

to new cures today and new therapies tomorrow.

I am also particularly proud of this body passing the United States Leadership Against Global HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act. As my colleagues know, respectively, 3 million people die of the first, 2 million of the second, and 1 million of the third of the disease I mentioned. More than 5 million people die a year. These are three deadly infectious diseases that can be controlled.

We took a major step forward with that \$15 billion commitment. There is a lot more to do to address our health care system today. I am a great advocate of aligning our values and our incentives on results and outcomes. I believe in that vision of a health care system that is centered around a patient, or “the patient,” that is provider friendly, that is driven by three things: 21st century information; second, by choice; and third, driven by some element of control. A consumer-driven system is that vision, that model, to which we should all strive.

We need to change the way we think about health care, we need to reign in those frivolous lawsuits. We tried again and again to do so in the Senate the last 4 years and have been unsuccessful. The frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of your health care, my colleagues’ health care, and the cost of health care of everyone in this country.

We also need to address quality of health care to make sure those medical errors are eliminated, those needless medical errors that are made in our health care system today.

I am proud of the contributions Congress has made. We have much more to do.

Mr. President, when I placed my hand on the Bible and took my oath of office on a cold morning in 1995, I did not know many things I know today. But I knew with certainty that medicine would play a major role in my career in the Senate.

I kept the letters M.D. beside my name in my Senate office. I kept a stethoscope on my desk. And I kept my mind on the work of healing—of helping.

For 20 years before I entered politics, I devoted my life to helping people one-on-one. I performed 150 major transplants and, I hope, did a little to advance the science of transplantation. For 12 years in the Senate, I focused on the needs and interests of the people of Tennessee, the nation and, and around the world.

And, throughout it, I have done my best to remember where I came from: medicine. At the onset of my Senate career, I began working to place medicine at the center of our national agenda and promote its role around the world. Health care, after all, affects all of us, at every stage of our lives. I’ve spent enormous time on health and I hope it has made a difference.

I am proud of the work I have done to improve Medicare and preserve its

promise to America’s seniors. Thanks to the new Medicare Part D drug benefit, millions of American seniors will no longer have to worry about how they will pay for their prescriptions. Just as importantly, the new Part D benefit serves as a template for the future of Medicare: it empowers consumers and lets them choose the plan that fits their needs best. Most seniors have more than 20 choices, satisfaction is high, and costs to consumers have been less than we projected. The plan is a success. And we did it without having to impose price controls or caps that would stifle innovation and dry up the supply of new medicines.

The changes we created with the historic Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 do not end with the drug benefit. Medicare has begun to change its focus as well: it includes a first-ever “welcome to Medicare” exam and new coverage for tests that will help us prevent and treat diseases before they become major problems. Under the same legislation, nearly all Americans also gained much broader access to a new type of health coverage—Health Savings Accounts that they own, control, and carry with them from job to job.

I believe my efforts with regard to the National Institutes of Health embody the same forward-looking spirit that led to improvements in Medicare. For years, NIH’s budget grew only about as fast as our overall economy even though medicine became an increasingly important economic activity. My medical colleagues told me that necessary research could not always find funding—and the American people made it clear they wanted a stronger federal commitment to medical research.

Over a 5-year period, I helped lead a bipartisan effort to double NIH’s budget. And it’s paying off. Among other things, NIH research has discovered new triggers for childhood asthma, innovative new ways to prevent diabetes, treatments to reduce mother-to-child HIV/AIDS transmission, new treatments for stroke, and dozens of other innovative medical techniques. Thanks to NIH research, the miracle medicines of tomorrow have begun to arrive more quickly. NIH research has saved thousands of lives.

Our efforts to improve medicine have not stopped at America’s shores. Health care can be a currency of peace. It can provide hope. It can give relief. And I’m proud of the way I have worked to improve it around the world.

I am particularly proud of the leadership role I played in the United States Leadership Against Global HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003. These three deadly infectious diseases kill over a million people each year in the underdeveloped world. These infectious diseases do the most damage to the world’s health. AIDS, the World Health Organization reports, steals more years of healthy life than any other disease. TB and Malaria—although usually not fatal—do enormous

damage to health throughout the underdeveloped world and cost some of the poorest countries billions of dollars. It’s vital that we attack them, fight them, and win. And we’re making progress. Water has improved, reducing malaria. More and more people in the underdeveloped world are getting antiretrovirals to fight HIV/AIDS. Widespread education on the Abstain/Be Faithful/Use Condom ABC model has proven effective in limiting the spread of AIDS. In my own missionary work in Africa—trips—I’ve taken every couple years—I have seen what these diseases can do—and the devastation that they can cause. The result: we’ve slowed the progress of these diseases, and we’ve saved millions of lives.

