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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROBERT MENENDEZ, a Senator from the State of New Jersey.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Most holy and gracious God, who turns the shadow of night into the glory of morning, shower our lawmakers with Your mercy this day. Calm troubled thoughts, and guide their feet in the way of peace.

Let Your strength be more than sufficient to meet and manage their weaknesses. Make them instruments of Your grace and goodness, as You renew in them the joy of belonging to You. Let Your eyes rest upon our Senators, and keep Your ears open to their prayers.

Guard their feet so that they will not deviate from the path of unwavering integrity. Give them fresh opportunities to discover Your unlimited power. We pray in Your blessed Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROBERT MENENDEZ 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, March 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 ROBERT MENENDEZ, a Senator from the State of New Jersey, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MENENDEZ 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, we are going to proceed to a period of morning business now. It will be for 60 minutes. The time is divided between both the majority and the minority. The Republicans are controlling the first 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1591, which is the supplemental appropriations bill. We will interrupt consideration of the supplemental at 11:50 in order to debate a judicial nomination. A vote on confirmation of the nomination of George Wu to be a U.S. district judge will occur around 12:10 or thereabouts. The vote will be the first vote today. After that vote, we will recess until 2:15 p.m. in order to permit the regular Tuesday meeting of the respective party conferences.

As a reminder, cloture was filed last evening on the supplemental appropriations bill. Members have until 2:30 today to file first-degree amendments.

We are conferring with the Republicans—Senator MCCONNELL and I have spoken on a number of occasions, not this morning yet but yesterday—to try to arrange votes on a number of amendments, one of which is the one filed by Senator COCHRAN. We are going to try to work out an orderly process to go to an amendment relating to minimum wage. There are, perhaps,

some other amendments the Republicans want to do dealing with strikes, dealing with the funding of this bill. There is an issue which is important to both Democrats and Republicans dealing with county payments and payment in lieu of taxes.

At this stage, that is the universe of the matters we will work on and try to get time agreements to proceed to the cloture vote, which will occur in the morning. Hopefully, we can work toward that end and get a lot of it done today.

We all recognize the importance of this legislation, not only from the aspect of the military, but there are other matters in the bill that are extremely important.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

VOTES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me just note the remarks of the majority leader that there are at least three amendments, hopefully, we can vote on today: the pending Cochran amendment; there will be a minimum wage amendment, on which Senator GRASSLEY and Senator BAUCUS are working; and the so-called county payments amendment, which also has bipartisan support, which was referred to by Senator REID. It would be my hope that we could vote on all of those today. We have, as the majority leader indicated, the cloture motion vote in the morning, so I think it would be good to dispose of those three for sure today, if not others.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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



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