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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, April 16, 2007, at 2 p.m.

Senate

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2007

The Senate met at 10 a.m., and was called to order by the Honorable MARY LANDRIEU, a Senator from the State of Louisiana.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of life, rescue us from the faults to which we are prone. Keep us from saying one thing and doing another; from criticizing others for what we allow in ourselves. Keep us from demanding standards from others which we ourselves make no effort to fulfill.

Lord, keep us from the indecision that cannot say yes or no. Keep us from the reluctance to break habits which we know are wrong. Keep our Senators today from trying to please both others and You. Keep them from anything that prevents them from giving all their loyalty, allegiance, and heart to You.

Lord, give them Your grace, mercy, and peace. We pray in Your powerful Name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARY LANDRIEU 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, April 10, 2007.

To the Senate:

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

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President Pro tempore.

Ms. LANDRIEU 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. First, Madam President, I would like to welcome everyone back here in the Chamber. We have had a week break, and we are king of the hill because the House is out this week, so we don't have to compete with them.

This morning there will be a 60-minute period of morning business, with Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the final 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will debate concurrently the two stem cell bills. Under an order entered prior to the Easter recess, debate on

the two bills is for a period up to 20 hours. I anticipate we will enter an order to provide for designated segments of time to be utilized for those who support and oppose the measures. As previously announced, there will be no rollcall votes today. Both the distinguished Republican leader and I have scheduled our work caucuses for tomorrow rather than today, when they normally take place.

Madam President, I have a speech that I am going to give today. I didn't alert the distinguished Republican leader that I was going to give that, so I yield to him, if he has anything he would like to say.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

IRAQ FUNDING AND STEM CELL LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I too wish to welcome everyone back.

It had been my hope that the House of Representatives would have appointed conferees on the supplemental appropriations bill for the troops before their departure. I think it is extremely important we finish that bill and get it down to the President for the veto we believe is forthcoming over the language with regard to the troops, the language which, in effect, dictates a withdrawal date and also the excessive spending that is also a part of that

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



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bill. So the sooner we can get through this process, the better.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff sent a letter to me, week before last, indicating that if we push this into late April, it creates a lot of problems for the troops. So we hope we can get through this process, resolve our differences, and get the money for the troops at the earliest possible time.

As the majority leader has indicated, we will be going forward with the stem cell issue. There is an alternative proposal by Senator COLEMAN and Senator ISAKSON that we think solves some of the ethical concerns and which will be considered by the Senate. Both will be subjected to the 60-vote threshold, and it is my hope the Coleman-Isakson bill, which could be signed by the President and will actually make a difference, will make it through the legislative process and down to the President for his signature.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Madam President, before I go to my formal remarks I have prepared, as I indicated, I have had extensive conversations during the past week with Chairman OBEY, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and I think we have made progress as to where we need to go in order to do this as soon as possible. There is some controversy over the time limit. We know the President has indicated he needs the money right away, but even last year, when the Republicans were in charge, we finished the supplemental bill in June and there were no complaints at that time.

We have had a statement from the Congressional Research Service that the money will last until sometime in July. Even the Pentagon itself has indicated the money will last until around the first part of June. So we are going to do the very best we can to complete this as quickly as possible. We know it is important, and we will move forward as expeditiously as possible.

During this week, since the House is not here, I intend to continue my dialogue with Chairman OBEY. I have not spoken to the Speaker today, but I have a meeting with her later, at 5 o'clock, and so we will move forward, and I appreciate the remarks of the Republican leader.

OPENING OF THE THIRD WORK PERIOD

Mr. REID. Madam President, throughout the world, Easter has been celebrated. This was done on Sunday. On that joyous day, Pope Benedict spoke of the human condition with a very heavy heart, and I quote:

How many wounds—how much suffering there is in the world. Nothing positive comes from Iraq, torn apart by continual slaughter as the civilian population flees.

As we open the third work period this year, Pope Benedict's words weigh on my mind. I hope we will honor them as we continue to work in a bipartisan

manner to address that suffering by moving America in a new direction at home and abroad.

