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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Loving King of the universe, thank You that nothing can separate us from Your love. Remind us that we are surrounded by Your unconditional, positive regard, regardless of our faults and failures. Help us to see that our anxieties and fears, our doubts and disappointments cannot diminish Your affection for us.

Today, bless the Members of this legislative body. Give them wisdom to see what needs to be done and the courage to do it. Help them to persevere in doing Your will, knowing that a productive harvest is certain.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD 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, June 9, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a

Senator from the State of Colorado, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will be in for a period of morning business. We do not expect a lengthy session over the course of this morning for today.

Last night, we reached an agreement to begin consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill on Monday at 3 o'clock. Chairman WARNER and Senator LEVIN will be in the Senate inviting Members to deliver their opening remarks. We expect amendments to be offered later in the day on Monday. There will be no roll-call votes on Monday. I anticipate debating amendments and setting votes to occur on Tuesday morning. Therefore, we expect at least one vote to occur Tuesday prior to the policy meetings.

As a reminder to our colleagues, we will have the official photograph taken

in the Senate Chamber at 2:15 on Tuesday. Senators should be seated at their desk promptly at 2:15 to avoid missing that photograph.

Following that, we have a debate period set aside prior to a cloture vote on a mine safety and health nomination reported out of the HELP committee back in March.

Early next week, we will be considering the supplemental appropriations conference report when it arrives from the House. We hope to dispose of that conference report in a reasonable amount of time in order to return to the Defense authorization bill.

Clearly, there is much to do next week. We will need everyone's assistance as we schedule these items.

We currently have a lot of things going on in addition to what is going on in the Senate Chamber. The supplemental conference bill, as most people have heard, is coming along and has come along very well. We will be doing that next week. There is a pensions bill in conference. There is real progress being made on that particular bill as well.

ALLIGATOR ALLEY CAR ACCIDENT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I take a few moments to share an account of an event that occurred nearly 3½ years ago. The story I tell is a very tragic story. At the time, it received a lot of media coverage, but because of a recent fortuitous occurrence, it has again become relevant.

Each year around Christmas, some time before, usually afterwards, my family, Karyn and our three boys, and my extended family, have a tradition of going to Fort Lauderdale, FL, a tradition that began well over 40 years ago by my parents and my own brothers and sisters—I have two brothers and two sisters—and their children, and usually, almost always, several friends from a number of those individuals spend time together enjoying the

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



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occasion, being together as a family, reliving old memories and, along the way, creating new ones.

On New Year's Day in 2003, I had taken my sons, Jonathan and Bryan, two of my three sons, on a trip to the Everglades. It was to spend the day in the Everglades, showing them the beauty of that wonderful area and the rich tradition that is reflected by the beauty there and by nature. We had a wonderful day.

On the way back—and this is west of Fort Lauderdale—on the way back in, we were heading down what is Interstate 75 west in that part of Florida. It runs directly east back to Fort Lauderdale. That whole track is known as Alligator Alley. It was an ordinary day. We had a wonderful day together as a family. It was a great start to a new year—again, it was New Year's Day—an opportunity to share with family the beauty of that environment, the gorgeous, wonderful, magnificent part of this country.

As we were talking about events of the day as we were driving, suddenly traffic came to a halt. Just ahead, I saw red lights flashing. We pulled onto the median. I came out of the car because something clearly had happened, and it had just happened several moments earlier.

Walking down the median, I approached a horrific scene. It was a little bit in the distance, 100 yards away. There was a crumpled red car on its side, an SUV. There were men, women, and children who clearly had been thrown, hurled from that vehicle, a distance of 25, 50, even 75 yards. I remember looking out—again, it was a beautiful day, a sunny day—and as with any event such as this that occurs so quickly, so unexpectedly, we saw the streaming smoke coming from an overturned vehicle with an open door. We saw a crushed car. We did not see another car near it. Clearly, the car had flipped. Then we saw these bodies that were hurled, thrown, from this vehicle a great distance in this beautiful green median. It was a surreal environment.

It was not immediately clear to me how many people had been injured, but the fact you could tell there were several people around the car, and there were at least four people in the median over this distance, I knew that what I was witnessing was clearly devastating. It was serious.

At that time, there were no other health personnel on the scene. As a doctor, and as one who has spent days and years in emergency rooms and in operating rooms, in terms of the immediate response, it comes pretty natural in terms of evaluation, triage, and resuscitation. The real challenge was being out there, and you saw over a distance of 75 yards four people who had such a traumatic accident. Two adults had climbed out of the vehicle itself. There were four individuals—four, what appeared to be lifeless, motionless bodies, women and children, two children and two adults—who lay in the median.

