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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 22, 2005, at 4 p.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2005

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN-NY ISAKSON, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty sovereign, You are the bright and morning star. Keep us from

sleeping during Your movement in our midst. Forgive us when we fail to see You in the needs of the hungry, homeless, and hopeless. Open our eyes to Your presence among the sick and the incarcerated, and use us to bring healing and freedom to our world.

Continue to sustain the Members of this body. Let no trial blind them to Your assured presence. Inspire them to

make a positive difference in a sometimes negative world. By their labors, help them to encourage those sorely tested by life's burdens.

Deliver each of us from permitting Earthly prizes to intrigue us and worldly concerns to possess us. We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

NOTICE

If the 109th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 22, 2005, a final issue of the Congressional Record for the 109th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Friday, December 30, 2005, in order to permit Members to revise and extend their remarks.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT-60 or S-123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Thursday, December 29. The final issue will be dated Friday, December 30, 2005, and will be delivered on Tuesday, January 3, 2006. Both offices will be closed Monday, December 26, 2005.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the Congressional Record may contain subject matter, or relate to any event that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at <http://clerk.house.gov/forms>. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT-60.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

TRENT LOTT, *Chairman*.

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



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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON 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, December 20, 2005.

To the Senate:

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

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ISAKSON 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 resume debate on the deficit reduction conference report. There is 8 hours remaining for debate under the 10-hour time limit. If Senators desire to speak on the package, they should contact the chairman or ranking member so we can schedule an orderly debate on the pending conference report. Both parties will have their policy luncheons today, and we will recess for those meetings if Senators are not prepared to speak during that time and if we can count that time against the debate limitation.

I remind everyone that I filed two cloture motions on two conference reports yesterday—first, Defense appropriations and, second, Defense authorization. Those votes will occur tomorrow morning, and Senators can expect votes early tomorrow morning on those.

I will be talking to the Democratic leader about the timing of the vote on the deficit reduction measure. We will need to confer with those managers to see how much of the 8 hours will be necessary so we can alert Members as to when they can anticipate the vote.

Senators should be around and ready to be here on time over the next day or two as we schedule these votes. We are attempting to finish these last few items to close out the session and, therefore, Senators should not stray far. I thank everybody for their continued patience as we wrap up.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

VOTE SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have, for example, Governor-elect CORZINE who is doing work in New Jersey, and we need some notice as to when the vote will take place to get him back here. He is, of course, coming. It appears very likely that the Vice President may need to vote on this himself. From the numbers we have, it is going to be extremely close. It would be important we have some notice as to when the leader would like to handle and have that vote. If all the hours are used and even if we charged the time for debate during our caucus lunches, it would be 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock. If all time remaining is used on this, when would the vote take place if we go straight through?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. About 6 p.m.

Mr. REID. I know the Vice President has been in Pakistan. At least I have been told he is coming back. Does the leader know when?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I do not, but we will be able to decide shortly after talking among everyone when that vote will be. For sure we will have these cloture votes tomorrow morning. We need to make sure all Members are back for the postcloture votes with regard to the deficit reduction bill. If we use all time, it would be 6 o'clock, but over the course of the morning we can decide when the most appropriate time for that vote would be.

Mr. REID. One of the things that could be done to make sure everyone is here, when we move to the Defense appropriations bill we could have that cloture and point of order. I am thinking at this time, even though the leader has filed cloture on the Defense authorization, I don't think we would have to have cloture on that. We could have final passage. One of the things the leader should think about is maybe doing them all at once. We could start fairly early in the morning and try to get them all done.

If that were the case, I assume we could speed through them fairly quickly tomorrow if things turned out the way we think.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, a couple of things. First, we do not want to delay any votes that will delay when we finally are able to depart. Within the next 48 hours we will have a number of votes. We will work on scheduling so we can let people know with certainty. I have told our people to be around and ready to vote when we decide. I don't want Members staying in New Jersey, New York, California, or Texas waiting for us to give a final time. We need to have people accessible and ready to get back.

Having said that, let's try to consolidate these votes at a time where people can come back, can be here, and we vote all at once or in a series.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think I have outlined the major votes I know of. There would be some housekeeping stuff to do. Who knows, we might get lucky and be able to do some other things.

Mr. FRIST. And with regard to that, we have a number of nominations, we have a number of judges, as well, we very much would like to be able to address. There are other issues with regard to the PATRIOT Act, Labor-HHS. We have a lot to do, all of which we need to address in the next day, 2 days.

We will maximize, from a scheduling standpoint, when everyone can be back.

Mr. REID. The other thing I mention is, in a meeting I had this morning, I think it is fairly clear it will not be necessary, even though we do not like the conference report on HHS, I don't think there will be a necessity for cloture on that. The leader should anticipate having a straight up-or-down vote on that at some time.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will speak on another issue and then we can come back and talk further.

Mr. BAUCUS. Will the leader yield for a question on the last subject of scheduling votes?

Mr. FRIST. I am happy to yield.

Mr. BAUCUS. I don't see any reason why we can't finish all our voting tomorrow. We all know what the issues are. We all know what the votes are. I don't see any reason to delay. We ought to vote.

There are so many families here, so many spouses, so many children, families want to get together. This is, after all, Christmas. I don't know why in the world we don't schedule all of our votes by tomorrow so at the very least by tomorrow we can start to head home with our loved ones. Can't the leader work that out?

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, indeed, he is going to do his very best.

Votes tomorrow, where the other side of the aisle causes us to have rollcall votes on motions to proceed and then cause us to file cloture, make it difficult. I was ready to get out 2 days ago. If we could do the up-or-down votes instead of filing the cloture motions, I am all for it.

Mr. BAUCUS. All the cloture votes can occur tomorrow.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, my goal would be to be out, for sure, tomorrow. I think we can work on that. I appreciate the appeal from that side of aisle to be out tomorrow. We can't have obstruction. Getting the votes done and finishing everything tomorrow would be a good goal. I am all for it. It means we cannot have delay and obstruction.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. FRIST. Let me make a statement now. I ask unanimous consent