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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SAXBY CHAMBLISS, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Our guest Chaplain today is the Rev. Neil D. Smith, of Faith Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kingstown, VA, who will lead the Senate in prayer.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, from Whom all blessings flow and to Whom all praise belongs:

May Your blessing rest on this Senate and on this Nation, not because we deserve Your blessing but because we need it.

Deliver us, we pray, from the tyranny of the expedient, that we might always seek to do what is right, whether or not it is politically advantageous in the moment.

Deliver us from evil, and from the evil acts and intentions of those who oppose the values of faith and freedom we cherish in this Nation.

Grant to the men and women of this Senate wisdom, grace, and courage for the living of these days. May Your grace abound to them so that, in all things at all times, having all that they need, they may abound in every good work, to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAXBY CHAMBLISS 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 27, 2004.

To the Senate:

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

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CHAMBLISS 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, we will have a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes. The first 30 minutes of that time will be under the control of the Democratic leader, and the second 30 minutes will be controlled by this side of the aisle. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 150, a bill relating to the taxation of Internet access.

Last night, the Senate invoked cloture on the motion to proceed by a vote of 74 to 11. Under the agreement reached following that vote, there will be an additional 2 hours 40 minutes remaining for debate on the motion. Following that debate, the motion will be agreed to, and the Senate will begin consideration of the Internet tax legislation. No vote will be necessary on proceeding. However, votes are expected today in relation to amendments that may be offered to the underlying bill.

I stated yesterday that it is my desire to consider the Internet access tax bill over the course of the next few days and to complete the bill prior to the end of the week. Hopefully, we can make progress today. Senators are encouraged to notify the managers of the bill if they intend to offer amendments to the bill.

I also remind my colleagues that the Senate will recess from 12:45 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. today for the weekly policy lunches.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the two leaders have some business to transact. I ask unanimous consent that when the Chair announces morning business, on our side Senator BOXER be given the first 5 minutes; Senator DURBIN the next 5 minutes; Senator WYDEN, 10 minutes; Senator LEAHY, 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that, as the leader just indicated, the morning business time be a full 30 minutes on each side, taking into consideration the fact that the Democratic leader and, perhaps, the Republican leader will give statements to the Senate under their leader time—so a full 30 minutes on each side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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



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MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

RELEASE OF ENERGY TASK
FORCE RECORDS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I stand here today to call on Vice President DICK CHENEY to immediately open his records of his secret energy task force meetings and tell the American people the truth about who attended those meetings.

The administration needs to stop fighting this wasteful lawsuit. It has cost hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, that belong to the taxpayers. And it has consumed an enormous amount of time with the Justice Department and other agencies. Today the case is to be heard across the street at the Supreme Court.

It is not too late for the Vice President to come clean. Just tell the American people who attended the secret meetings he held before he issued his energy policy which took the form of this very expensive, beautiful-colored brochure which has, for example, this picture of "Energy for a New Century," and it shows an oil rig in the ocean. By the way, that is not exactly the energy of the future.

The time has come for the Vice President to stop the stonewalling. Simply tell the truth. Who did he meet with in preparing our Nation's energy plan?

First, the American people have the right to know. The last I checked, this country was a free country. It is a country where there is access to information for the people. We pay the salaries of our President, our Vice President, our Senators, our House Members. Unless it is a question of the highest national security, the people have a right to know how their money is being spent or misspent. Why does the administration continue to hide the truth about how its energy policy was formed? It is not necessary to be secretive. It is wrong. The public needs to know how public policies are formulated.

To know that, they need to know who was sitting at the table when this national energy policy was put together. Who was there? Was it a broad array of citizens from all sides of the issue—consumers, environmentalists, people from the oil companies, the gas companies, the nuclear industry—or was it just one set of people?

Second, it is time to stop wasting taxpayers' money. The cost of that lawsuit across the street is very dif-

ficult to pin down. We know the General Accounting Office, which tried to force the Vice President to reveal who was at the meetings, spent over \$300,000 in legal fees to fight DICK CHENEY's stonewalling. From my office's research, we believe attorneys from Justice and the Office of Solicitor General have spent thousands of work hours preparing these documents.

