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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2008

The Senate met at 3 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.

O God, our Father, help us to have the right attitude. Keep us from pride that makes us think more highly of ourselves than we should. Save us from false modesty that sometimes moves us in the direction of evading responsibility. Instead, help us to think of ourselves, to think of others, and to think of You as we ought.

Inspire the Members of this body. Let them not be content to wait and see what will happen but give them the determination to make the right things happen. Give them the humility to know that no one has a monopoly on Your truth and that they need each other to discover Your guidance together.

We pray in the Name of the Light of the World. 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 21, 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, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business. Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. There will be no rollcall votes today because of the Passover holiday. Tomorrow at 12 noon, the Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 1315, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act.

Tomorrow, in addition to the usual recess for the caucus luncheons from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., the Senate will recess from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the unveiling of Majority Leader Daschle's

portrait. This is very traditional. We have done this for each majority leader. That will be from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. I invite all Senators who wish to attend to make themselves available.

On Wednesday, the Senate will recess from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the Dr. DeBakey Gold Medal ceremony in the Rotunda. Also on that same day, Admiral Mullen will brief us from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. We will be in recess from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday. There will be a briefing in room 407.

Again, tomorrow afternoon, we are going to, hopefully, invoke cloture on the veterans' benefits matter, and we will also have the unveiling of Senator Daschle's portrait. From 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., we will be in recess. On Wednesday, we will be in recess from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the Dr. DeBakey Gold Medal ceremony and will be in recess from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday for a Senators-only briefing by Admiral Mullen in room S-407. I hope this has allowed staff in the various offices to follow what we are doing.

BREAST CANCER AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, maybe an hour ago, my wonderful assistant Janice Shelton said: I have bad news. I said: What is it, Janice? Carol Chadburn worked for me for many years. She was my scheduler. She was a wonderful woman. She was so happy. She loved to have parties at her home

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



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for staff. She came from Nevada. She was a legal secretary to my friend who then was an attorney and later became a justice on the Nevada Supreme Court for many years, 18 years. She came back here. Her husband was a labor leader. They moved back here from Nevada. He died within 18 months. He was dead. He was a young man. He just dropped dead. Carol kept their home in Centreville. It was a long drive back and forth for a long time working for me. She was such a hard worker and was so happy.

Many years after her husband died and her daughter returned to Nevada—she raised the girl here—she met a retired colonel, and they were married and moved to Florida. She had a wonderful—I don't know how many years it has been, maybe 8 years. Time goes fast. I don't know how long it has been.

Janice said to me: I was going to tell you last week that she had breast cancer and you should give her a call. She said she died yesterday. I feel very bad about that. She was such a good woman and worked so hard and found happiness. She was not an old woman—maybe 58, 59. I don't really know how old she was.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women just like Carol are diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer will strike approximately one in eight American women, and a new case is diagnosed every 2 minutes. We have made progress in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, but we still do not know the cause. We do not know the cause. I don't really know if Carol died from lung cancer or breast cancer, but I want to direct my attention today to breast cancer.

Scientists have identified some risk factors. Those risk factors explain fewer than 30 percent of the cases. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act that I started with Lincoln Chafee, a former Senator from Rhode Island, to establish a national strategy to study the possible connection between breast cancer and the environment would authorize funding for research.

Many people believe these cases of breast cancer have something to do with the changing environment. The resulting discoveries of this research could be critical to improving our knowledge of this complex illness, which could lead to better prevention, treatment, and maybe even one day a cure.

Although we first introduced this legislation in 2000, despite strong bipartisan support, Congress has yet to act and send this bill to President Bush. In the last session of Congress, the bill was reported out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, but one of our colleagues prevented final passage. This session, we worked in good faith to address concerns that may have been raised about this legislation. As a result, this legislation, the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act, was once again reported

out of the HELP Committee and co-sponsored by two-thirds of the Senators, Democrats and Republicans.

It is long past time for the Senate to take up this broadly supported bipartisan legislation. Too many women and their families have waited for so long. I agree with them, they waited far too long.

