

Democratic caucus. That is what we did.

The Honest Leadership Act fundamentally changed the debate on ethics and lobbying reform. It is hard to draft legislation. I called upon my staff, one of my most senior persons, someone who was the chief of staff of the Commerce Committee under Senator Hollings, Kevin Kayes. He has worked hard. Saturday nights, Sunday nights, I have spoken to him. I acknowledge the hard work that he has done on this legislation. I appreciate it very much.

We put on paper what we thought was the best thing for this institution. The Honest Leadership Act, Open Government Act, fundamentally changed the debate on ethic and lobbying reform. Democrats stood united. United we said: We are not going to let this process drag on and hope that people get distracted. We are going to seize the initiative and begin to change the culture that we find in Washington. Democrats established the baseline for reform by getting caucus-wide support for a tough and comprehensively formed bill. Democrats raised the stakes on this issue and forced the Senate to deal with this in a meaningful way.

We have had a number of participants on the Democratic side of the aisle. This is not in the order of how hard they have worked, but I express my appreciation—because they have all worked hard—to Senator DODD, Senator LIEBERMAN, the ranking members of the Committee on Rules and Government Operations Committees. I appreciate the work of Senator FEINGOLD who has been involved in these issues for many years. And a new Senator, Mr. OBAMA, has done such a good job of expressing himself to the American public how we feel on this side of the aisle about the need to change what is going on in Washington. Senator LEVIN has also been a stalwart, helpful from the very beginning. He, like Senator FEINGOLD, has been involved in these issues for a long time.

It would not be fair to just list the Democrats. The work performed in the Committee on Rules was a hard job. It was the first body to take this up. It showed the experience of Senator DODD and Senator LOTT. They had a cordial relationship going into this which helped significantly in moving that bill out of the committee very quickly. Senator LIEBERMAN worked very hard with Senator COLLINS. They came up with another piece of legislation as a result of their ability to work together. I appreciate Senator LOTT very much and Senator COLLINS for their work, working with Democrats. Their work did advance the reform proposals that we introduced.

It goes without saying I am glad we are here today. It is fair to say we would not be here and certainly not with this strong piece of legislation from the Committee on Government Operations and the Rules Committee if not for the efforts of my caucus.

In fact, much of what Democrats supported in S. 2180 has been included in the bills that will come before the Senate today which will be united into one bill. What are some of the things we have done? I will not mention all of them, but I will mention some. Slow the revolving door between government jobs and lucrative private sector employment. Revoke floor privileges for former member lobbyists. A former Member has to decide, if they want to come to the Senate, they are not going to be able to do their work here if they are lobbyists. That is unfair to some who also are lobbyists who certainly never used the floor in any negative way. I think I can say that for most all.

We have to do away with what is wrong and with what appears to be wrong. This legislation will be in the Senate in less than an hour and it eliminates gifts paid for by lobbyists, not just disclosure gifts. There will be more disclosure and scrutiny of privately funded travel. This legislation will stop dead-of-night legislating by making conference reports available on the Internet. This legislation will require more frequent and more detailed lobbyists' disclosure available on the Internet. And there is increased civil rights penalties for violations.

This legislation required ethics training. It will require ethics training for congressional staff and will require disclosure for stealth lobbying campaigns by business coalitions and other organizations that slipped under the radar screen in the past. They will not any more.

Not all of what the Democrats sought is in this bill. I know that. In some cases, the provisions included are weaker than what was in our proposal. But we will offer amendments to strengthen the bill in these areas.

I am pleased that so much of what we worked for as a caucus has now gained broad bipartisan support. We have tried very hard. There are some groups, quite frankly, that there is not enough we could ever do, no matter what we do would never be enough. But it is important to recognize while there may be some outside groups who think we have not done enough, we have done a lot.

During this debate, I hope we remain honest with the American people about an important point. When we approve this legislation—I am hopeful in conference we will—we will not have put the Abramoff scandal behind us. Indeed, it is likely that future indictments and additional revelations will end any confusion on this point. The only way we put the Abramoff and other scandals behind us and restore the public faith in government is by each and every one of us, all 100 of us, and our staffs, conducting ourselves and operating this institution with the highest level of integrity.

This legislation will set parameters that will be easier to follow. The costs of corruption are high, and it is the American people who pay for it. What

has happened in Washington has eroded the ability of our Government to meet the needs of our people.

Look at this administration's response to Hurricane Katrina and the growing national unease about our security, both here and abroad. Just imagine, if Duke Cunningham and his coconspirators had not succeeded in spending tens of millions of taxpayers dollars to give their cronies bogus contracts, that money could have been used to pay for body armor, port security, or some other critical need. This is only one example.

The culture of corruption distorts our priorities and frustrates efforts to address the real needs of Americans, these Americans who are trying to cope with high natural gas prices to heat their homes, high fuel prices for the cars, concerns about their own retirement security, and a growing sense that they are having to work harder and harder to maintain even their current standard of living. Each one of us came here to serve the American people. We have been given a tremendously difficult responsibility. But it is one we all sought. Of course, it is a real privilege.

