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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges, guide the Members of this body so that they will be faithful stewards of Your will. Give them understanding and integrity that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served. Teach them to rely on Your strength and to serve You with honor. May each Senator in her or his daily work know the joy of partnership with You.

Lord, we pray today also for the men and women of our Armed Forces. Defend them with Your heavenly grace and give them courage to face perils with trust in You. Give them a sense of Your abiding presence wherever they may be. Strengthen and sustain their loved ones.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER 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. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2007.

To the Senate:

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

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER 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. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. During the period of morning business, Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The first 30 minutes will be controlled by the Republicans and the second 30 minutes will be controlled by the majority.

At 12:30, the Senate will recess until the hour of 2:15. Upon reconvening at 2:15, the Senate will resume debate on the motion to proceed to S. 184. The cloture vote will occur at 2:30, with the time until then equally divided and controlled between the two leaders and their designees.

As I indicated yesterday prior to the Senate adjourning, the Republican leader and I have had discussions about the 9/11 Commission recommendations legislation, and while the time has been set for the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 184, we will continue our discussions to ascertain whether we can vitiate that cloture vote. If we are able to do that, we would switch to S. 4, which is the Homeland Security-reported matter reported by Chairman LIEBERMAN and Ranking Member COLLINS.

I would say, as I said last night, whichever vehicle comes to the floor—I would hope we could speed things up by 30 hours by doing S. 4—we need to get to this legislation. I had indicated prior to the recess, and indicate today, it is open to amendment. I, in fact, even have the first Democratic Senator who wants to offer an amendment. I am sure the minority has a lot of amendments they want to offer.

9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of the body letters Senator MCCONNELL and I received. They are dated yesterday. The letter to me states:

It has been exactly 14 years since the first attack on the World Trade Center; over 5 years since the terrorist attacks of 9/11; and over 2 years since the 9/11 Commission released a blueprint for strengthening America's security. The pace of Congressional response to these wake-up calls has been glacial.

Now, I am not going to read the other three paragraphs of this letter other than to say this letter is signed by different groups—widows and orphans—Carol Ashley, representing a group called VOICES of September 11th, who is the mother of Janice, who was killed in that 9/11 occurrence; Beverly Eckert, representing a group called Families of September 11, and who is the widow of Sean Rooney, who was 50; Mary Fetchet, the founding director and president of VOICES of September 11th, who is the mother of Brad, who was 24, who was killed in the incident; and Carie Lemack, the cofounder and president of Families of September 11, who is the daughter of Judy Larocque, who was 50 years old, who died in that terrorist attack.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

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



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S2237

FEBRUARY 26, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Senate Majority Leader U.S. Senate, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID: It has been exactly 14 years since the first attack on the World Trade Center; over 5 years since the terrorist attacks of 9/11; and over 2 years since the 9/11 Commission released a blueprint for strengthening America's security. The pace of Congressional response to these wake-up calls has been glacial.

The House of Representatives has validated its commitment to improving national security by passing H.R.1. When S. 4 goes to conference, its provisions must match or surpass the strength and comprehensiveness of H.R.1. Failure to act ratchets up the danger for America. The longer critical security issues remain unresolved, the more time and options the terrorists have.

S. 4 should be a clean bill, limited to implementing the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations. This legislation is far too important to be politicized by the introduction of non-germane, controversial amendments and debate, particularly those relating to Iraq. Attention to both issues is critically important. As such, each deserves separate deliberation.

We urge you to act now to protect America by passing stand-alone, comprehensive security legislation under S. 4 based on the 9/11 Commission blueprint without complications regarding Iraq. The legacy of those whose lives have been taken by terrorists on American soil is in your hands. Prove to the families of those killed in 1993 and 2001, and to all Americans, that this is a new day in Washington, and that safety and security will finally take precedence over special interest groups and politics.

Respectfully,

CAROL ASHLEY,
Mother of Janice, 25,
VOICES of Sep-
tember 11th.

BEVERLY ECKERT,
Widow of Sean Roo-
ney, 50, Families of
September 11.

MARY FETCHET,
Mother of Brad, 24,
Founding Director
and President,
VOICES of Sep-
tember 11th.