Let me show a chart on what other things these persons could be doing other than keeping the meetings that the Vice President had secreted from the people. They could have been fighting terrorism by seeking and freezing assets of terrorist groups such as Hamas. They could have been prosecuting Medicare fraud. They could have been prosecuting drug companies that falsify data for FDA drug approval. They could have been prosecuting corporations that violate consumer safety laws with toxic products. All those things are in the public interest.

But, no, this Vice President says to these people who work hard every day: Just forget about this. We know we said a lot about cracking down on terrorism, money laundering. We said a lot about cracking down on Medicare fraud and drug company fraud and corporations that violate consumer safety laws with toxic products. Just forget it. Defend me. I am so important. I am the Vice President and the people have no right to know with whom I meet.

It is outrageous. I want the Justice Department to go after criminals, not to keep meetings secret that should be made public.

The Supreme Court has other things to do as well. They defend our way of life, our civil liberties, our human rights. For this court to spend its time listening to Mr. CHENEY defend his secrecy pulls it away from other important issues it could address. It is a waste of the Court's time. It is a waste of money.

I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes and ask that Senator DURBIN have an additional 2 minutes as well.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we ask unanimous consent that the majority have an additional 2 minutes as well, a total of 2 extra minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the Senator is recognized for an additional 2 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Two Federal judges have already found that the administration has violated the Freedom of Information Act. Openness is an American value. In the end, openness is a way of life. Do you remember how Condi Rice was not going to testify because the President said that she only reports to him and what she tells him is secret? Well, they caved on that one. They caved on that one because that is not in the public interest, and the people wouldn't stand for it.

Do you remember when First Lady HILLARY CLINTON said she believed she didn't have to reveal who was sitting in

on the health care task force meetings? Well, they were sued. And HILLARY CLINTON, now Senator CLINTON, said: OK, OK. Let's not go to court. I will reveal this information.

But not this administration, not DICK CHENEY. He has a lot of time to bash Senator JOHN KERRY, but he doesn't have time to open up the files and show the people who sat in on those meetings that led to the formulation of the national energy policy. It is remarkable—someone who didn't serve 1 minute, 1 hour in the military is taking on a war hero, JOHN KERRY. But he doesn't have time to pay attention to this issue on which the New York Times editorialized today and said:

[The Cheney] case also raises more substantive issues about the degree to which a vice president can claim to be above the law.

This is a sad day. We already know because the Vice President admitted that Ken Lay attended those secret meetings. Yes, he did. Ken Lay, the man we are hoping will wind up in prison for defrauding the people of California and the people of the west coast of billions of dollars. We know he was in the meeting. We also know he handed the Vice President a document that said: Don't take any action in California.

I call on the Vice President, tell the truth. Cut it out. Walk away from this case and let the people know with whom you met.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes.

ATTACK ON JOHN KERRY'S
MILITARY SERVICE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over 35 years ago, JOHN KERRY faced his enemies in Vietnam. There were enemies there who were involved in sniper fire against JOHN KERRY, trying to take his life and kill him because he wore the uniform of the United States of America. Sadly, the Vietnam snipers are still trying to cause damage to JOHN KERRY.

The new Vietnam snipers come from the Bush-Cheney campaign: Karen Hughes, sadly the Vice President, and other campaign operatives who are now attacking JOHN KERRY because he served our country. He wore the uniform of the United States of America. He volunteered and put his life on the line in Vietnam.

This shameless exercise by the Bush-Cheney campaign must be called for what it is. Many of us did not serve in the military, even those of us in the Vietnam era. We did not volunteer for service as JOHN KERRY did. We didn't wear the uniform of our country proudly as he did. We did not risk our lives. Included in this group is Vice President CHENEY, who used his deferments to avoid military service, as he was legally allowed to do. Yet we now hear Vice President CHENEY leading the attack against JOHN KERRY, a man who