We still have much work ahead of us. Enormous numbers of Americans still lack insurance. Through the State Children’s Health Insurance Program SCHIP and HSAs we have made it easier for some Americans to get health insurance. But we haven’t done enough. Over the next several years, I hope Congress will work to change our health care system so all Americans have affordable, reliable health coverage.

But simply expanding insurance coverage isn’t enough. We need to change the way we think about health care so we focus on results and value for patients. Getting there isn’t going to be easy. To do it, we need national, interoperable, privacy protected electronic medical records for all Americans who want them. We need to rethink the way we structure medical practices, and we need to do a better job monitoring quality.

We also need to reign in predatory trial lawyers who stand in the way of the doctor-patient relationship by encouraging doctors to care more about avoiding liability and less about providing high quality medical care. Medicare and Medicaid, too, need additional and sustained reforms to ensure our federal programs are in line with ever-changing realities.

American health care still faces enormous problems. We have tremendous work ahead of us. I am proud to have played a role in the health care reforms of the past 12 years, and I will continue to speak, think, and write about the vital importance of health care to our future as a nation. I entered this body as a physician and I will leave as one.

#### REASSIGNING THE HENRY CLAY DESK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 6½ years ago the Senate acted to ensure that the desk of Henry Clay would forever stay in the family of Kentucky Senators.

Henry Clay, the greatest statesman that my home State ever produced, served the people as speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Secretary of State under

President John Quincy Adams, and of course as one of the greatest Senators to ever walk through the Capitol.

He was also honored to receive his party's nomination for President three times, in 1824, 1832 and 1844.

The essence of legislating in the Senate, as 100 viewpoints are brought together to create one law, is compromise. Henry Clay became known as the Great Compromiser by forging the compromise that would keep his precious Union together.

Clay did not compromise in the sense of forsaking his principles. Rather, his skill was to bring together disparate ideas and forge a consensus among his colleagues. That is a skill we could certainly use more of now.

We recognize his dedication and service to our Nation by displaying his portrait just off the Senate floor as one of history's most outstanding Senators.

In the 106th Congress, the Senate unanimously resolved that the Senate desk once used by Henry Clay would be assigned to the senior Senator from Kentucky, to maintain the Clay legacy.

Only two other desks are so honored. In the 94th Congress, the Senate assigned the desk of Daniel Webster to the senior Senator from New Hampshire. And in the 104th Congress, the Senate assigned the desk of Jefferson Davis to the senior Senator from Mississippi.

Since 1999 I have been honored to use the Clay desk, and would have been honored to do so for the remainder of my Senate career. However, in January I will begin service as the 15th Republican leader.

With the Republican leader's position comes the Republican leader's desk—a desk equally steeped in tradition. First used by Republican Leader Charles McNary of Oregon in 1937, it has been passed to nearly every Republican leader since.

Leaders such as Robert Taft, William Knowland, and Everett Dirksen have sat behind it. So have leaders I have been fortunate to know and work with, men like Howard Baker, Bob Dole, TRENT LOTT and, currently, BILL FRIST.

In fact, Senator LOTT spoke on the floor on behalf of my resolution of 1999, and he also had some very kind words for me that I have not forgotten. I want to thank my good friend, the Senator from Mississippi, for that kindness.

So I was faced with a decision, the same decision that faced Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire when he was elected Republican leader in 1952.

At that time, Senator Bridges was using the famed Daniel Webster desk. Rather than give up that desk, he chose to have it moved to the front row of the Chamber, and he became the only Republican leader since Senator McNary to not use the Republican leader's desk. In fact, the Congressional Directory lists the desk as unassigned during 1952.

I can understand Senator Bridges's decision to keep the Webster desk in the family of New Hampshire Senators.

And yet it would be a shame not to follow the custom set by the Republican leaders I have just named, as well. So today, I come to the floor to offer a resolution to keep both of these venerable traditions alive.

This resolution will amend the resolution of 1999 by adding that, if the senior Senator from Kentucky is also a floor leader, then the Henry Clay desk will go to the junior Senator from Kentucky. That way, we can ensure the Bluegrass State will maintain its link to a tradition symbolized by this mahogany desk.

I am sure my colleague and friend Senator BUNNING will honor and keep the legacy of the Henry Clay desk—a legacy I have been proud to help continue. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of every Republican leader to have used the Republican leader's desk be printed the RECORD.

