



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 154

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 7, 2008

No. 110

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2008, at 2 p.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JULY 7, 2008

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.

Holy God, creator and sustainer of life, thank You for the inward prompting that draws us closer to You. Bless our Senators today. Make them leaders who are true and strong. Empower them to live lives that are above reproach. Give them self-control, generosity, gentleness, and humility. Lord, remind them that You do not ask for success but faithfulness. Help them to set exemplary standards in their speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Give them a productive persistence that will keep them from weariness as they do good. Bless their families and surround their loved ones with Your favor.

We pray in Your great Name. 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, July 7, 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, today, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. Senators will be permitted therein to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

I know the two managers of the housing bill plan on being here on or about that time. As I have indicated, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message that accompanies H.R. 3221, housing reform legislation, under a previous order. At 5:30 p.m. today, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the motion to concur with respect to the housing reform legislation.

Before we left for the Fourth of July recess, we were able to reach an agreement on FISA legislation. We will debate the bill.

I have spoken to the distinguished Republican leader today. We are going to try to get an agreement—I feel very comfortable that we can—and we will complete all the debate tomorrow. There are a number of Senators proceeding to North Carolina for the funeral of Senator Helms. So they could spend whatever time is necessary to be in North Carolina and not feel pressed on coming back, we are going to try to do the votes Wednesday morning. I think that will work out just fine for everyone's schedule. We will debate the bill then tomorrow afternoon; tomorrow night, we have 7 hours set aside. We may even leave a little time for Wednesday morning. We will see how that goes. Whatever I do will have to be with the agreement of the Republican leader; otherwise, we finish everything tomorrow night and no one thinks that would be appropriate. Senators will be notified as soon as this is worked out. We will try to have a unanimous consent agreement on that at the earliest possible time today.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JESSE HELMS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on Friday, the Fourth of July—in fact the Fourth of July had just broken; it was an hour and a half after midnight—the Senate lost a Member of our Senate family: Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

I can't but think of Jesse Helms and the first name that enters my mind is

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



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Senator Paul Wellstone. Paul Wellstone, as we all remember, was a Senator from Minnesota. I am sure it seems odd to most people—recognizing their political proclivities; that is, those of Senator Wellstone and those of Senator Helms—why my mind picks up Paul Wellstone upon mentioning the name of Jesse Helms. It is hard to imagine two Senators more divergent in their views.

Senator Wellstone was clearly a liberal. Senator Helms was clearly a very conservative man. Their views were very divergent, very different. It is no secret because he told everyone when he came to Washington—Paul Wellstone made it clear he didn't like his rightwing colleague from North Carolina, Jesse Helms. He said that openly. But it was not long before Paul Wellstone publicly changed his view of Senator Helms. Senator Wellstone continued to fiercely disagree with Jesse Helms on most issues, but he quickly came to respect him for his sincerity.

When I came to the Senate, I, similar to all new Senators, was excited to be here and understood what a great honor it was to represent the people of the State of Nevada in the Senate. But one of the last people whom I was going to try to befriend was Jesse Helms. As a moderate Democrat, I found his views extreme. We found little common ground in points of policy, it appeared.

As a freshman Senator, I enjoyed presiding, as does the Presiding Officer now presiding over the Senate. I spent my share of time in the seat the Presiding Officer now has. I enjoyed that very much. During my time, that first 2 years I was in the Senate, I watched Jesse Helms right over here to my right, stand and talk often—and a lot. I can remember one time he was here—I was the Presiding Officer, he was over there—there was not another person in this Chamber. Jesse Helms said to me, as sincerely as anyone could say anything—and he had a distinct speaking voice—he said to me as sincerely as anyone could say anything, he said:

Mr. President, I don't want to be here on this issue but no one else will come and talk on it.

It was an issue dealing with pornography. The speech Jesse Helms gave was often on issues that other people would not speak out about. But I became so impressed with his sincerity, that he wasn't doing what he said for political reasons; he was doing it because that is what he believed. We all have to admire someone such as that, even though we may disagree with what they speak.

