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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, whose compassion never fails, from Your vantage point of eternity, look afresh into our time. Teach us to love as You love and to touch hurting lives as You do. Remove from us besetting fears about what tomorrow holds as You remind us that our times are in Your hands.

Today, inspire our Senators to honor You. Empower them to treat one another as they themselves desire to be treated and to pray for one another. Calm their anxieties and strengthen their faith in the ultimate triumph of Your purposes. Let Your unfailing love energize them to new levels of excellence and service.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 6, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in reading this morning's paper, I was reminded of the times I would read Dr. Seuss to my boys and my girl. In today's New York Times, Tom Friedman quotes Dr. Seuss as follows:

Then he shut the Things
in the box with the hook.
And the cat went away
with a sad kind of look.
"That is good," said the fish.
"He has gone away. Yes,
but your mother will come.
She will find this big mess!
And this mess is so big
And so deep and so tall,
we can not pick it up.
There is no way at all!"

Mr. President, some would say that is what we have in the Senate today—a big mess. But if you go back and read Dr. Seuss, the cat manages to clean up the mess. And as big of a mess as we have with immigration in the United States, we have the opportunity to clean up a big mess. If we work on a bipartisan basis in the next couple of days, we can clean up this mess. If we cannot, then we are back with the cat who didn't clean up the mess and the Senate didn't clean up its mess with immigration.

We have known for 3 months the time set for doing immigration. People worked in good faith trying to come up with legislation, and they were a week

short. They said: We need more time. So they got more time. They came up with a bipartisan bill. Ten Senators, Democrats and Republicans, came up with an immigration bill. Is it a perfect bill? Of course, not. Is it a good bill? It is not bad at all. It does some things that I think are extremely important, something I have talked about for a long time based on my experience in Smith Valley, NV, with a girl who couldn't go to college. She was Hispanic. Her parents were here illegally, and this young girl couldn't go to college even though she was the best student in her class. So we have in this bill the DREAM Act. It is a dream for many young Americans.

AgJOBS. We have been talking about an AgJOBS bill for years. This bill has one in it.

Border security. We have talked about the need for border security. This bill provides border security.

Employer enforcement, employer sanctions. This legislation has good employer sanction language. Good enough? Well, we will have to see. Some want to improve it. Maybe that is the way to do things.

Pathway to legalization. For millions of people here illegally with improper papers, a path to legalization is a way to bring them out of the shadows. That is in this legislation.

This year's legislation builds on the bill passed by the Senate last year after extensive committee considerations and many floor amendments. This year, there were lengthy bipartisan negotiations involving about 10 Senators and a number of Cabinet officers, in addition to other people from the White House. The negotiators asked for additional time. We talked about that. It was agreed upon.

We started the floor debate the week before Memorial Day recess. During that week, we disposed of more than a dozen amendments and allowed an additional 14 amendments to become pending to the bill. Proponents of the

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bill asked for an additional week of floor debate. I agreed. The minority leader said this time this is a 2-week bill. I agreed with him and scheduled a second week of debate, and that is where we are now.

This week, we have conducted four rollcall votes, adopted four other amendments by voice vote, and we probably would have done more but for the unfortunate death of our colleague and friend, Senator Thomas. Yesterday morning, in memory of our friend, we decided not to work here, and that was the right thing to do. This morning, we have two more votes that are scheduled already on the Cornyn and Kennedy amendments regarding eligibility for the legalization program. We have proposed a unanimous consent agreement. We did that yesterday, and I understand the managers have that fairly well worked out on the 12 pending amendments to have votes on those later today. That was not accepted last evening, but I am hopeful that agreement can be worked out soon.

So it is clear we are working in good faith to process amendments and move forward on this bill. My decision about cloture last night was simply a way to ensure that we finish this bill in a timely manner. By offering to postpone the cloture vote, as I did yesterday, until tomorrow night, I am offering an additional full day of amendments before the cloture vote and, of course, germane amendments are considered postcloture.

I had a meeting in my office just a few minutes ago with a bipartisan group of Senators. I believe there is a good-faith effort being made by a majority of Senators, Democrats and Republicans, to move this bill forward. That is what we are going to try to do.

There are some people, rightly or wrongly—and that is all in the eyes of the beholder—who feel they have not had an opportunity to deal with this legislation. If that is the case, let's see if we can come up with some amendments that will make them happy. We do a lot of business in this body by unanimous consent—in fact, most everything. The cloture vote is scheduled for tomorrow morning, an hour after we come into session. We can change that. It is my hope that we can finish the bill this week. I am very confident we can.

