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Senate

The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. Charles V. Antonicelli, of St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Capitol Hill.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we glorify Your Name as we ask You to hear our prayers. With the Psalmist we say, "To my words give ear, O Lord, give heed to my groaning. Attend to the sound of my cries, my King and my God.

"It is You whom I invoke, O Lord. In the morning You hear me; in the morning I offer You my prayer; watching and waiting."

In a special way today we pray for those killed in a senseless act of terror in Saudi Arabia yesterday. Grant us Your peace, Lord, which we so desperately desire.

Bless Your faithful servants today, Lord, as they come together in this Senate to deliberate and discern. Give them a spirit of compromise and consensus so that their decisions may benefit all in their care.

We ask this in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN ENSIGN 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. STEVENS).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 13, 2003.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENSIGN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business to allow speakers to discuss and introduce legislation or to speak on the topic of their choice. It had been our expectation that the amendment process on the jobs/growth bill would begin this morning; however, that will be delayed until later today.

Today, we do have a Senate delegation out of town attending the funeral of former Senator Russell Long, and that delegation will not return until early this evening. In addition, the Finance Committee will need to meet this evening to report out the reconciliation measure. The Senate will then immediately begin its consideration. This will allow us to begin to use time under the statutory time limit as well as begin the consideration of germane amendments this evening.

I say to my colleagues, we will have to work late each night this week. At the end of last week I mentioned it was going to be a very busy week, and due

to the delays which we are experiencing, it means we will be working late each night this week and through Friday.

Following morning business today, we will resume consideration of the energy bill. Pending to the energy bill is the bipartisan Frist-Daschle ethanol amendment. I understand there are additional speakers on that amendment.

Also, as I mentioned last week, there are a number of pressing issues that the Senate must address prior to the Memorial Day recess. First, we will finish the jobs/growth package this week. We have the statutory time interval of 20 hours of debate which will begin as soon as the Finance Committee reports out the reconciliation bill tonight.

Also, as I mentioned last week, this week the Senate will consider the bipartisan global HIV/AIDS legislation. This measure has broad support across both sides of the aisle, and it is my hope that we will be able to work out an agreement this morning or over the course of the day that will allow the Senate to pass this bill after a reasonable period of consideration later this week.

Third, we also have an order to consider the debt limit extension bill with a limited number of amendments. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have indicated they would not delay this bill once we bring it up. I hope it will not be necessary for all of the 12 Democratic amendments to be offered once we do bring up that bill. I believe everyone does understand the need for fiscal continuity and the importance of getting a debt limit bill to the President's desk before the Memorial Day recess.

As for next week, we will be considering the Department of Defense authorization. The chairman and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee have done yeoman's work to get the Department of Defense authorization bill ready for floor action. We will proceed to full Senate consideration of that bill early next week.

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



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Needless to say, again, as I mentioned at the end of last week, we have a very busy 2 weeks really with 9 legislative days prior to the recess. I do ask for all Members' cooperation in the coming weeks as we move through these important issues.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant minority whip.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could, I know the distinguished majority leader has a statement to make on an important subject. While he is here, as we begin today's session, I have a couple of questions.

First, with the order that was entered last night, we are in morning business until 12:30; is that what the leader intends to do?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it was not specified last night, but our intent was to do morning business for an hour and at 11 o'clock to come back to the energy bill to continue the opening statements and comments and discussion on the ethanol amendment that was offered last week.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the leader, we would be happy to cooperate in any way that will make things move more quickly. We do have a number of Senators—Senator CONRAD, Senator STABENOW—who wish to speak, and so I am not sure they can complete everything by then, but we will enter into an agreement that we can get to the energy bill as quickly as possible.

I am not going to do this in the form of a unanimous consent request because I did this yesterday—and there is no need to do this again—other than to say, I think it would be in the best interest of the Senate if today we immediately move to the debt limit bill. The leader has indicated what he wishes to finish this week. We believe it would be good to do this prior to the tax bill. We could finish it today. We could be in a position where we could complete the votes even tonight when the people return from the Long funeral.