That was the promise we made to the American people when the 110th Congress opened 3 months ago; not a promise made only by Democrats but by Democrats and Republicans. Although we have only completed the first two work periods of the session, we have made considerable progress.

When we began in January, we knew all our goals depended on changing the way Washington works. So our first order of business was passing the toughest lobbying ethics reform legislation in our Nation's history. We were guided through that by the chairman of our Rules Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN.

Next, with the skill of Senators KENNEDY and BAUCUS, we voted to give working Americans a much deserved and long overdue raise by finally increasing the minimum wage.

After the minimum wage, we addressed the fiscal mess left by the last Congress and passed a continuing resolution on a bipartisan basis, then enacted tough spending limits and limited earmarks for this fiscal year.

We then set our sights on keeping our country safe by finally passing the recommendations set forth by the 9/11 Commission, recommendations that came many years ago. This legislation was led by Senator LIEBERMAN, as he skillfully led us on this long overdue legislation.

Next, we passed, under the guidance of our brilliant chairman, KENT CONRAD, a balanced budget that put American families first by cutting taxes for working people, increasing investment for education, veterans, health care, and implementing the same pay-as-you-go rules that every American family must follow.

While addressing these crucial priorities here at home—ethics reform, minimum wage, homeland security, a return to fiscal responsibility, and a balanced budget for working families—we have also continued to seek a new direction for the war in Iraq at every opportunity, as the American people called for us to do last November. That is why we passed—with Senator BYRD and Senator MURRAY—last week an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that fully funded our troops while also setting forth a new course in Iraq.

The President has put our troops in the middle of a civil war. That was never supposed to be their mission. Every day the price we pay grows worse—soon to be 3,300 American lives lost, tens of thousands more wounded, and according to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 600,000 Iraqis have been killed. Our American Treasury has been depleted by about a \$½ trillion because of this war. Yet there is still no end in sight for our troops or our taxpayers.

Let me be clear. Democrats are committed to giving our troops the funds

they need. The supplemental appropriations bill that we are trying to send to President Bush will provide every dollar the commander has requested and it will go further by providing funding to address the unconscionable conditions at Walter Reed and the other military health care facilities the President's budget left out.

Democrats are united in our commitment to fully funding our troops on the ground in Iraq and here at home, but we are also committed to providing our troops a strategy for success in Iraq, which President Bush has failed to do from the very start of this war more than 4 years ago.

Virtually all experts, military and civilian, agree the war cannot be won militarily. Success can only come when all the political leaders in Iraq reach a settlement. Even General Petraeus, who is our commander on the ground there, said that only 20 percent of the war can be won militarily. It can only be won politically, diplomatically, and economically. Eighty percent of the war must be conducted through economics, through politics, and through diplomacy.

Pope Benedict, the spiritual leader of more than a billion people, said on Easter Sunday, and again I quote:

Nothing positive comes from Iraq, torn apart by continual slaughter as the civilian population flees.

That is why we are telling the President he needs to make good on his promise to get the Iraqi people to meet the benchmarks they set for themselves but have never followed through on. After 4 years, it is long past time for Iraq to take responsibility for its own failures and its own future.

American troops are putting their lives at risk every single day, but Iraqi leaders are not willing to take the political risk of governing their own country. That must change. That is what Congress is demanding, that is what the American people, by a large majority, demand. The President should be leading us in that direction, not threatening to veto funding for our troops unless we rubberstamp his flawed plan.

Over the next 2 weeks, the President has an opportunity to work with Congress to let his views be heard on how to improve this bill. Speaker PELOSI and I invited him last month to sit down and work with us to develop a strategy together. We remain ready to do that. But this will require a commitment by the President to move beyond the political theater and take a seat at the table of negotiation, of compromise, of direction change.

Recall the Pope's Easter message: "Nothing positive comes from Iraq."

While we continue to press the President and his supporters in Congress to chart a new course in Iraq, we will move to the next set of issues crucial to the American people: expanding Federal funding for stem cell research, lowering Medicare prescription drug costs, delivering a new national energy