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Senate

The Senate met at 9:36 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL, a Senator from the State of Kentucky.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O Lord, our God, the heavens declare Your glory and the firmament shows Your handiwork. Give us today the faith and willingness to follow You with faithfulness. Thank You for revealing Yourself to us and the wonders of Your creation. Reveal to us creative ways to contribute to Your purposes.

Sustain our Senators in their work. Remind them that true prayer is more than words; it is acting in Your name. Lead them to a commitment to continue Your liberating thrust in our world. Use them to unshackle captives and to lift heavy burdens.

Help us all to follow the narrow path of service. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL 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, February 16, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL, a Senator from the State of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MCCONNELL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ISAKSON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the distinguished acting majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning we will have a period of morning business for up to 30 minutes and then resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2271, the USA PATRIOT Act Reauthorizing Amendments Act.

As a reminder, at 10:30 this morning we will have a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to that bill. As under the previous order, if cloture is invoked, we will proceed immediately to the bill itself. We still have a number of items to complete before next week's recess. The leader will have more to announce on the schedule later in the day.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 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 Georgia is recognized.

USA PATRIOT ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, within the hour, we will cast our votes on whether to proceed on the debate on the extension of the PATRIOT Act, which I intend to vote for, both to proceed and then finally for that act.

I rise this morning to reflect on my strong support for the PATRIOT Act and also express some of my frustration with those who have questioned its use with regard to our civil liberties.

I was born in the United States of America in 1944. I am 61 years old. The inalienable rights endowed by our Creator that our forefathers built this Government on, of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, have been the cornerstones of my life. They are the foundation of all our civil liberties. They allowed me to pursue a business career, a marriage, the raising of a family, the educating of children, and allowed me to proceed to the highest office I could have possibly ever imagined: a Member of the Senate. Because of God's blessings and the blessings of this country, last week I was blessed with two grandchildren, born 61 years after I was but into a country that still is founded on the cornerstones of the great civil liberties of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But Sarah Katherine and Riley Dianne, my two granddaughters, were born into a totally different world—the same country but a different world.

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



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Today, terror is our enemy, and it uses the civil liberties that we cherish to attempt to do us harm; in fact, to destroy us. In fact, the freedom of access to communication, to employment, to travel, even to our borders, are the tools and the weapons of those who would do our civil liberties harm and in fact take them away. Because of this, do we give up our civil liberties? Absolutely not. But because of this, we must watch, listen, and pursue our enemies with the technologies of the 21st century. The PATRIOT Act does not threaten our civil liberties. It is our insurance policy to preserve them.

We obviously must be diligent with anything we give Government, in terms of a tool or a power to communicate or to watch or to surveil. But do we turn our back on everything we cherish and that has made us great out of fear we might lose it when, in fact, it is our obligation to protect it? We are in the ultimate war between good and evil. Our enemy today, terror, is unlike any enemy we have ever had. All our previous enemies wanted what we had—our resources, our wealth, our ingenuity, our entrepreneurship, our natural resources, our money, our wealth. Terror doesn't want that. Terror doesn't want what we have. Terror doesn't want us to have what we have. They don't want me to be able to speak freely in this body and speak my mind, or my constituents in Georgia to do the same, even if what they say is diametrically opposed to me. They don't want me to freely carry a weapon and defend myself. They don't want a free press that can publish and write its opinion. They don't want any of the inalienable rights and the guarantees and the civil liberties that we have because they know it stands against the tyranny and the control and the suppression that their radical views have brought to a part of the world.

This place you and I call home and the rest of the world calls America is a very special place. You don't find anybody trying to break out of the United States of America. They are all trying to break in. And they are for a very special reason. The civil liberties and the guarantees of our Constitution and the institutions that protect our country—the reasons that you and I stand here today.

While I respect the dissent of any man or woman in this Chamber about the PATRIOT Act, I regret that we have delayed our ratification of the single tool that turned us around post-9/11, in terms of our ability to protect our shores and our people.

