

## **BOX 5.1** The Daily Order of Business

House Rule XIV sets out the daily order of business, some of which is rarely observed (correcting the reference of public bills, for example). Commonly, the order of business is superseded by other procedures, such as adoption of special rules from the Rules Committee or business in order on special days (e.g., suspension procedure). Rule XIV itself highlights that the daily order is nonbinding, with this parenthetical: “unless varied by the application of other rules and except for the disposition of matters of higher precedence.” The usual routine on a normal day is as follows:

*Call to Order.* The Speaker or Speaker pro tempore will call the House to order.

*Morning-Hour Debate.* From Monday through Thursday, the House convenes early to allow a period of debate, limited to 5 minutes member. Each member is recognized from lists provided to the chair by the majority and minority leaders. Following morning-hour debate, there is a recess before the House convenes to conduct its normal business.

*Prayer.* The chaplain, or guest chaplain, offers a prayer to start the day.

*Approval of the Journal.* Under the Constitution, each chamber must “keep a Journal of its Proceedings,” which includes the official legislative action of the House (or Senate). Unlike the *Congressional Record*, the Journal does not contain a generally verbatim transcript of the debates. The Speaker may announce his approval of the Journal—the record of the previous day’s proceedings—or any lawmaker can request a vote on the Journal. If that occurs, the vote is typically postponed until later in the day. A record vote on the Journal is sometimes used by party leaders to bring or keep colleagues on the floor to communicate with them about priority issues. The Journal vote is sometimes called by members as a form of protest against House proceedings.

*Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.* A majority and minority lawmaker alternate each day the House is in session in leading the members in the pledge.

*One-Minute Speeches.* Typically, the Speaker will recognize members from each side of the aisle to make a limited number of **1-minute speeches** on virtually any topic. This period is essentially a time for “free speech.”