

of the Army. The order provides for up to 3 hours of debate, and if all that time is used, we will be voting at approximately 5:15 p.m. today. We will be updating Members this afternoon as it becomes clear how much of that debate time will be necessary.

We will be having discussions with leadership over the course of the day on the debt extension bill as to how we will plan that out in terms of voting so people will be able to have their schedules accommodated for especially Thursday. As all of our colleagues know, the Clinton Library will be inaugurated at that point in time, and we will be making appropriate accommodations for voting.

I mentioned the appropriations process. I do think we are going to be able to carry out closure on those negotiations quickly and that we will have something for action sometime this week.

We in all likelihood will remain here this week and finish our work on the appropriations bill—hopefully this week, obviously very late this week. We will keep Senators notified as to the schedule.

I mentioned the Intelligence reform bill is still in conference. Members were working late last night and are in through today. As I mentioned, it has been nonstop. I am very hopeful we will be able to complete that bill as well.

In short, in closing, there are a very few days remaining. We have a lot of scheduling challenges. I will be looking forward to working with our counterparts on the other side of the aisle in addressing the business with the expectation, if at all possible, that we will be able to complete work this week, which would be the objective. Again, that is a lot to accomplish in the next several days.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democrat leader is recognized.

THIS WEEK'S AGENDA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to acknowledge the work the majority leader has clearly laid out as an agenda that I think both sides wish and hope we can accomplish this week. There is a lot to be done but a lot has been done.

The distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee has worked diligently these past weeks to reach a point where we have agreement, as I understand it, on all but one of the bills. That will allow us to expedite consideration of the appropriations process this week.

A lot of work has been done on the 9/11 Commission. Even though we still have not resolved some of the remaining questions, I hope Senators—and House Members especially—would refrain from extraneous issues because

that only complicates our ability to complete our work.

There is a lot of effort that has been made now on the nominations package that has been the subject of a great deal of discussion and negotiation for many weeks. As the distinguished majority leader has noted, there is a possibility that we could also do IDEA. I think that would be a great culmination of the effort that has been made throughout the last several weeks as we have looked to completing that work before the end of the year.

So much remains. Much has been done. We hope to work very closely with our Republican friends to make this as productive a week as we can.

We are also appreciative of the majority leader's willingness to accommodate the schedule for many of us to allow for the travel to Little Rock to attend the dedication ceremonies for the new Presidential library, the Clinton Library.

It will be an exciting week, a very busy week, and one that I hope, at the end of the day, will be a very productive one as well. I look forward to working with the majority leader in that regard and will have more to say on many of these bills as the week unfolds.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

Who seeks recognition?

The majority leader is recognized.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 108TH CONGRESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I just want to make a few more comments since we have a few minutes before 12:30 and I see we do have another Senator in the Chamber who is desiring to speak.

Over the 108th Congress, we have worked hard to move America forward. Indeed, we have gotten results. We have an economy now that is rebounding with job growth that is robust; 2.4 million jobs have been created since August of last year with 14 straight months of job gains. We have unemployment down from its 6.3 percent peak last year. Unemployment rates have fallen across categories of race and age and all levels of education. Inflation remains low. Interest rates remain low. Our tax cuts clearly have had a huge effect on the economy. Americans today enjoy more of their hard-earned money to spend, to save,

to invest as they choose. We have home ownership at an all-time high including among African Americans, where it is at an all-time high. Health care security has made huge advances.

We have a lot more to do. Many of these issues played out in the recent elections. I think, as we all begin to plan for the next Congress, clearly health care will remain high on that agenda. We have a lot to be proud of in this Congress in addressing health care security for seniors, addressing Medicare modernization, strengthening of Medicare with the biggest reform package in the last 40 years. All this translates down to better health care security for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

For the first time, Medicare will cover the most powerful tool we have in medicine today and that is prescription drugs. That is a huge service to seniors to give them the health care security they deserve. That is a good first step. Again, we have to come back and look and make sure we continue to strengthen Medicare over time.

Over the last week, as I traveled around the country, I have taken the opportunity to ask about these drug discount cards we have made available through Medicare. Indeed, 4 million seniors today have these Medicare discount cards that give them discounts of 10 percent to 25 percent, which they simply did not have before we passed that legislation.

I do want to remind low-income seniors who have not yet signed up for one of those prescription drug cards that if you sign up for one of those cards, it has, in addition to those discounts, \$1,200 of value on it and \$600 of that value will go away after January 1 of next year. So I encourage you to sign up for those cards. If you have any questions, as most seniors know, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE and have those questions answered.

Health savings accounts—a lot is being written about them in the newspapers today. In fact, in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, medical savings accounts for the first time will be made an option for us in the Senate and for the 8 or 9 or 10 million Federal employees around the country. Indeed, I look forward to signing up for a health savings account myself here as we reenroll in the next several weeks.

The President's agenda for the upcoming Congress is going to be vigorous. I had the opportunity to meet with the President yesterday, and with the Speaker of the House. Although we focused mainly on finishing the work over the course of this week, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I am very excited about the agenda, the vision that is laid out for next year.

As I also said in my opening comments, I look forward to working aggressively across the aisle, with civility, in a bipartisan way, as we address this agenda that the American people really deserve. The issues are many.

We will have the opportunity to discuss those in the future.

Mr. President, we are back for a short period of time. It is real clear, in terms of what we have to accomplish. We are not going to be doing a lot of new business because we have much unfinished business to do.

