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No. 15

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at 2 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008

The Senate met at 10 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.

O God of light, in whom there is no darkness, thank You for Your light. You are a guide who gently leads us. You are a mystery but not a puzzle; profound but not incomprehensible. You are loving, patient, and long-suffering. O God, You are all things that we are not but need to be. You don't make promises to forget them. You, O God, with steadiness and perseverance move in the lives of people and in the life of our Nation and world.

Awaken our lawmakers to Your inescapable presence. Keep them from thinking that You are absent from our world or disinterested in it. Enable them to feel You in their midst as they grapple with the problems of our time.

We pray in the Name of Him who promised never to forsake us. 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 30, 2008.

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.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate proceeds to morning business, there will be 1 hour equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Republicans and the next 30 minutes under the control of the majority.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we were able late last night to work out some-

thing on FISA, a 15-day extension. There is a path forward. We are going to try very quickly to get an agreement so that we can move forward. I had a meeting in my office at 6 o'clock last night. Following that meeting, I called the Republican leader, and I think we have a way of moving forward on this legislation, one that would be agreed upon by Senators BOND, ROCKEFELLER, LEAHY, and SPECTER, so that we can complete that legislation. I think it will probably take a good long day to do that, but I think that would be all it would take.

I hope we can get that done very soon. I do not want to wait. Whatever we do, whether we do something or nothing, I do not want to wait until the last minute. This is something we need to do. I think it would be in everyone's interests to get it to the House as quickly as we can so that we can move forward on a conference to send something to the President that he can review.

Again, we have the stimulus package that we have to deal with, and we are going to do that. That is why I made the announcement last night that we are going to have to do some work on Monday. We are going to have votes on Monday. They won't be early in the day, but we will have votes on Monday. Whatever we are working on, we will try to work Monday so that we can have some votes Monday night, so there will likely be more than one vote Monday night.

Tuesday, we are going to have to work. We really do need to complete this work on the foreign intelligence legislation quickly. Whatever we do on

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



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the stimulus, we also need to do that quickly. Again, whether we come up with our own package here in the Senate, whether we accept what the House has done, or do nothing, it is not fair to the American people, the other body, and the President not to take action that would be fairly quick, and we are going to attempt to do that, both dealing with the FISA legislation and the stimulus package.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

MOVING FORWARD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, based on the majority leader's representations that we are going to move forward and make our best effort to finish FISA, I agreed to the 15-day extension last night. He is a man of his word, and I know we will do everything we can to wrap up that important legislation.

It is a rare opportunity for a bipartisan accomplishment. It came out of the Intelligence Committee 13 to 2. It is the Rockefeller-Bond proposal. It is very important to our country, and I know the majority leader shares my view that we need to act in order to protect the homeland. I commend him for his decision to try to move it forward as rapidly as possible.

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 be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise in morning business today to talk about the so-called economic stimulus package we will be dealing with in this body over the next few weeks. I think the Presiding Officer knows that it is very seldom that I come to this floor to speak. I try to only speak when I have something to say. I realize that today, I am probably a voice in the wilderness and probably will be over the next few weeks.

As are many Americans, all Americans who are familiar with being around railroads, I know a freight train when I see it coming. I realize the action taken yesterday in the House, by

overwhelming majority sending over to our body a stimulus package to deal with—I realize the winds are blowing, and the fact is that the winds are blowing in the direction of a stimulus package.

I am honored to serve in this body. I know that, contrary to much of what the American public thinks, there are many things that happen on this floor that actually show greatness of this body and greatness of individuals.

I have seen on this floor both the majority leader and the minority leader do things to cause something good to happen for our country. When I have seen that happen—and most of the time it happens under the radar screen—I have tried to go to them and thank them for taking the positions they did, even if it was a private position to make something good happen. I have seen other Senators take politically courageous votes that were maybe not in their own best political interests but were in the country's interests, and I have tried, too, on those occasions when I have recognized that, to go up and thank them for what they have done. Then, on the other hand, I have also seen occasions when we in this body just bow to the political winds and do things that are expedient because they are expedient, even though in our hearts we know they are really not best for our country.

Today, all across America, there are young people, young children gathered in classrooms, and they are learning in those classrooms that which will equip them to be productive in life. They are learning not just about facts and figures, but they are also learning about character. They have teachers whom they look up to. They have parents, hopefully, whom they go home to and look up to, coaches and others, Sunday school teachers, and hopefully some of the people whom they look up to from time to time are us in this body.

I know that right now in our country we are going through tremendous economic turmoil as it relates to the markets in general. I think most of us know that it is due to excesses that have taken place in the marketplace, that in our country and in this world we have business cycles that exist. That is what happens in a free market society such as we have. Those excesses work themselves out, and over time, we begin building again.

I know in the process of these excesses that in some ways they are beyond the control of the average citizen, and there are people in this country who are hurting. I know they are. My heart goes out to people across this country who find themselves in economic situations that in many cases are beyond their control. They have to do with markets. They have to do with the way we ourselves have conducted ourselves as it relates to fiscal policy. They have to do with things that are happening in other parts of the world. I truly feel for people who go home at night with tremendous economic dis-

stress. I am also always happy—just honestly always happy—when I see Americans receive refunds from the Federal Government. That is a good thing, and I am happy for people when that occurs. I really mean that.

But in this backdrop, I must say that I find it so odd that today in America we would consider a stimulus package, a package that in essence is built on sprinkling money around America and then encouraging people to quickly spend that money to ignite an economic stimulus in this country. I doubt there are many people in this body—there may be some, and I don't want to in any way criticize anybody because I know there are some who may believe the stimulus package that came from the House yesterday really is going to do some good. There are some, and I understand that, but I bet there are not many in this body who believe sprinkling money around America and asking people to spend it is going to do much, is going to do much to affect the long-term status of this economy.

But what I see happening is, all of a sudden, in the name of bipartisanship—and I want to say I have been excited to see bipartisanship taken up, and I want to put on the record that I have exercised, as the Presiding Officer has, bipartisanship in many cases to try to make something good happen. But in the name of bipartisanship, what has happened is we have come—what has come out of the House is a bipartisan bill in the name of economic stimulus that to me is—and I hate to be this crass—nothing more than political stimulus.

I hope this body will have the responsibility and the character to deal with our economic situations over the long haul. It may be that this body takes up this stimulus package, and it may be that this body makes changes, and it may be that this body actually passes a stimulus package that is similar to what came out of the House. But what I see in this package is nothing but a political stimulus. It is a stimulus to make the American people think that we as a body are doing something to actually cause the economy to be stronger.

So at this moment, I fear we are going through one of those moments where I am less encouraged about what might happen, but I am hoping that somehow or another, we will deal with this in an appropriate way.

I think all of us know in our country that we together have been fiscally reckless over the last several years. I think we know that generations who come after us will be dealing with the brunt of our actions. Not to be misunderstood, I am a strong believer in low taxes and creating a structure in this country that people can count on to move ahead and to make investments, but with that has to be the reality that spending has to be under control. Yet there is always a reason in this body and in the other body to spend money we do not have. I can go