I am confident we can clean up the situation we now have in Washington so we can get on with the Nation's business. America deserves a government as good as its people. Together, America can do better.

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 for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2369 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, are we still in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2006

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate begin consideration of Calendar No. 367, S. 2349, the lobbying reform legislation. I further ask consent that following the reporting of the bill, I be recognized in order to offer a substitute amendment, and following that action, the bill be open for debate only during today's session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will state the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2349) to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

AMENDMENT NO. 2907

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I call up the substitute amendment which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 2907.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I am pleased to see that my colleague from the Rules Committee, Senator DODD, is here. He is the ranking member on the Rules Committee. We have done a lot of work together over the years, going all the way back to our days on the Rules Committee in the House. It is always a pleasure to do business with him.

I am also pleased to see the distinguished chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in the Senate, Senator COLLINS, who has been doing outstanding work there, with a greatly expanded committee, with jurisdiction over almost everything that is moving these days. She is doing a wonderful job.

Again, I am pleased to see both of my colleagues here as we begin debate on this very important issue involving the rules of the Senate and lobbying reform legislation. I think one of the im-

portant things to note at the very beginning is that this legislation from both the Rules Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee was reported as bipartisan legislation, and it is legislation that will absolutely ensure greater transparency and accountability in the legislative process.

There are those in Washington—me included—who have been concerned of late by how much partisanship there is in Washington and in the legislative process. I do think it has reached unprecedented levels. But I believe it is also possible for us to not have everything be that partisan. So that is why I think the way these two bills have been reported is so remarkable because the Rules Committee had a full debate and amendments were offered. Some were passed, some were rejected, some were accepted, and some were ruled out of order. When we got to final passage, Senators on both sides of the partisan aisle felt it was a fair process and there was not a single dissenting vote.

Also, the Governmental Affairs Committee—if I may refer to it that way in shorthand—reported it with only one "no" vote after having a full discussion and some amendments that were not easy to deal with. So I hope the spirit of bipartisanship can carry to the floor when we take up the amendments.

This afternoon's proceeding will be somewhat abbreviated because we have to take out some time for discussion about judicial nominees and votes, and we do have some further action with regard to the low-income energy assistance issue. However, when we get back to these bills tomorrow and are ready for amendments, I hope Senators will come over and we can get a time agreement and we will have a good discussion and votes. Perhaps even some amendments can be accepted, depending on what they are, and we can get this process completed before this week is over. I think that would be very good for the institution, and it needs to be done.

I do think this is an important effort. I have looked at what the Rules Committee did and what came out of the Rules Committee in the last week. This will be the third time I have been involved in a process of changing the rules or looking at what we might need to do after a difficult time in our history. That was true back in the seventies after the Watergate matter. We took up campaign reform and ethics reform and made some significant changes, some of them wise and some of them turned out to be not so advisable. We had to address the people's confidence in our institutions at that time.

Then again in the nineties we had some issues come up that caused problems and concerns following the House banking scandal. Again, we went through a process of looking at our ethics, looking at our rules, and looking at lobbying reform, and took action.

Here again we are looking at some changes in the rules and some improvements or some additional requirements with regard to lobbying reform. I think it is needed.

Some people say: Why do you have to keep changing? Are your rules, your ethics, are your lobbying requirements changing? Yes, they change with time. When we wrote the Telecommunications Act in 1996 and 1997, we thought phones were all going to be hard wired. We had no idea of all the technological advances that were going to occur. When we did immigration reform in 1997, I thought we did a good job. Obviously, we did a terribly inadequate job.

We need to take a look at what we have done in the past when it comes to laws, rules, ethics reforms, lobbying reform, and modernize it. For one thing, with all the modern capability and technology, you can have instantaneous disclosure; you can have fuller disclosure. It is easier now to file reports with the Secretary of the Senate or to put it on your own Internet to divulge and disclose to the American people and all who wish to look at those reports what you are doing in your role as a Senator and your service to the people.

I want to make it clear, I think this is an issue we should address. That is why when the leader called on me to have a hearing in the Rules Committee and to move forward, I moved forward on the issue aggressively because I thought there are rules changes that we need, we should do, could do, that would make common sense, and would be fair.

This is an issue where it is very easy to lose control emotionally or we get involved in a tremendous process of self-flagellation and condemnation. I don't want to do that, but there are some places where there are legitimate concerns or appearances of impropriety which we can improve.

Senator DODD and I talked on the phone, we met, and we came up with some important points, and I think we have come up with a pretty good bill. We need to go forward, have a full discussion, take up serious amendments that will be offered, and get this job done. I look forward to working with Senator COLLINS and making this a bill with which both committees are comfortable.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my section-by-section analysis of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2006 (S. 2349)

(Reported by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, February 28, 2006)

Section 1. Short Title: The Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act of 2006.

Section 2. Out of Scope Matters in Conference Reports: New Point of Order against