I do welcome my colleagues back. Over the next several days there will be opportunity for tributes for Senators who are retiring and leaving this body. The Democratic caucus just had their leadership elections and I want to congratulate each one of those new leaders and will do so formally, not quite now but a little bit later, in phone calls to them. We have our leadership elections tomorrow. I look forward, leadership to leadership, to working in a vigorous, robust way to accomplish the agenda before the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is no unanimous consent required. The Senator is authorized to speak for 5 minutes.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened closely to the comments made by the majority leader, Senator FRIST, a man whom I respect and with whom I have worked over the past several years and look forward to working with again in this new Congress.

The Presidential election is completed. The people have spoken. A few moments ago the Democratic Senators gathered just a few feet from this Chamber in the Old Senate Chamber where we had an election of our new leaders for the upcoming Congress. In that meeting was Senator JOHN KERRY, who was our standard-bearer in the last election. We are all extremely proud of the job he did. Both he and Senator EDWARDS covered the United States, crisscrossed it from every corner, taking their message to the American people. The outcome was very close. When it was all said and done, President Bush had emerged the clear winner. The day after the election Senator KERRY and Senator EDWARDS conceded to the President and Vice President.

We now have a question before us as to which direction this Nation is headed. It is a question that is going to be dramatized even more by the recent resignations of key members of President Bush's Cabinet. It will now be up to the President and his close advisers to decide the team that he will put on the field for the next 4 years to serve and represent the American people.

The President will also have an opportunity and responsibility to develop an agenda, an agenda of issues to bring before the Congress.

At an early point the President will have to make threshold decisions. Will

he make decisions in terms of his leadership team, an agenda where we will try to find a bipartisan approach to solving our problems, or will we separate as we have in the past? I sincerely hope the President chooses the former and not the latter. It will be a better service to our country if we sit down on a bipartisan basis and address some of the serious issues we face.

On foreign policy, we can't escape the stubborn realities. We still have the ongoing threat from terrorists. The war in Iraq and Afghanistan is far from over. We face a nuclear North Korea. Our military concerns stretch across the world from Saudi Arabia to the Philippines. Our military is stretched to the limit, and our resources are constrained by record deficits which we have seen during the last several years in the Bush administration.

On the home front, the President's policies raise questions about the future of Social Security and whether we can trust it to continue to pay as it has in the past, and our ability to invest in America and the many freedoms we value which Senator FRIST talked about earlier. That is an issue that is front and center in my State of Illinois.

As I traveled across the Nation, I heard concern about the cost of health insurance from business leaders, families, and individuals alike. In the last 4 years absolutely nothing has been proposed from the administration to deal with the cost of health insurance. I hope the President will come forward with a good, sensible plan. A good starting place might be the Federal Employees Benefit Health Plan, a plan that covers millions of Federal employees and which offers them an enormous variety of options for health insurance at reasonable costs. That is a model we should use to offer the same insurance to small businesses and the American people.

Senator FRIST spoke of the Medicare prescription drug plan. This plan has been very coldly received by seniors across America. They cannot understand why Congress couldn't pass something that was understandable and which would truly help them. The Medicare prescription drug plan as passed by the Congress is so bad that we postponed its effective date until after this election. Those who wrote it knew if seniors saw exactly what we had proposed, they would rise up in opposition to it. They are learning that when you give everything to the pharmaceutical companies and you don't protect the seniors, you don't solve the problem.

We have a lot to do in the months and years ahead. I hope we can do this on a bipartisan basis. It would be a value to this country to see us come together. But it will start with leadership from the White House, and decisions by the President which can bring us together.

We have stood together, Democrats and Republicans, on the declaration of

the Afghanistan war, No Child Left Behind, intelligence reform, Sarbanes-Oxley, a bill to reform corporate governance, and also the approval of 201 of the President's proposed 211 judicial nominees. There has been good cooperation in many areas. If the President's party expects Senate Democrats to walk away from their basic values, I don't think that is going to occur.

I listened in this caucus we left and I wondered if some of the writers who said since the election the Democrats were adrift listened to the Democratic Senators. We understand their values. They are American values, and they are values which we take to the American people in each of our own States.

I look forward to working with our friends on the Republican side of the aisle in trying to find common ground, which is so important. We believe that on critical matters of personal responsibility and freedom we should have an honest resolution. We also believe that caring for the less fortunate is a moral value and most major religions should be respected. I look forward to the upcoming Congress and I hope we can find the common ground.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

APPRECIATION OF PAUL NITZE

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak for a very few minutes to recognize and reflect on the extraordinary career in public service of Paul Nitze who died on October 21, since the Congress recessed.

Paul Nitze was probably the paragon of the private citizen rendering public service at the request of his government. His service was rendered to Democratic and Republican Presidents alike.

Paul Nitze was first summoned to Washington in 1940 by James V. Forrestal, his former boss at the New York investment bank where both had worked. Once in Washington, Nitze became involved in a variety of activities leading up to and supporting America's efforts in World War II. He helped draft the Selective Service Act. He served as chief of the Metals and Minerals Branch of the Board of Economic Warfare. He oversaw foreign procurement of goods and services for the U.S. Government.

From 1944 to 1946, Nitze served as vice-chairman of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, which studied the impact of U.S. bombing in Europe and Japan after we had dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This office applied rigorous analytical methods to assess the effectiveness of weapons and tactic in World War II. It was the forerunner of today's Program Analysis and Evaluation Office on the Pentagon.

After the war, the scope of Paul Nitze's contributions continued to expand. He headed a billion-dollar global