



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2008

No. 58

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and Earth, open our minds to the call of love that we may measure our attitudes and responses by this standard. Deliver us from the delusion that we are self-made and increase our dependence upon You.

Bless our Senators. May they give attention to their personal health and family relationships, as they seek to be Your instruments for good. Remind them that You alone, O Lord, have the wisdom and power needed at this critical hour. Assure them of Your presence, love, and grace in their labors. Give them fresh strength and vision, as You renew them by the power of Your spirit.

We pray in the Name of him in whom is all power in heaven and on Earth. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB 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, April 14, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB 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, following my remarks and the remarks of Senator MCCONNELL, if he chooses to make some, there will be a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each. At 3 p.m., the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to H.R. 1195, the highway technical corrections bill. At 5:30, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the highway bill.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

ARMY SERGEANT TIMOTHY SMITH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, amidst a great war that threatened to tear apart the fabric of our Nation, Abraham Lincoln gazed upon a battlefield and was moved to say:

My dream is of a place and a time where America will once again be seen as the last best hope on earth.

Mr. President, on Monday, April 7, U.S. Army SGT Timothy Smith gave his life in pursuit of that dream. Sergeant Smith was 25 years old.

While serving in Iraq with the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th

Mountain Division, Sergeant Smith was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near the armored vehicle in which he was riding with SGT Brandon Lords.

Sergeant Smith and Sergeant Lords were brothers in arms, and they had made a pact that if one was lost in combat, the other would escort his body home. Sergeant Lords will honor that promise by accompanying his fallen comrade's body to South Lake Tahoe, where he will be received by his beloved family and friends before he is laid to rest.

Both Sergeant Smith and Sergeant Lords were emblematic of the courageous young men and women who serve in the U.S. military. My words are certainly insufficient to fully express our gratitude for their valor. Our hearts and prayers are with Tim's family.

Thursday night, at about 7 o'clock Washington time, I called and spoke to Michael, Tim's father. We had a very nice visit. I expressed my sympathy, and I said to Michael: You know, I have four boys, and I cannot comprehend what you are going through at this time. We talked for quite a long time, and he said, "Before you hang up, would you talk to Timmy's brother Tommy?" I said that I would be happy to. He was right there. So I talked to him for quite a long time. I told Tommy that I could appreciate what he was going through because I was one of four brothers. My brother Dale died unexpectedly in his midforties. I expressed to Tommy how, even today—on that Thursday night—I would like to be able to talk to my brother Dale, even though it has been more than two decades ago that he died. I can see in one of my boys my brother Dale's smile and the way he walks. So I could empathize much better with Tommy than I could with his dad.

We talked for quite a long time and he said, "Would you talk to Jackie?" That is their sister. We had a wonderful visit, talking about how sorry they

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felt, how they will miss their brother. When I was getting ready to end the conversation with Jackie, she said, "Will you call Mom?" Her mother was visiting with Tim's wife in North or South Carolina—I forget which. So I called her when I hung up. We had another nice visit.

I told Michael, when I first called—and these calls are really hard to make. I have made a few of them, and they are difficult to make. This call was no easier than the others. It was sure a nice visit we had, in effect, crying on each other's shoulder. I think that is what these times are for, to be able to reflect on our loved and lost. So I indicated to each of those four to make sure they expressed to Tim's wife Shayna and their son Riley how our thoughts and prayers go out to her and the little boy.

Tim graduated in 2001 from South Tahoe High School. He joined the Army in April 2004—about 4 years ago. He is remembered by all as having a special sense of humor, for making people laugh, and really for his warmth. He was opinionated and strong, even from a young age. He was determined, courageous, and caring.

Tim married Shayna on the Fourth of July 2007. Their son Riley must now grow up to be a man without a father but with the gift of knowing his father was a real live American hero who gave his life for his country.

Honoring SGT Timothy Smith on the floor of the Senate is no more than a modest tribute to his great sacrifice. I hope it is some small comfort to those his life and courage touched that the Senate and the American people share the pain of their grief and the burden of their sacrifice.

In SGT Timothy Smith's memory, as I told his parents and brother and sister, we pray that every man and woman serving in Iraq will come home safely and soon.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I had the good fortune, earlier today, to have the first visit in a long time to the new Capitol Visitor Center.