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

LIST OF SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERS WHO HAVE USED THE REPUBLICAN LEADER'S DESK

The first Senate Republican Leader to use the Leader's desk was Senator Charles L. McNary of Oregon, who began serving as Leader in 1933 and began using the Leader's desk in 1937. Since 1937, 11 Republican Leaders have been assigned the desk:

Charles L. McNary (Oregon), 1937–1944  
Wallace H. White Jr. (Maine), 1945–1949  
Kenneth S. Wherry (Nebraska), 1949–1951  
(Note: Sen. Wherry died on November 29, 1951. During 1952 the Congressional Directory lists the Republican Leader's desk as unassigned.)  
Robert A. Taft (Ohio), 1953  
William F. Knowland (California), 1953–1959  
Everett M. Dirksen (Illinois), 1959–1969  
Hugh D. Scott Jr. (Pennsylvania), 1969–1977  
Howard H. Baker Jr. (Tennessee), 1977–1985  
Robert J. Dole (Kansas), 1985–1996  
Trent Lott (Mississippi), 1996–2003  
William H. Frist (Tennessee), 2003–2007

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 630 which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 630) allowing the senior Senator from Kentucky to reassign the Henry Clay desk when serving as party leader.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 630) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 630

Resolved, That S. Res. 89 (106th Congress) is amended by—

- (1) inserting “(a)” after “That”; and
- (2) adding at the end the following:
 

“(b) If, in any Congress, the senior Senator from the State of Kentucky is serving as

party leader, the desk referred to in subsection (a) may be assigned to the junior Senator from Kentucky upon the request of the senior Senator.”.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have passed the baton, if you will, of the Henry Clay desk to my colleague from Kentucky, Senator BUNNING, who is also here.

I yield the floor and look forward to hearing his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, first, I thank my senior colleague—not senior colleague but senior Senator from Kentucky for this wonderful gesture.

Every young student in Kentucky knows the legend of Henry Clay. My wife Mary and our children all learned about Henry Clay in Kentucky schools. Many of my grandchildren in Kentucky have also heard the stories of Henry Clay's time spent as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives where he became speaker, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Secretary of State in the United States, and U.S. Senator.

Henry Clay served the people of Kentucky for nearly one-half a century. He also is called and should be called one of the greatest Senators in the history of the Senate for the compromises he brokered during the divisive war years before the Civil War.

Henry Clay's legends remains with all Kentuckians today. His home in Lexington is a revered site in Kentucky. A statue and portrait of Henry Clay stands just off the Senate floor, and the desk of Henry Clay used when he served in this great body remains with us today, as well. As my colleague Senator MCCONNELL said, he has used that desk since it was assigned to the senior Senator from Kentucky.

Senator MCCONNELL is a student of Kentucky history and a student also of the history of the Senate. Like Henry Clay, Senator MCCONNELL has become a respected leader in this Senate. Now with Senator MCCONNELL's new role as the Republican leader in the 110th Congress comes a new desk and with it, its own special history. He has been gracious to introduce and pass a resolution to allow Henry Clay's desk to remain forever in the family of Kentucky Senators.

As the junior Senator from Kentucky, it would be an honor to serve in this Senate with the same desk that Henry Clay once called his own. It is with deep gratitude and thanks to my senior Senator from Kentucky for his work on this resolution that I have co-sponsored, and I hope my colleagues are as excited as I am about what has just happened, the fact that my time in the Senate will at least be spent, partially, at the desk of Henry Clay, the great compromiser from Kentucky.

I thank my senior Senator for all the work he has done in his entire Senate career and particularly today on passing Henry Clay's desk on to the junior Senator.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALEC GIFFORD

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I pay tribute this morning to a great American journalist from New Orleans, LA. Alec Gifford will be formally retiring from WDSU in New Orleans this December after an extraordinarily lengthy, fulfilling, and energetic career covering politics and a whole range of issues over decades, including hurricanes, storms and other disasters. He even hosted, believe it or not, a cooking show.

Alec came from a family of journalists. His father covered Governor Huey Long for the Times-Picayune, and his grandfather published one of the first local French language newspapers. So his family tradition has deep roots in Louisiana and in New Orleans. After serving in the U.S. Navy, Alec came to WDSU in 1955. He introduced the people of Louisiana to a very young Senator at the time, John F. Kennedy, as he sought to become—and ultimately did—the President of the United States. Just as we have spent many hours on this floor in recent months and years discussing the share of royalties that Louisiana should get from energy production off of our coast—and I believed I was the first on the story—I was corrected by my staff that Alec Gifford was one of the first on the story four decades ago.

He asked Senator Kennedy his position on how these royalties would be handled when he came in to campaign for the Presidency back then. And he also pressed him on the Nation's path toward an equal education for all of our children during that extraordinary historic interview.

Louisiana later gave all of its electoral votes to Senator Kennedy, who became our 35th President. We then, of course, passed major legislation for equal opportunity, and today or tomorrow we will be passing a historic piece of legislation on royalty sharing after all these many years.

Alec was a journalist who always knew the important stories and managed to explain them to the people at home in a way they could grasp and understand the impact on their daily, everyday lives, and their future.