I personally feel an obligation to go to the funeral in Wyoming. Craig Thomas was a Republican with whom I worked very closely on a number of issues, and I had great appreciation and admiration for him. Out of respect for him and Susan, I feel that I need to go to that funeral, and I am sure many others feel the same way. So that is going to change our schedule. It is my understanding that funeral is going to be Saturday. I have notified my caucus, and I have explained to the distinguished Republican leader that we may have to work longer hours this week. But let's try to finish this bill.

There are some, and it is a small number of people, who don't want this

bill finished under any circumstances. That happens on a lot of bills, and we have to try to work our way through that.

I hope people understand that I would like to get a bill passed. We have responsibilities as Senators to not only deal with immigration, which is a system, as I have tried to explain with a little vignette from Dr. Seuss, that is badly in need of fixing, but we have a lot of other problems in this country that are badly in need of fixing. So we may have to work hours the Senate hasn't seen very often. We may have to work into the night, tonight and tomorrow night and maybe even Friday and Friday night, and who knows if that will be enough time to get us over the hump.

I hope people will understand that it is not a question of how much time we spend on the bill, it is a question of whether people feel they have had the opportunity to change the provisions that are in the bill. I have gone over most of them: AgJOBS, DREAM Act, employer enforcement, legalization, border security.

I hope we can get this bill done. We can debate this bill all year and end up right back where we are. The American people did not send us here to pontificate; they sent us here to legislate. That is what I am trying to do and most are trying to do.

Recognizing that this immigration system is broken and that we need to fix it, I extend my appreciation to Senators—Democrats and Republicans—who believe this is the time for us to do something important for the country.

I have said on a number of occasions that this bill, when it comes out of this body, is not the last word. We have other ways of working on this bill. We, as Senators, are going to be fully involved in the legislation until it comes out of conference, which is after the House passes a bill which will have the imprint of the White House on it.

So I hope we can move forward in good faith and understand that everything we do in life has deadlines, even our legislation in the Senate.

Mr. KENNEDY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank our leader, someone who has been interested, along with many others, in the immigration issue, for the leadership he has provided in making sure the Senate was going to take up this issue. He had announced in January of this year that he was going to take a time for the Judiciary Committee to consider this legislation but that he was going to allocate 2 weeks of time, which was basically the time we took on the last bill, but it was a major period of time to consider the people's business regarding this issue. He has been accommodating in terms of working through the Senate's schedule. For all of us who are interested in getting a bill, we thank him for all he has done in terms of encouraging us to

reach judgments on these various measures.

As he has mentioned, we have made very important and significant progress, and I think there is a strong mood in the Senate, as there is in the country, that this is an extremely important issue. We are increasingly close to trying to at least make a recommendation to the country about what the Senate's judgment will be on this issue.

I join with him, as others, to say we are eager to move ahead during the day today and tomorrow and to work with the leadership. I know they have full schedules. I do think we are making significant progress and it is being done in a bipartisan spirit with a desire that those who have differing views about this issue can come together and do the Nation's business. When we achieve that, hopefully by the end of this week, both the Senator from Nevada and the Senator from Kentucky will be very much appreciated for their support in helping this legislation move ahead.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as I think my good friend, the majority leader, already knows, we are ready to work with the other side to schedule votes on pending amendments. I think the two managers are working together this morning to set up a schedule of votes for this afternoon. All of that is a step in the right direction.

Many of the amendments we hope to schedule, however, for the afternoon are amendments that were offered prior to the recess. My concern with cloture being filed last night is that we do not want to deny Members who have yet to offer—and many of them have been denied the right to offer their amendments this week—and those who have been denied the right to offer their amendments should still get their opportunity prior to being shut out.

Now, I am counting progress on this bill not by calendar days—that is one way of looking at it—but by the ability of Senators to debate and to vote on their respective ideas is the way that I would consider progress on the bill. So I hope we can clear out the amendments that are currently pending and that we will also work together to schedule debate and votes on additional amendments that are going to be offered.

Let me remind everyone again, on the day my conference elected me leader I said that I thought we ought to do two big important things, at least, in this Congress. And one of the issues I mentioned was immigration. So I am among those in the Senate who would