Lara Spalding, whom I did not know at the time—I will come back to Lara in just a little bit—then was a nursing student at Nashville—this is the irony of it—Nashville's Belmont University, and actually worked in the emergency room there with some of my colleagues back at Vanderbilt, where I worked for 10 years as a cardio surgeon, heart surgeon, trauma surgeon.

She later described the scene that day:

It was awful. It looked like someone had dropped six people from a 5-story building.

At that point in time when I was there—and I didn't know Lara at the time—she was there either at the same time or a few seconds afterwards, there were no other doctors on the scene. Alligator Alley being so far out at that time—although it has changed, thank goodness—the emergency personnel had to come from within Fort Lauderdale to come out along one stretch of highway. It was probably 25, 30 miles, so health personnel were not yet on the scene.

When that sort of thing happens, you know your immediate responsibility needs to be to assess the situation, triage their care, and to initiate resuscitation appropriately, but the problem is people were scattered over a 75-yard distance.

I did what I could; that was, rapidly assess the ABCs in terms of resuscitation, in getting airways, and when the medical personnel started to arrive, both by helicopter, trauma teams, relief teams and ambulances started coming in, help them triage and direct them to the people who needed the care the most. And then for individuals conducting the appropriate resuscitation, of establishing an airway, making sure they were breathing and receiving CPR.

In that sort of event, it is important to get someone on the telephone to coordinate overall, so I spent a lot of time talking to 911 and the hospitals that coordinated the personnel, and as the paramedics arrived by helicopter, was able to say: You are on the ground now. Don't waste your time here; that is taken care of. And they were able to go to another patient.

I mentioned all that because I do think it is important for people to participate. Lara, at the time, was with one of the patients, cradling them, giving appropriate encouragement and instruction to personnel who were arriving who very much appreciate her heroism in stopping along the side of the road and assisting.

In addition to Ms. Spalding, there was an off-duty paramedic and five others who also stopped to help. Ms. Spalding, Lara Spalding—I will come back to her again shortly—at that time was a nursing student but before had been an Army medic who had worked at Vanderbilt University Trauma Center. She was of huge assistance in terms of the triage, assisting the paramedics.

I remember her going over to one boy who had a mangled leg. She cradled his

head and tried to keep him comfortable. She later said:

You're prepared for this when you're in a trauma center . . . but not when you're driving down the road.

I also want to comment on the men and women of the Broward County Sheriff's Office Division of Fire Rescue, particularly Incident Commander Chris Koski and his firefighters who also came on the scene and were so professional, so experienced. They deserve tremendous credit.

As far as the rescue operators, the first responders out there do not get enough credit. They are out there 24 hours a day responding to these incidents. They responded in such a quiet, humble, and heroic way. They all deserve our gratitude. They are heroes, not just for this particular day but for the work they do every day. That is what they do every single day and night.

I do remember the people whom we could not help: Felicie Kali, a beautiful 11-year-old girl whom we were unable to resuscitate, died at the scene. Her 14-year-old brother, Felix Kali, unfortunately, died later that day. Shadia Rene, a 20-year-old half-sister of the two, we were able to resuscitate but died 3 days later at the hospital. The two parents lived. A family friend who was in the automobile also lived.

After the tragic events of that day, I went back to see them the next day at the hospital, to console and to comfort them as much as one can in that time of tragedy.

There is little anyone can say directly to a family or to people involved to address such grief, but I do pray for their family to this day.

I clearly wish there was more that could have been done in response, despite the heroic actions of so many of the paramedical personnel, first responders, and Lara Spalding. I keep mentioning Lara Spalding because it was 2 years ago that my staff ran into her and talked to her. She was at that time working as a nurse at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital. In May, she took a new job. Today, she works here in the Nation's Capitol. I didn't know this until just a few days ago. She works in the Office of the Attending Physician. I was unaware of that and then had the opportunity to learn about that last week. I am delighted that she is here in the Nation's Capitol. I know she will be of great service to the U.S. Congress and to our Nation. While I would have gladly recommended her based specifically on her actions that day, I clearly had no role in her actually being hired but do appreciate her service.

SUPPLEMENTAL SPENDING

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the issue of spending in Washington, DC. None of us, as elected representatives, Democrat or Republican, in the House or the Senate, can go home without people saying: Washington seems to be spending too much.