So I would hope the majority leader would consider allowing us, rather than going to the energy bill, which we are not going to make much progress on—and my personal feeling is we will not finish that bill until the leader gives us a lump of time that says we are going to finish the bill. So, anyway, I hope we can move to the debt limit bill as expeditiously as possible. That is why we have this agreement which is standing dealing with H.J. Res. 51, that we have a limited number of amendments. We have indicated there would be no filibuster. So I would hope we could move to this as quickly as possible.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I appreciate the assistant Democratic leader making the request and stressing the importance of dealing with the extension of the debt ceiling. It is an issue we have to address. We have a number of issues that are pending, that are underway, and one is the energy bill introduced last week, with an amendment that is currently on the floor

that I would like to come to this morning and continue. It is business that is underway.

Secondly, the jobs and growth package is an issue that, at the end of last week, we committed to go to very early. I very much want to get this out of the Congress before the recess, if at all possible. That means we do need to go to that as soon as possible.

The third priority I have set and laid out last week is the HIV/AIDS bill. I will make a few comments on that shortly, why I believe it is urgent for us to pass that particular legislation. Then, in this order, the fourth is the debt ceiling which has to be dealt with before we leave. I will be in consultation with the Department of the Treasury in terms of the exact timing of that. The sequence of events will be as I outlined as we go forward.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we understand the importance of each one of these measures. We understand the importance of global AIDS. I think it is important that we have a bipartisan approach, and the majority leader, as a physician, has helped us move into that position. Keep in mind, this is an authorization bill. We have to do authorizations before we do appropriations. With regard to its urgency, it is important we get it done so that during the appropriations process we can give some money to the programs that are authorized. As far as it being as urgent as the tax bill or the debt ceiling is concerned, it is down the list in that regard.

Senator FEINGOLD wishes to speak. I will work with the floor staff as soon as the majority leader completes his statement to try to figure out how much time we need on this side. While it is the decision of the leader to move to energy, we think we should move to the debt limit. But the leader makes that decision. We will work out with the floor staff as to how much time we need for this side.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the sequence we just walked through is very important. The sense of urgency for the HIV/AIDS legislation, for me, really boils down to the fact that every 10 seconds somebody is dying from this little virus, and that is something that is going to take leadership from the United States—the President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives—to act upon. Indeed, the President has acted; the House of Representatives has acted. The last hurdle to the reality of the United States being the true world leader in fighting HIV/AIDS is this body. When every 10 seconds a person is dying and we can make a difference, it becomes urgent, not just to this physician but to the Congress and to the United States.

Following the jobs and growth package this week, we will immediately turn to H.R. 1298, which is the bipartisan United States Leadership Against

HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003. I plan to bring that to the floor as soon as we complete the jobs and growth package and to complete it this week. It is my hope we will have good debate. We will have good debate. There are people on both sides of the aisle who have participated aggressively in the discussion and, indeed, have moved legislation—not successfully—but moved legislation forward in this body. We will have the debate. We will dispose of the amendments and proceed to final passage by the end of this week on this urgent issue.

For the past 5 years, I have worked with Senators on both sides of the aisle, and House Members, all of whom are devoted to the idea that the United States can and, even more importantly, must play a leading role in our response to this global health crisis. It has taken a long time for people throughout the world, indeed the United States and—maybe a little bit longer than I and others would like—for the Congress to realize what a moral crisis, what a public health crisis this pandemic is, all caused by a virus, an infection which emerged in this country about 22 years ago—in 1981, not that long ago.

In previous Congresses, we passed legislation at the committee level. Sweeping legislation to accomplish the establishment of the U.S. leadership on the virus has been considered, but it has never made it into law. Now we have that opportunity. Indeed, I am committed to see that we seize that opportunity this week with no delays because it is such a huge global issue, an issue which I regard as one of the greatest moral challenges we have seen in this country in the last 100 years.

I have chosen to begin our debate with H.R. 1298 because it is the bill that offers us the best hope that we can get the job done in an expeditious fashion and one that best assimilates the thoughts and ideas and works of past legislation from this body, on both sides of the aisle, as well as in the House of Representatives.

What is making it possible now, after 5 years of working on this issue personally, again with colleagues from both sides of the aisle—it is very clear—is the leadership of the President of the United States. It was his statement in the State of the Union Address this year where the President didn't just use rhetoric or give lipservice to the fight against this virus, but he made an unprecedented commitment to this public health challenge in a 5-year, \$15 billion effort to combat HIV/AIDS globally. It was unprecedented. The President has claimed for our Nation the leading role in fighting this aggressive virus, this destructive virus, a virus that daily continues to take the lives of thousands of innocents, resulting in about 13 to 14 million young children today as orphans, and even that number will go to 30 to 40 million over the next 15 years.