When I first came to Washington many years ago and served as a Capitol policeman, every evening in the summer part of my duty was to go out on the east front of the Capitol and watch things. I can remember having many fond memories, such as watching Carl Hayden in his wheelchair watching those concerts. Even back then, I thought, gee, this is such a beautiful place.

The east front of the Capitol is so much easier for visitors coming to the Capitol to see than the west front because there are not those big steps. Before, it didn't look very nice. The blacktop covered that place. That just didn't look right—with cars parked there and oil spilled from the cars.

I had the good fortune, in the third year that I was a Senator, to become

chairman of the Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee. Back then, the reason I was able to do it was Senator Bumpers simply didn't want to do it. It was a great experience for me. I started working to do something to make the east front of the Capitol a little more visually nice. We did a number of things. First, we got the cars off.

With the help of many other Senators, we were able to finally get legislative permission to do something about it in a big way. The culmination of our being able to do that was when two police officers were killed on the House side, on the east front of the Capitol. That gave us the impetus to fund the project the way it should be funded. We did that. Now that is just great. It is so wonderful.

The Capitol Visitor Center is the eighth major expansion of the Capitol in its 214-year history. The last one was out here on the east front of the Capitol for the rooms we have there for holding meetings. This facility out here is almost 600,000 square feet of space. It is equivalent in size to the current footprint of the Capitol. It consists of beautiful sandstone, granite, and marble from 14 different States. The Capitol Visitor Center project conforms to "Buy American" standards. I saw a lot of beautiful things but probably the most beautiful on the tour this morning were the historic Olmstead fountains and lanterns. They have been beautifully restored and are going to be the centerpiece over there.

Mr. President, if someone wants to visit the Capitol today, there is no place for them to gather. It used to be on the east front, and now it is on the west front. The people who work here joke about it, saying: You can always tell when it is summertime because you can smell the visitors. The visitors stand out in the high humidity, heat, and they sweat. There is no place for them to go. The bathrooms in this facility are almost nonexistent. There is one on each side, and they are very small. This visitors center can hold 4,000 visitors at one time, and, with 8 magnetometers, they can process 2,000 people an hour. It will make this place vastly more secure than it is. We expect as many as 3 million visitors a year under the new process we will have here.

When visitors come here now, there is no place for them to eat, no place to go to the bathroom, and there are limited places to buy souvenirs. With our new facility, there will be a 550-seat cafeteria, with a beautiful kitchen that will be as good as anyplace there is in our country.

There is an 18,000-foot exhibition hall that will feature many never-seen-before historic documents, such as Madison's notes from the drafting of the Constitution.

There are two 250-seat orientation theaters. When people come to the Capitol, they will see an 11-minute film that is done so beautifully, and it will

tell them what they are going to see in the Capitol. That is as it should be. Now people walk in and don't know what to expect. There is a film they will see called "Out Of Many, One." It will be played every 11 minutes.

There are two beautiful gift shops—one on the House side and one on the Senate side—and 26 restaurants. There are meeting rooms for constituent meetings. The cost is a lot, about \$650 million. But in comparison, the Newseum, which was opened this past Friday, cost roughly \$550 million. It took 7 years to complete, and it did not have all the security problems we have had here.

I congratulate the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. They did a wonderful job. Everyone has cooperated. It is a facility of which we can all be proud. I enjoyed my visit through it. It will be an added feature of this beautiful building, and it will make it so people can come here safely and securely and all the many people who work in this Capitol and work in these office buildings will also certainly be more safe because there is a way to come in and there is adequate security.

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, the Senate will proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Utah.

TAXES

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, tomorrow is April 15, the day tax returns are due to the IRS for most citizens. It is a day most Americans meet with fear and loathing. Even though most taxpayers will not file their returns tomorrow because they have already done so or because they have filed for an extension, April 15 remains a symbol of a burdensome tax liability and an even more burdensome tax compliance system for millions of Americans.

April 15 is met with apprehension and dread for many reasons. The primary one is understandable. People do not like paying taxes. Who can blame them? Under the best of circumstances, if you owe Uncle Sam, a day spent with your tax return is worse than a day spent with the dentist. Yes, the IRS has become one of the most despised institutions in American life. However, a good share of this agency's reputation is undeserved. In fact, considering all we require the Internal Revenue Service to do and the resources we give them, the folks who work there do a pretty darn good job.