But Alec really made a name for himself in 1965, demonstrating his dedication to the story when Hurricane Betsy struck Louisiana. While every other station had lost their ability to broadcast back in 1965—the city and region were basically dark and shut down, and the winds were howling, and the waters were almost as high as during Katrina—Alec stood in the path of the hurricane and brought images of the storm into every home that could receive a television signal.

Forty years later, he was there again for us with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. He evacuated himself to Jackson,

MS, but stayed on the story, as many brave journalists did. But Alec has been doing this for so long. His accomplishments throughout this were singular. Working his way—scratching, crawling his way—back to New Orleans, like many of our journalists did, he continued to stay on the story.

The hurricanes could not stop him. The flooding could not stop him. And in a few simple sentences, Alec Gifford illustrated the magnitude of the impact that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had on Louisiana, when he said:

This is nothing like Betsy. . . . Betsy was a horrible storm. Betsy was a walk in the park. I cannot believe how Katrina and Rita have turned our world upside down and backward. Isn't it amazing how everything changes?

But Alec has not changed at all over these decades. He has stayed resolute, committed to his craft, energetic, and absolutely consistent in his work ethic. He is almost 80 years young, and he has never slowed down. His colleague, Travers Mackel, can attest to that. He said:

I'm 31 years old, and I have a tough time keeping up with him. He's the first one in to work [in the morning] and the last one out the door.

His news director, Anzio Williams, said: "I don't ever want to hear anybody complain," he says to his staff, "about being overworked and overstressed. This guy, [referring to Alec], outworks everybody."

But after a half a century on the air, at WDSU, WVUE, and for NBC News, Alec has decided to retire. He has certainly left his mark on the news in New Orleans, hiring the next generation of WDSU in anchor Norm Robinson and reporter Richard Angelico—who both have done an outstanding job for our community—but he will now be able to spend more time with the people he cares about most, his wife Delores, his five children, and his eight grandchildren.

He is truly part of the soul of our city, and a shining example of the best in his craft—a reporter to the core, a man willing to stay on the job, no matter what, to tell the story, to tell it right, to tell it clearly. Alec Gifford may be leaving the studio, but he is not leaving our hearts and our memories. I for one would not be surprised to see him on television again. I am sure he will come back in a different capacity, in a different way, but this Senator would like to say how much I have personally appreciated his service to our community and wanted to pay tribute to Alec Gifford today on the eve of his retirement from WDSU.

#### HONORING SENATORIAL SERVICE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I have a few more minutes before the 10:30 vote, and I take this time to say a few words about some of my colleagues who are retiring. We had a good bit of time yesterday devoted to their tremendous contributions, and as

each of us, the 100 of us, do know each other pretty well, I have come to the floor to say a few things about several of the colleagues I have had the distinct pleasure of working with very closely.

BILL FRIST

Mr. President, one is, of course, Senator BILL FRIST, our retiring majority leader. I had the wonderful opportunity to be invited to travel with Senator FRIST. I guess you could say it was clearly an opportunity. It was not necessarily a pleasurable trip in the sense that the first trip I took with him was to tour the devastation of the tsunami. Soon after he assumed the role of leader, the tsunami hit the Indian coastline. It was one of the largest disasters in the recent history of the world.

I had a chance to go to that region with Senator FRIST. I actually saw him firsthand don his doctor's coat and take off, if you will, his hat as Senator and put on his coat as doctor and operate. I agreed to go on that trip with him under one condition, that I myself would not have to go with him into the operating rooms. So I stayed outside and talked with people while he went in and actually did the hard work of saving people's lives and bringing them back to health.

But what I will most remember about that trip—and there were about six of us on it—is that he was the first one awake in the morning, the last one to go to bed at night, constantly working until the point where those of us said we are unlikely to ever travel with him again because we could not get any rest through the entire week and were so exhausted when we got back. We said: If he calls again to ask us to travel, tell him I am doing something else. I am kidding, of course. But I say that with the greatest admiration for a man who has an extraordinary work ethic. And through so many ups and downs, literally, of these helicopters and trips, I remember him staying so steady and so calm, even when we saw some of the most horrific sights you can imagine.

But he has led this Chamber and brought his own style of leadership and his own gifts that God has given him to this Chamber. I am a Senator who truly admires that particular aspect of his service and wanted to put that into the RECORD in a small way this morning.

JIM JEFFORDS

Mr. President, I also want to remember for a minute the good work of Senator JEFFORDS. Senator JEFFORDS tends to be one of the quiet Members of the Senate. Some of us talk a lot more than others. He does not do much talking, but he sure gets a lot done. I will never forget, and the people of Louisiana are so grateful to Senator JEFFORDS, as he chaired the EPW Committee, for being one of the first Senators in this Chamber to recognize the extraordinary loss of our wetlands and what it would mean to south Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. And ultimately, of course, we saw the tragedy