I remind this Chamber and everyone who can listen and hear what I am saying that when the 9/11 Commission reviewed all that went wrong prior to 9/11, it recognized that what went right post-9/11 was the passage of the PATRIOT Act. It acknowledged, without our ability to connect the dots, we could not protect the country.

Once again, I cherish our civil liberties. I see the PATRIOT Act not as a

threat to them but an insurance policy to protect them. As we go to a vote in less than an hour, I encourage every Member of the Senate to vote to proceed and then debate, as we will, the issues and the concerns. But in the end, we should leave this Chamber, today or tomorrow, sending a message to those who would do us harm and sending a message to those whom we stand here today to preserve and protect, that we will not let any encumbrance stop our pursuit of those who would destroy or injure us, our children or our grandchildren.

At the end, at the age of 61 and with the opportunity to serve in the Senate, the rest of my life will be about those grandchildren. Riley Dianne Isakson and Sarah Katherine Isakson are less than a month old. They have a bright future. The PATRIOT Act is going to ensure that the very civil liberties that will allow them to pursue happiness to its maximum extent will still exist because America did not turn its back or fear our ability to compete in a 21st century of terror with the type of 21st century laws we need to surveil, to protect, and to defend those who would hurt or those who would harm this great country, the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ENERGY

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to address some troubling information about natural gas, energy, and the prices of energy as well as its availability. This information came from a hearing held in the Air subcommittee of the EPW Committee last week, and I think it is of sufficient importance to all Members and all States in the Nation that I rise to speak to my colleagues about it.

We all know that American families and workers are suffering from high energy costs. They will suffer even more if we do not balance our environmental concerns with their energy needs. That is why the hearing held last week in the Air subcommittee is all the more important. If we fail to heed the warning our families and workers are sending us about high energy costs and their lost jobs, their lost incomes, their lost standards of living, then we risk doing even more harm.

The people I am talking about include manufacturing workers who used to make chemicals, plastic products, automobile parts or fertilizer. Many of them are now out of work because their employer moved to a foreign

country with cheaper natural gas prices.

The pain, obviously, doesn't stop with workers. Families suffer from lost wages. Most of those who are lucky enough to get a new job will be working for lower wages. Does that mean that those wages have to move even lower? Do they have to live with a broken-down car even longer?

In addition, seniors on fixed incomes are particularly vulnerable to high natural gas prices. Across the Midwest, indeed across the country, many depend on natural gas to heat their homes in the winter and cool their homes in the summer. What do we tell them: Wear a coat inside during the winter and turn on a fan during the summer? We all know of the tragedies that hit our seniors in summer heat waves. What do we tell their families?

Some have said we should tell our workers and their families that we are going to hurt them even more in order to fight climate change. We will pass proposals to cap carbon emissions which, by the way, will raise energy prices even more. For some, I guess today's energy prices are not high enough. Some are willing to drive power and heating bills even higher in their fight against global warming. Some do not care that there are no technologies currently available to capture and store carbon dioxide. But they are working on finding those. We are not there yet.

Some are willing to stop using cheap and abundant fuels, such as coal, and force ourselves to use only the expensive and very limited supply of natural gas. Every year, recently, we have had an opportunity to vote on the McCain-Lieberman proposal. Every year we hear about how it will deliver a \$100 billion hit or more to the economy. Thankfully, every year the Senate kills this job killer.

Last year, as part of the Energy bill debate, we passed a sense of the Senate stating support for climate change strategies that did not hurt the economy. I think we can all agree with that. It sounds simple, but as we consider the "McCain-Lieberman lite" proposals, we have to look at whether a second generation of proposals will actually spare our families and workers from more pain.

Since we still do not have the technologies to capture and store carbon, they will present other dubious arguments. Some will pin their hopes on projections that future natural gas prices will fall from triple historic levels, where they are now, to only double historic levels, where they were a few years ago. This will somehow make carbon caps affordable.

Not only do I doubt that natural gas prices will return to historic lows, States represented by Members advocating these proposals are actively trying to block actions necessary to increase natural gas supply and get prices down. Government natural gas projections, which we found very dubious, include a prediction that natural