There are examples we can all give, as I talked about Carol, who died yesterday of cancer. In January 2007, Nevada lost a lifelong resident, somebody who worked so hard on this issue. Her name was Deanna Wright Jensen. She was a lobbyist without pay. She just thought something should be done. She thought something in the environment was causing this illness. I don't know if she was right, but we should find out. Many people agree with her. Scientists agree with her. Even as she was enduring a grueling regimen of radiation and chemotherapy, she continued to remind me and my staff through e-mails and letters about the importance of this legislation. In Deanna's words, passing the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act is a real opportunity for Congress to "step up for women and breast cancer." For her, it is too late. She did not want others to have a similar fate.

One person, one Senator is holding up this legislation. That is why I will be asking unanimous consent—I am not going to do it now. We do not have a Republican on the floor. But I told staff I am going to come back at 3:30 p.m. or thereafter. The Republicans have had adequate notice. I cannot make the entire Senate schedule convenient for one Senator who is objecting, causing this problem for all the Senate.

It is time to offer more than words of encouragement to those affected by breast cancers. Our wives, sisters, mothers, daughters, and friends have waited far too long. I am going to come back maybe at 3:30 p.m., maybe at 3:45 p.m., but I am going to come back and ask unanimous consent to take up this bill, and the Republicans are going to have to object to it if they are going to follow the lead of one person holding up this legislation.

Why, Mr. President? Why can't we take up this bill? Why wouldn't the minority go along with this effort? That is my concern.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a similar vein, 9 months ago, in August of last year, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee reported the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act to the Senate floor.

Today, there are about 150,000 young Americans serving, sacrificing, and suffering in Iraq. This legislation, which is on the Senate floor today—we are trying to get it so we can debate this bill—would provide much needed and long overdue benefits for veterans young and old.

This legislation on which we had to file cloture—here it is: Republican filibusters, 66 and still counting. They are going up, it seems, a couple times a week. It is hard to comprehend, but we have had to file cloture on allowing the Senate to proceed to debate on an issue of this importance. We should have gone to it Thursday night. No, we had to file cloture on it. We are going to vote on cloture tomorrow, and then, if we get cloture, they will make us use the 30 hours, waste the 30 hours, just eat up time.

This bill has 38 provisions and 8 titles, all extremely important. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance, extends eligibility for specially adapted housing benefits to veterans who have been burned severely. As the Presiding Officer knows, those improvised explosive devices cause infernos, and people are burned often. The bill increases benefits for veterans pursuing apprenticeships or on-the-job training programs. It restores veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under U.S. command during World War II. As I mentioned last Friday, all one needs to do is watch the Tom Hanks World War II series, and you can see what the Filipinos did for us side by side in fighting the Japanese during World War II. We want them to have the benefits that are so long overdue.

We have had to file cloture and break filibusters 66 times. The prior record was 57 or 58 in a single Congress; that is 2 years. They broke that before Christmas last year. They did it in far less than a year. They broke the 2-year record.

America's commitment to the men and women who have served in uniform must never waver. At a time when one in five young men and women returns from Iraq and Afghanistan with post-traumatic stress disorders and other psychological problems, this legislation should have come to the Senate floor with no delay. At a time when tens of thousands of our troops are returning from war with wounds, many of them grievous, this legislation should have passed overwhelmingly, if not unanimously.

On many days, there is a tour guide in the Capitol who, when he spots a veteran in one of the tours, talks with them, and he has a little thing that we sign, and many times he brings them by my office.

I have seen, at Walter Reed and in my office, what this war has done to our troops' bodies. I have had a chance to visit with these young men and women, after they have been to war and come back, out of Walter Reed—sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently. They are still teenagers. I have seen their scars. I have heard how their lives have been changed. I asked them, talked to them in detail: How did you get hurt?

The last one who was in, I said: How long were you in the vehicle?

He said: Twenty seconds. Went from the house, jumped in the vehicle—it blew up almost immediately.