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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEBBIE STABENOW, a Senator from the State of Michigan.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rear Admiral Barry C. Black, U.S. Navy Chief Chaplain, offered the following prayer:

O God of light and truth, enter and abide with these leaders today, as they do the work of freedom. Give them Your wisdom, so that they will be instruments of Your peace.

Lord, thank You for this great land, and for our freedom, which is neither derived from, nor conferred by a state, but comes from You. May the liberty You bring keep our feet in right paths.

Eternal Lord God, today and always give us wisdom to perceive You, intelligence to understand You, diligence to seek You, patience to wait on You, eyes to see You, a heart to meditate on You, and a life to proclaim You. In Your strong Name we pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable DEBBIE STABENOW 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2002.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DEBBIE STABENOW, a

Senator from the State of Michigan, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Ms. STABENOW thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. The Chair will shortly announce that there will be a period of morning business until 10:30 with time equally divided between the majority and minority, with the majority controlling the first half hour. Senator CORZINE will lead that.

At 10:30, the Senate will begin 30 minutes of debate prior to a vote on a motion to invoke cloture on the emergency supplemental appropriations bill. As a reminder, all second-degree amendments must be filed by 10:30 a.m. today, this morning, in order to be considered as timely filed under rule XXII.

We are going to have votes, we hope, throughout the day as we endeavor to move forward on this most important legislation.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the first half of the time will be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from New Jersey.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader.

Mr. LOTT. If the Senator would yield a couple of minutes before we get started, I will be very brief.

Mr. CORZINE. I would be pleased to yield to the minority leader.

VOTE FOR CLOTURE

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I understand there will be morning business now until 10:30 and the time will be equally divided. Between 10:30 and 11 a.m. we will have equally divided debate on the pending issue and the Stevens-Byrd cloture vote at 11 a.m.

I come to the floor to make sure that I have an opportunity to urge my colleagues to vote for cloture. I am not happy with this legislation. It is very unfortunate that it has been increased at every step along the way beyond what the President asked for, at least \$4 billion more than what the President asked for, and the mix within the rest is clearly not what the President asked for in this emergency supplemental for defense and homeland security. It is unfortunate that it has been brought to the floor in this way.

I remind my colleagues that postcloture, assuming cloture passes, amendments to strike would still be in order. I am sure there will be a number to try to pare back the bill and to take out nonemergency, nondefense, and homeland security issues. I hope they succeed, because, clearly, the bill has gotten out of control.

This is nothing new. Every Congress does it. Every President makes the mistake of asking for supplemental appropriations, and every Congress sees this as a vehicle on which we can enjoy a ride. We have all participated. I am not proud of that. But I say that to

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



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make the point this is not something new. They always tend to grow and grow. I have taken occasion with every President of both parties to plead with them not to send a supplemental; just do what we need in the regular appropriations process. But they always do it. And quite often we urge them to do it when there are, ostensibly, emergencies. Many of them are very legitimate.

On the other side of this coin, this is supposedly an emergency. We should have done it 2 months ago. The President should have asked for it earlier, the House should have acted earlier, and we should have found a way to act early, although it is hard to be too critical of the time in the Senate because we were not going to be able to move forward on it until the House acted.

If it is an emergency, if it is payback for what we have spent in defense, if it is to provide what we need on an emergency basis—homeland security, Coast Guard, whatever—in terms of making sure our country is safe, we should have already done it. To drag this out into next week would not be a positive thing.

I add that amendments that would be offered, if we don't get cloture, will make worse a bill that has a lot of problems. Substantive amendments would be offered that would cause problems. More spending would be added. The better part of valor is to vote for cloture, continue to work to try to pare it down to a more reasonable number, get it in conference, and get it closer to what the President wants so we can get our work done before the Fourth of July recess and get it to the President so he can sign it.

We are not unanimous on our side of this issue. The proper leadership position is to say, let's vote for cloture, go forward in the hours we have after cloture to cut it back and then get it into conference.

I urge my colleagues on both sides to vote for this cloture motion. Perhaps the cloture was filed too quickly. I understand, as majority leader, sometimes events or speeches prod you to do things that later maybe you wish you had not done. The fact is the majority leader filed it, and we will vote on it. After watching events the last 2 days, I think we should go ahead and support cloture.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Before the Senator from Mississippi, the Republican leader, leaves the floor, I express my appreciation for his leadership role in suggesting and advocating that we invoke cloture.

