

hands of teenagers or preventing identity theft? Eighty-one percent of Americans agree with von Spakovsky's position on this matter. Yet he is being attacked as being outside the mainstream for what his critics call a partisan position.

Because of the holds that have been placed on Commissioner von Spakovsky's nomination, we now come to this impasse where the FEC will be left with only two Commissioners, unable to rule on any potential violation that may occur in the 2008 election—a Presidential year, along with all of the Senate races that are up, and every Member of the House of Representatives. The FEC will not be able to rule on any violations because they will have only two Commissioners—all because of an ideological bent pushed by groups outside of the Congress saying that this one man, because he agrees with 81 percent of the American people, is somehow disqualified for being too partisan.

The principle has always been that the Republicans pick the Republican nominees for the FEC and the Democrats pick the Democratic nominees for the FEC—a principle that makes sense. I do not know very much about the Democratic nominees for these positions who will not be confirmed, and, frankly, I do not care because they are not mine to select. They have been picked by the Democratic leadership to represent the Democratic position, and I am willing to vote for them on that basis.

Mr. von Spakovsky has a 2-year history of acting intelligently, with great integrity, and great collegiality in this position, and it is a tragedy that the whole Commission will be denied the opportunity to function in a Presidential year; that those Presidential candidates who are depending on Presidential matching funds will not get them because outside groups have demonized this one public servant. It is a sad day that this kind of thing is happening with respect to our governmental appointments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. I certainly do not want to preempt him if he wants to go next. Does the Senator have a preference? If not, I will go ahead, if that is OK.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

#### IN MEMORY OF THOMAS B. MURPHY

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise on a sad occasion for me personally and for my State, but also in some sense a proud time for me to be able to acknowledge the life and times of Thomas B. Murphy.

Last night, at 10 o'clock, in Bremen, GA, in Haralson County, Thomas B. Murphy died from the complications of

a stroke that for the last 4 years kept him, at best, semiconscious and in a very difficult state.

But in those previous 79 years of life, he is probably the most remarkable political figure in the history of the State of Georgia. Elected speaker of the house in 1974, he maintained that position until 2002—for 28 years—longer than any speaker of any legislature in the history of the United States of America.

He was the son of a primitive Baptist preacher by weekend and a railroad telegraph man by day. He was a product of the Depression. And he was Irish. He was tough as nails but had a heart of gold. He was a Democrat through and through, and proudly stated his absolute distaste for any Republican.

For 8 years of my 17 years in the Georgia Legislature, I was the Republican leader of the Georgia House. To give you an idea of what a minority is really like, I was 1 of 19 Republicans, and there were 161 Democrats. I understood what being a minority leader was all about.

Tom Murphy was a powerful, forceful leader. But from the day I met him, when I was first elected in 1976, to the last day I held his hand, this past April, by his bed in Bremen, GA, he was always fair, he was always good, and he did what was best for the State.

Tom Murphy did not play golf. He did not play tennis. He raised tomatoes in his garden. His house is a modest brick ranch in Bremen, GA. His trade as a country lawyer was exceeded only by his skill as a politician. He never cared for money. He never cared for fame. He never cared for attention. His favorite day of the year was March 17, St. Patrick's Day, for which he would summarize adjourn the Georgia Legislature so he and his entourage could go to Savannah, GA, and be a part of the second largest St. Patrick's Day parade in America, in Savannah, on St. Patrick's Day.

His second favorite thing was to hold his grandchildren in his lap as he sat on the throne of the speaker of the house of representatives, and let them watch over his presiding of the Georgia House.

But this common, tough, fine man did so much for our State it is almost difficult to describe. We would not have a Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority were it not for Tom Murphy. He delivered the rural vote for the urban city of Atlanta in 1974 to get mass transit and to raise the taxes to do it. If you ever watched the Super Bowl in the Georgia Dome, the Georgia Dome would have never been built were it not for Tom Murphy.

As to the Georgia World Congress Center, there is not a Member of this Senate who has not been there because almost every convention in America goes through there once every couple years. It would never have been built were it not for Tom Murphy. Our rural roads and highways, the Governor's Road Improvement Program, would

never have happened were it not for Tom Murphy.

But of all the great legacies and edifices that will be named after him, and have been named after him, his legacy will live on not through buildings and institutions but through people because Tom Murphy cared the most about people. And he cared the most about people who were poor and people who were disadvantaged.

Tom Murphy's legacy is the children who were born in poverty who came out of poverty and became successful because of the programs he put in place as speaker of the house. Tom Murphy's legacy will live on because of those who know, as a foster child or as a child in trouble, it was Tom Murphy who was there to give a hand up, not a handout.

Tom Murphy will be honored this Friday in the State capitol, where he will lie in state, and where his funeral will take place—a State capitol where for 28 years, through five Governors, he ruled the State of Georgia—not in the sense of a ruler or a tyrant but in the sense of a proud man whose time and destiny came together in the great State of Georgia. I will mourn his loss for all I learned from him.

I end my remarks by telling you about that day I sat by his bed this past April and held his hand. He could not communicate, but I knew he was awake. I said: Mr. Speaker, I am now in the U.S. Senate. And I just wanted to tell you I am a better man, and I probably got there because of the painful and wise lessons I learned from you.

A tear came in his eye, and he squeezed my hand. I knew, as we communicated first in 1976, we communicated once again. And from the day I knew him in 1976, to the last day I knew him this year, I respected him, I honored him, and I loved him.

Georgia appreciates the service Tom Murphy gave to all her people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### LIHEAP

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking my good friend, the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, for yielding.

The reason I rise is to deal with a very important issue that impacts millions of our fellow Americans, and that is all over this country, with the price of home heating oil soaring, people are wondering about how they are going to stay warm this winter. My very fervent hope is that the Congress, both the Senate and the House, will address this issue before we adjourn for the Christmas holidays.

I commend Majority Leader REID, Minority Leader MCCONNELL, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD, Chairman HARKIN, and others for, in fact, adding a significant sum of money—over \$400