

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE IN THE 104TH CONGRESS

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, with the opening of the 104th Congress, we again witness a historic transfer of power as the Republican Party takes control of the Senate and Senator STROM THURMOND earlier today replaced Senator ROBERT C. BYRD as President pro tempore of the Senate. In this transition, we are witnessing one Senate institution replacing another.

Together, these two outstanding legislators total three quarters of a century service in the Senate. Each not only has witnessed, but participated in, so much history and in the enactment of so much legislation, that Senators of my generation often are left in awe. As we prepare our legislative agendas and prepare for the upcoming debates and battles, this historic transition should not be lost upon us.

Senator BYRD, for the past 6 years, has presided over the deliberations of the Senate.

A look at the record reveals that he is indeed an institution within this institution. The senior Senator from West Virginia has served in the Senate for nearly 40 years. He has served as chairman of Senate Appropriations Committee, as the Senate Democratic whip, 6 years as Senate minority leader, 6 years as Senate majority leader, and, since 1987, President pro tempore of the Senate.

His unparalleled knowledge of the Senate's intricate rules and procedures, his overwhelming knowledge of the history of this legislative body that he loves so deeply, and, his presence in this Chamber combined to make him a most effective and impressive President pro tempore.

What an honor it has been for me personally to watch him preside. We will miss him and his presence in the chair. While there is not a stronger, more ardent fighter for the causes in which he believes and supports, no one could have been more fair or more impartial in presiding over the Senate.

Although he leaves the chair of President pro tempore, I can assure you he is not about to fade away. As the new Democratic leader of the Senate, I will need, I will seek, and I will certainly appreciate his wisdom, experience, his insight, and his foresight. I know that Senators from both sides of the aisle will continue to value the benefit of his unique perspective and the importance of this institution as well as his unique ability to resolve problems within it.

Mr. President, at the closing of the 99th Congress, the Senate approved a resolution recognizing the outstanding service Senator STROM THURMOND had performed as President pro tempore of the Senate. The resolution expressed the Senate's appreciation for the courteous, dignified, and impartial manner in which the senior Senator from South Carolina had presided over the deliberations of the Senate.

In the 104th Congress, Senator THURMOND again will occupy this important and prestigious position. Like Senator BYRD, he, too, is an institution within this institution. While a Member of the Senate, he has been a member of both political parties and a candidate for President of another. While serving in the U.S. Senate, Senator THURMOND has had highways, courthouses, Federal buildings, and schools named in his honor—honors usually reserved for those who are no longer with us. In the Senate, he has been an active participant—sometimes controversial—but a participant in the legislative struggles of our times. I have not always agreed with his positions, past or present, in those contests, but I have never seen or encountered a more worthy, a more dignified opponent or one for whom I have greater respect.

As everyone who has had the pleasure of serving in this Chamber with him knows, Senator THURMOND has been a consistent champion of the South and of conservative causes, but we also know he has been able to blend and bend when democracy took a different course. He has remained a southern gentleman of the highest order.

As the Democratic leader, I want to extend my congratulations to Senator THURMOND for his reelection as President pro tempore and welcome him back to this position. I look forward to working with him as well. I am confident that in the 104th Congress, Senator THURMOND will perform the duties of President pro tempore of the Senate in the same courteous, dignified, and impartial manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the Senate in the 99th Congress.

THE 104TH CONGRESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today we begin a new session of Congress. I know all my colleagues are eager to move ahead with the Nation's business.

In some ways, we face circumstances that earlier generations of Americans faced as well. At the beginning of our Nation's existence, after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the former colonies busied themselves establishing legislatures and drafting constitutions.

It must have been a heady time. Men, for they were all men at that time, who had been colonial appointees began to see themselves for the first time as legislators, potential leaders, people who could steer their States' destinies.

In the State of Pennsylvania, the legislature spent several months thrashing over the outlines of a new constitution but found itself, months later, without a finished product.

Meanwhile, the life of the State continued. Citizens woke each morning, attended to their affairs, transacted their business, and seemed not to notice that they were without a constitution.

Ben Franklin pointed out the evident danger: "Gentleman," he said, "You

see that we have been living under anarchy, yet the business of living has gone on as usual. Be careful; if our debates go on much longer, people may come to see that they can get along very well without us."

It is somewhat in this spirit that I approach the beginning of the 104th Congress. We, too, will be judged less by our rhetoric than by our accomplishments.

Today, I offer the first five bills that my Democratic colleagues and I will seek to move in this Congress. They are bills that speak to three critical areas I believe should be the focus of our efforts in the 104th Congress—economic opportunities for working American families, the values in our social fabric that bind us together as a society, and a determination that we end business as usual in all aspects of Government.

The first bill, S. 6, is designed to be for American workers today what the GI bill was for American soldiers after the Second World War. The Working Americans Opportunity Act takes the funds now used for 20 major job training programs and turns them into vouchers so Americans can buy the training and education they need themselves. In this way, we can streamline and consolidate nine job training laws to focus more services and to redirect the funds to the people who need the training in the first place.

Our limited job-training resources should be directed to those who will benefit from training, not siphoned off to support the administrative costs of overlapping, fragmented, and outdated programs.

The GI bill is rightly credited with lifting American productivity, economic growth, and living standards. It did that by giving all returning GI's—millions of men and women in the aggregate—the ability to go back to school and make up for the years they sacrificed to their Nation's service in war.

It was not only well-deserved reward for veterans. It was one of the best investments the Government ever made. The GI bill more than repaid its costs many times over in worker income, in productivity, in economic growth, in State and Federal taxes, in virtually every other way.

At the end of the cold war years, we're not facing an army of returning veterans. We are facing a society that is emerging from a preoccupation with military spending and the military sciences, and turning to cope with a new world of technological advance that holds enormous promise for those who can learn to participate in it.

Our bill, therefore, will consolidate old job training programs and put money directly into the hands of those who need training, not to bureaucratic overhead. Americans need the tools to enter fully into the new technological workplace. That is what our first bill will do. It will be a workers' GI bill to