This is the right thing to do for the country. There are things in the bill I do not like. There are things in the bill the President does not like. But that is what conferences are all about.

We will get this thing out of here. There are some motions to strike. I understand we have been talking about bringing those forward for several days

now. Good, let's have them come forward. We will vote as to whether or not they are good or bad motions. Let's get the matter to conference as quickly as possible so we can help our troops and we can help homeland defense.

The Republican leader's advocacy is something that is good for the country, and I appreciate that very much.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the statement of the Senator from New Jersey not appear interrupted and he be given, minus the time he has already taken, the full 30 minutes as the Republicans would be given, and then we will shorten the time.

I am reminded, of course, it is not the full 30 minutes but whatever he was accorded, following the initial discussion, prior to his beginning. The Democrats would have the same amount of time as Republicans; we would just shorten the time before 11 o'clock for those for and against the cloture motion.

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

The Senator from New Jersey.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. CORZINE. Madam President, this morning I would like to take a few moments to talk about one of my favorite subjects: Social Security and the privatization plans that have been developed by President Bush's Social Security Commission.

As I have discussed in the past, I, like many Members, have serious concerns about these privatization plans, primarily because they involve deep cuts in guaranteed benefits. Those cuts would exceed 25 percent for many current workers and would exceed 45 percent for seniors in the future. The cuts would apply even to those who choose not to participate in these privatized accounts. In effect, they would force many Americans to delay their retirement.

Over the past few weeks, I have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with privatization supporters, including the Cato Institute and a few of the members of the Bush Commission. The Cato Institute criticized the national radio address I gave on April 27 describing the privatization program the Bush Commission proposed. I then responded with a critique of their critique. And then, most recently, I received a letter from 6 of the 16 members of the President's Commission with a critique of my critique of the Cato critique.

Unfortunately, their critique also is flawed, as I have outlined in a letter back to the six Commissioners, and as I want to discuss today.

The most fundamental disagreement I have with the six Commissioners concerns the deep cuts in guaranteed benefits included in the Commission's report. The Commissioners state:

The Commission proposals do not "cut benefits" for anyone.

I am troubled by this statement, which, at best, is highly misleading.

Essentially, the Commissioners are arguing that reductions in benefit levels, relative to those proposed under current law, should not be considered cuts. That is just wrong on its face.

The Commissioners reach this conclusion by assuming that the assets in the Social Security trust fund will be deleted in the future and Congress will refuse to take the steps necessary to honor the promises made to workers who now are paying into the system. They make this assumption even though they also assume that massive amounts of general revenue will be available to subsidize privatized accounts.

In effect, the Commissioners are arguing that Congress, having used Social Security funds for other purposes, now should be able to break its promise to retirees because there is not enough money in the trust fund.

To me, this is tantamount to a borrower telling a lender: I haven't saved enough, and therefore I have a right to default on your loan. And, moreover, the reduction in my payments to you should not be considered a cut or a loss to your income.

I do not think that adds up. Surely the lender in such a situation would experience the loss and view it as a real cut—just as seniors would experience a reduction in their promised benefits as a cut.

In my view, it is a distortion of the English language to claim that changing the law in order to reduce benefit levels, as the Commission has proposed, should not be considered a cut. This claim is especially problematic because the Commission's proposed cuts would be so deep for many beneficiaries—exceeding 25 percent for many current workers, and exceeding 45 percent in the future. By the way, these numbers are confirmed by the nonpartisan Social Security actuaries. The Commission should be open and honest about this. The numbers are in the report.

It also is important to emphasize, as I noted earlier, that the benefit cuts proposed by the Commission apply even to those who choose not to participate in privatized accounts. This belies claims that the Commission's plan is based on voluntary choice. It's not. Even those who do not choose to use privatized accounts will get cuts.

Supporters of privatization may believe that income from privatized accounts will offset the cuts in guaranteed benefits. That is the argument they make. However, this is problematic for at least two reasons.

First, the combination of reduced guaranteed benefits and income from private accounts in many cases would be less than the benefits under current law, even under the assumptions used in the Commission's report.

That is certainly one of the possibilities. And that is particularly true if one takes into account the administrative costs which are going to accompany these private accounts. In Great