I came to understand what Paul Wellstone had come to realize. I came to it before Paul Wellstone did because I got here before he did. Whether you agreed with the Senator from North Carolina, his sincerity and his views and the forthright way in which he stood by them were remarkable. So I believe it is fitting that Jesse Helms' last day on Earth was the Fourth of

July. He loved his country. He spent every day doing what he believed was necessary to make it stronger. His wife Dorothy and children, Jane, Nancy, and Charles, along with seven Helms grandchildren and one great grandchild are in our thoughts.

Rest well, Jesse Helms.

I have some other things to say, but perhaps my colleague wants to say something about Senator Helms? If that is the case, I will save my remarks until he finishes.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JESSE HELMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend, the majority leader. Let me just add, Jesse and Dot Helms were good friends of Elaine's and mine and good friends of a lot of other people in the Senate on both sides. There are a significant number of our conference planning to attend the funeral tomorrow. I thank the majority leader for his accommodation of those requests by having the votes on Wednesday morning. At Dot Helms' request, I will be doing one of the eulogies tomorrow at the funeral, and I will have more to say about the life of my good friend Jesse Helms when I get back. But I wish to echo the remarks of the majority leader about what a fine gentleman he was.

If you took a poll around here of the pages and the people who work in the Capitol about who was the most popular Member, I expect Jesse Helms would have won it—which would surprise an awful lot of people in the press and out in America who thought of Senator Helms as sort of a fierce individual. In fact, in person, he was as gentle, as accommodating, and as friendly as anybody I have ever met. We all will miss Jesse Helms a great deal.

I thank the majority leader for giving me an opportunity to make some comments at this point about our good friend Jesse Helms.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to go ahead and do our caucus tomorrow as we normally do, but the Republicans are going to do theirs on Wednesday. We will make sure there are no votes between 12:30 and 2 o'clock on Wednesday so they can do their business.

REPUBLICAN OBSTRUCTION AND THE ECONOMY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, just as the American people are recovering from a holiday weekend marked by record gas prices announced this morning, averaging \$4.11 a gallon—and it is much more than that in Nevada; it is \$4.25 in Nevada—another report in the news this morning suggests oil might reach \$200 before the end of the year—\$200 a barrel. It was only a couple months ago

that President Bush seemed shocked and confused when a reporter suggested that some analysts were predicting that gas would reach \$4 a gallon. Now some economists consider \$6 a gallon a very real possibility.

While most Americans enjoyed a day off from work on Friday to celebrate the Fourth of July, no one gets a day off from paying record gas prices, record oil prices, and record grocery prices.

I spoke an hour ago to Verie Doing, who owns the biggest business in Searchlight. Verie and her late husband, Warren Doing, ran what might not be much by most standards, but it is for the people in Searchlight. She employs 70 or 80 people, and it is the biggest employer in Searchlight. She has a bar and casino, a restaurant. She said she is feeling the impact of gas prices. Las Vegas is 60 miles away, there is no town closer, so in Searchlight you need the tourist trade.

She is similar to all small business people—they are struggling. That is why on Thursday it was announced that Starbucks is closing more than 600 stores; Dillard's will likely go out of business; Pep Boys will likely go out of business. There are huge cutbacks in many other companies. Nine thousand stores will close before the end of the year. That, of course, opens places that people are going to have to try to rent, probably at reduced rates if they even can rent them. So this is a snowballing effect.

With rare exception, all these problems economically are caused by two things: the gas prices and the housing crisis. We have 8,500 new home foreclosures every day. Americans are at risk of losing their homes. They don't get a day off, of course. As American people endure sleepless nights trying to figure out how to make ends meet and provide for their families, they deserve to know that Congress is working hard to help.

But what we are seeing is the Republican leaders, both in the House and in the Senate, simply refusing to work with Democrats on legislation essential to our country in this economic recession. Of course, it is more focused on the Senate because, as we know, if you are in the majority of the House, you can move things. In the Senate, that is not the way it is. We have the ability to filibuster things and, as we know, that is what has been going on in recent months.

My friend, Senator MCCONNELL, said time and time again the way to get things done in the Senate is through bipartisanship. There is no question about that. The only way you get things done in this body is bipartisanship, and that is why I have said if there is a change in the number of Senators we have next year, if there are more seats on this side of the aisle next year, we still have to work on a bipartisan basis.

I am committed to doing that. I could not agree, as I have indicated,