CARIE LEMACK,
Daughter of Judy
Larocque, 50, Co-
founder and Presi-
dent, Families of
September 11.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, the distinguished Republican leader and people on his side of the aisle, if people are concerned about going to S. 4 because of not being allowed to offer amendments, I have stated publicly—and I understand because there were no amendments on the continuing resolution—and I will state again, I appreciate very much the cooperation of the Republicans. Even though there were no amendments, this was an issue this Congress, this Senate had to complete. None of the Members of the body here are responsible for what took place prior to this Congress. The 110th Congress is our responsibility, and that is why I am very happy the Democrats and Republicans joined together and got the continuing resolution passed. We were able to work our way through the contentious matters we had dealing

with the Iraq war. I stated at the time we were doing that the 9/11 legislation will be subject to amendments.

Senator MCCONNELL and I are working our way through this issue to determine when the next debate will take place regarding Iraq. I hope it can be done on an agreement between the two of us. We are working on that. But I do say, don't anyone suggest the 9/11 legislation will not be open to amendment; it will be. We are going to work our way through that. There will not be cloture filed on this legislation until—hopefully, it won't have to be done. I think this is a piece of legislation for which it would not be necessary. There certainly will not be anything in the next 10 days. We will take a look at it.

I will work in conjunction with the distinguished Republican leader to find out if cloture ever has to be filed on the 9/11 bill. But I would hope we could gain this extra 30 hours and move to it right away. We could get the opening statements out of the way and some amendments offered today.

I had a leadership meeting at 9 o'clock this morning. I told the Senators there they better be ready for some votes Friday, that we are not going to be finished by 10 o'clock Friday morning. We have to finish this bill and finish it in a way that is appropriate.

So we have a lot of work to do. When we finish the 9/11 legislation, we have stem cells, we have the budget, we have the supplemental during this work period. We have a lot to do. We will need the cooperation of both sides.

I spoke out here last night, and I did my utmost to lay out the facts. We have been able to get a lot done this last work period. It was a long work period. We were able to do some good things. We were able to pass the most comprehensive ethics and lobbying reform in the history of the country. We passed minimum wage legislation for the first time in 10 years. We got the country's financial house in order by completing that. We have done some good work. As I said last night, it has been done on a bipartisan basis. We have worked together. So I hope we can continue to do that.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

9/11 BILL AND IRAQ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I indicated to my good friend, the majority leader, yesterday, and I now reiterate publicly, our desire to go to the measure reported by the Committee on Homeland Security. I think we will be able to work that out in the next few hours. We have also had a good conversation about how to structure a debate on Iraq to follow the 9/11 bill. There are a number of important

amendments that Members on this side of the aisle want to offer to the 9/11 bill.

The majority leader has indicated there will be no desire on his part, and reiterated it here this morning, to prevent any of those amendments from being acted upon. So we expect a free-wheeling, Senate-style debate on the 9/11 bill in which a number of important amendments related to the measure are offered. I think we will be able to work out a way to go forward in the next few hours that will accommodate our mutual desire to have the right bill before the Senate regarding 9/11, and, hopefully, sometime shortly thereafter some kind of agreement to structure the debate on Iraq in a way that will be mutually acceptable to both sides of the aisle.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

EASTER RECESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, finally, let me say this. I have had a number of people come to me during the last several days. In fact, I got a call in Nevada. The House is having 2 weeks during the Easter recess. The Senate is going to have 1 week. Everyone should understand that. We are going to work—we cannot move as fast as the House. We have rules here that simply do not allow that. While we would all like to be able to go home and spend time in our respective States, that will not happen. We are going to have only a 1-week recess for Easter.

I would say during the rest of the year there are no set times. I have been as forewarning as possible to the distinguished Republican leader, telling him of the days we would not have votes, days we would have votes. I am going to do my very best not to have surprises in the schedule. One of the surprises we will not have is 2 weeks for the Easter break. We are going to have to work through that. Up until August, I am hopeful and confident we can get our work done. But the August recess is a long one, and everyone should understand that is not automatic. We have to get our work done or we may have to shorten that also.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I appreciate the clarity the majority leader brought to the issue of the Easter work period. I think that is very helpful to Members on our side of the aisle for planning purposes, and I appreciate his bringing up that matter this morning.

I yield the floor.

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