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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, thank You for the miracle of Your love. We discover Your affection in the beauty of nature and the farflung immensity of space. We feel Your embrace in the orderly movement of the seasons, in the laws of seedtime and harvest, and in the unfolding of Your merciful providence. We receive Your kisses in the cry of a new baby, in the softness of a leaf, and in the lilies of the field.

Today, use the Members of this body as agents of Your love. Remind them that they fulfill Your will by loving You passionately and by earnestly caring for their neighbors. Open their ears to the cries of the less fortunate. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARY L. 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, May 22, 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 L. 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.

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 now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, with the first half of the time under the control of the Republicans and the second half of the time under the control of the majority.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, as you just announced, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour. Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the immigration legislation. Senator SESSIONS, under a previous order entered, is to be recognized for 2 hours. He will speak until 12:30 p.m. Today, the regular party conferences will be held beginning at 12:30 p.m., so Senator SESSIONS will complete his remarks after 2:15 p.m.

It is my understanding that the first amendment that has been agreed to be

laid down will be by Senator DORGAN. I don't know if there is a consent agreement to that effect. Is there one, Madam President?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is not.

Mr. REID. I think this has been cleared on both sides. I ask unanimous consent that the first amendment be offered by Senator DORGAN, after the remarks of Senator SESSIONS.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, if there is any problem with this procedure, the two managers can ask unanimous consent, and we will all agree to change it. But I think that is the agreement which has been made. If it has not, we can start over. That is the general agreement. What we plan to do during consideration of the legislation is to alternate back and forth—Democrat and Republican, Democrat and Republican. That is what we did the last time.

The only thing I will announce—I told both managers and I think Senator McCONNELL agrees with this, and if not, it is something we need to do for an orderly process here—is that we do an amendment at a time. The last time on this bill, we wound up with 30, 40 amendments pending. I am saying we are not going to do that this time. We are going to do one amendment at a time, unless there is something extraordinary to come along to change that procedure.

We have a long amendment list. The substitute amendment was laid down last night. It is now available to all Members.

Tonight, I should announce, as has been announced in the past, there is going to be a dinner in the Botanic Garden to honor the spouses of the Senate. I hope all Members will attend this event.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who seeks time? The Senator from New Hampshire.

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



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Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I believe I am to be recognized for 15 minutes; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. GREGG pertaining to the introduction of S. 15 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

2003 TAX CUTS

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, if there is one thing I hear over and over again when I talk to my constituents about where we are in this Congress, it is the request that we get together and work together and that we get something done. There is always some particular issue someone will raise that will have to do with immigration, that will have to do with taxes, that will have to do with Social Security, but underlying all these issues is the refrain: Why can't you people work together? Why can't you get something done? As one constituent put it, almost plaintively: Senator, is there any hope, or are you just going to bicker back and forth between the parties, as you have always done?

Well, this month, there has been a sign of hope that I think we ought to make mention of that demonstrates that, in fact, maybe it is possible for us to work together on some of the more contentious issues. This sign of hope did not necessarily come from the Congress, it was an action that involved Members of Congress and members of the Bush administration, and it has to do with trade.

There are many issues that divide the two parties, but one that has divided us as much as any has been the issue of trade, with the Democrats saying under no circumstances will we approve any more free-trade agreements until we get the kinds of provisions with respect to labor standards that we insist on; and the Republicans have said and Republican administrations have said, those kinds of agreements are deal breakers; if we put those in the trade agreements, we make the trade agreement impossible to enforce. The two sides have yelled at each other over this issue now for years.

Well, this month we have had a breakthrough, and I will quote from the newspaper articles with respect to this, first, from the New York Times and then from the Wall Street Journal. With a May 11 headline "Bush and Democrats in Accord on Labor Rights in Trade Deals," the New York Times said the following:

The Bush administration and House Speaker Pelosi, breaking a partisan impasse that had dragged on for months, reached an

agreement this evening on the rights of workers overseas to join labor unions. Both sides predicted the agreement would clear the way for congressional approval of several pending trade agreements.

