that is available will cure the problems that are present. We are fortunate we do have the medicine available to do this.

My thoughts cannot contemplate the evil nature of such an act on innocent people working in Senator DASCHLE's office opening mail, answering constituent mail, doing those activities that one does working for a public servant. A lot of them are very young.

This is a tremendously evil act. I hope these people will be brought to justice; that the full weight of this Government will be used to search out these people who would perpetrate this evil through this diabolical scheme they engendered. I do not know what satisfaction they get out of doing such acts.

We are the greatest country in the history of the world. We are far from perfect, but certainly we are going to overcome this. It is a very small setback, and we will proceed stronger than ever.

Again, my heart is overwhelmed today with a feeling of anxiety and sadness for the majority leader of the Senate for the burden he has recognizing that because he is who he is, people in his office are sick. I know him and know how much heartache this causes him.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—H.R. 2646

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand H.R. 2646 is at the desk and is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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



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S10779

A bill (H.R. 2646) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2011.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the rule, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend from Wyoming is in the Chamber. If he has some remarks, he can certainly proceed; otherwise, I am going to ask we go into a quorum call at this time. We are going to shortly recess until after the 10:30 a.m. briefing.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada for his remarks this morning. Certainly we all have very strong feelings and sympathy for what is happening. My office happens to be one of the offices that is closed as well. I have a strong feeling about what is happening as well.

Mr. President, we should just go into a quorum call and go to our 10:30 a.m. meeting without further ado.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:10 a.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 12:12 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. TORRICELLI).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CLOTURE VOTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote which was scheduled for 11 o'clock today be set for 10 o'clock next Tuesday morning. This request has been cleared by the minority leader and the majority leader.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, also, I would like to inform Senators that this afternoon, at around 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock—we don't know the exact time; we are trying to work that out, and we will shortly—we will move on the Interior conference report. We do not know if we will need a vote on a motion to

proceed to it. That is a nondebatable motion. So if we do, we will do that and then move right to approving the conference report.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, having said that, and having told Senators what is in store, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:13 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 1:32 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. REID).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Thank you, Mr. President.

PROCEEDING UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as I did yesterday, I think it might be helpful if I report to our Senate colleagues and to the extended Senate family about circumstances now over the last 24 hours.

Let me say, I have been especially appreciative, again, of the services provided to the Senate, especially by our extraordinary Sergeant at Arms and our Secretary of the Senate, who have just done an outstanding job of responding to the many challenges that we have faced over the last few days, especially.

I thank Secretary Tommy Thompson for his great cooperation, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Capitol Police for their work, and, finally—and certainly it should have been at the top of the list, if I was listing anybody—our distinguished Republican leader. Senator LOTT has been there shoulder to shoulder with me on every one of these occasions and over the course of the last couple of days. Our partnership is strong, but our friendship is even stronger. And that could not be in greater evidence than it has been over the last couple of days.

We will have a vote this afternoon on the Interior appropriations conference report. That conference report will come over to the Senate sometime this afternoon. As my colleagues probably know, the conference report is currently being debated in the House. Obviously, I am quite sure it will be adopted. Once it is, and once it is sent over to us, there will be a rollcall vote on the Interior appropriations conference report this afternoon.

There will also be a vote on the conference report on the military construction appropriations bill tomorrow. We do not know the time yet. We will certainly notify our colleagues. In part, we do not know the time because I am not sure what the House schedule is; that also will be a piece of business that we will take up.

It is my hope that we may be able to take up nominations as well. I will be

consulting with the Republican leader and with my chairs in regard to the degree to which Executive Calendar matters could be considered and, hopefully, voted upon either today or tomorrow.

So we have a good deal of business that we will be conducting. Again, one of the reasons why is because of the outstanding job that all of our service personnel have provided in accommodating our schedule, as we have continued to work through the immediate challenge that we have faced with the anthrax experience.

Mr. President, I could not be more proud of my staff for the way they have conducted themselves, for the attitude they have reflected at every step of the way, the professionalism they demonstrated on Monday, and the attitude and the degree to which they have taken each one of these moments in stride.

We have had a good number of discussions and consultations and meetings with members of my staff. It is now at a point where I think we can say that 31 members of my staff, and a certain number of Capitol Police, were found to have tested positive as a result of the nasal swab that was administered to them a couple of days ago.

A positive result on a nasal swab simply means they were exposed to the anthrax bacteria. Not one incident of infection has been recorded or reported. There is a huge difference between exposure—as is revealed by the nasal swab, if it is positive—and the actual infection itself. Antibiotics were administered immediately, even though we did not know the results of the nasal swabs, whether they were going to be positive or negative. And because of the early access to the antibiotics, the overwhelming advice I am now being given by all health care personnel is that each of my staff members will be OK. I am gratified to hear that, I am gratified to repeat that, and I will continue to emphasize that fact as we go forward.

In part because of the limited exposure, in part because of the opportunity to be administered the antibiotic quickly, in part because of the professional response all the way through this process, we are very confident about our ability to provide for the needs of each of my staff, with every expectation—I would say 100-percent expectation—that they will be treated successfully. So we feel very good about the current circumstances involving treatment and involving the response to the antibiotics already shown by members of the staff.

As many of our colleagues know, the exposure was limited, at this point, to two locations: My office in the Hart Building, Room 509; and the mail room in the Dirksen Building. There is no evidence currently that anyone in the mail room has been exposed to the point where they would receive a positive nasal swab, although we will be getting those test results back in the coming days. About 1,400 people were