This came as happy news to me. I was with the majority leader and a group of Senators when we went to South America, and we heard from the President of Peru that the most significant thing we could do in the United States to maintain good relations with Peru was to approve the Peru Free Trade Agreement. After this conversation, some of the Democratic Senators who were on that trip said to me: BOB, that is going to be very hard. It is going to be very difficult. We are not getting the kind of cooperation we feel we need out of the Bush administration. Well, now they have. It has been worked out.

Again, back to The New York Times:

Negotiations to complete the trade deals have been led by Susan Schwab, United States Trade Representative on the administration side, and by Representative Charles Rangel, the New York Democrat who is Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee on the House side.

Good news. Both sides giving a little and getting something done. Then this paragraph from the New York Times:

Despite the endorsement of Mr. Rangel and Speaker Pelosi, many Democrats say that half or more of the Democrats in Congress may vote against the deal, but the agreement is expected to pass with strong backing among Republicans, whose leaders will urge them to vote with President Bush.

This reminds me of a meeting I had in the White House when Bill Clinton was the President. We were talking about how to deal with trade, and President Clinton said to the Members of Congress who were there: What do we need? The former Senator from New York, Pat Moynihan, sitting next to the President, spoke up and said: Sir, we need more Democrats. The Republicans are fine on this issue, it is the Democrats who are the problem.

Well, we have had that breakthrough on trade. It is encouraging. The Wall Street Journal had this to say about it.

The agreement announced last night by House Speaker Pelosi, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, and other top officials and lawmakers clears the hurdle to passage of some small bilateral trade deals, and it could ultimately smooth the way for broader trade measures such as renewing President Bush's soon to expire authority to negotiate trade deals without the threat of congressional amendments as well as a new global trade agreement now being negotiated in the Doha round of world trade talks.

I raise this as a ray of hope and then as the background for a suggestion. I hope the sense of urgency that brought the two sides together on trade can apply to the question of the tax cuts and whether they will be made permanent. I was in New York yesterday with a group of representatives from Wall Street, from the venture capital community and those economists who deal with the question of growth and keeping the economy strong, and was interested to be told the one thing that

would be the most important for them to keep the economy strong and growing was to keep the tax cuts that were enacted in 2003 in the law permanent.

We asked some of those representatives what would happen if the tax cuts were to expire? The reaction we got was: Well, we assume that Congress will, of course, not let them expire because they have worked so well. They have made significant differences with respect to corporate governance and economic growth that, of course, they are going to be extended. Then I pointed out to them that if we stay on the track that was established in the budget bill that was passed, the budget bill that the Senator from New Hampshire talked about, those tax cuts will expire in 2010.

The folks in New York were stunned. How could Congress do this? How could they allow that to expire in the face of the evidence that these tax cuts have been so beneficial? We said: Well, that is the path we are on. That is the glide-path that was set in this budget bill. The budget bill can be trumped by future budgets later on, but if nothing is done and we stay exactly as we are, these tax cuts are certain to expire.

What will be the consequences? Well, we have turned to some experts who will make these kinds of projections and asked that question. We would like to talk about this. I am sure no one can see the detail on the chart, but I will do my best to highlight the visual impact. I will say, in all fairness, as I always say, these are projections, and every projection is wrong. I don't know whether it is wrong on the high side or wrong on the low side, but every projection we ever have about the future, that is specific, is wrong. Nonetheless, I think the basic trend that is shown in these charts is a legitimate trend.

This first one talks about the number of jobs that will be created State by State if the tax cuts are made permanent. Now, don't pay attention to the numbers because you can't see them, look at the bars and let me identify the States that will see significant job growth if the tax cuts are made permanent.

The biggest line is California, followed by Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas. It might be interesting to go back to those States and look at how those Senators from those States voted on the budget bill that would have the tax cuts expire. Jobs in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Some of those States are complaining about their current economies. They are saying their unemployment rate is too high. Make the tax cuts permanent and you make a significant contribution to creating jobs in those States.

What about economic growth in those States? Let's look at that chart. Basically, they are the same States, but there are some slight changes. Once again, this is the income growth