

Mr. REED. Thank you, Mr. President. First, let me thank the majority leader for arranging this time.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS P. RILEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding Rhode Islander and a superb employee of the Senate who is retiring after 34 years of Federal service—my friend, my colleague, someone I admire immensely, Dennis P. Riley.

Dennis Riley has worked in my Providence office since I was elected to the Senate. But before that, he was a long-time employee of Senator Claiborne Pell, my predecessor. Dennis was born in Pawtucket, RI, on March 3, 1948, and attended St. Raphael's Academy. He went on to earn a bachelor of science in history and political science at the University of Wisconsin in 1971.

He taught history for a brief time in the Pawtucket School System and was a graduate student in the Masters in Teaching Program at Rhode Island College. In 1972, he became the field coordinator for U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell's reelection campaign and formed a bond with Senator Pell and public service that lasts to this day.

Dennis came to serve on the personal staff of Senator Pell, first as a staff assistant in Washington, DC, from 1973 to 1978. But in recognition of those skills and the commitment he brought to bear as a staff member for Senator Pell, Senator Pell chose Dennis to serve as his campaign manager for his next successful reelection effort. So Dennis returned to Rhode Island and successfully planned and executed the Senator's reelection campaign.

From 1979 to Senator Pell's final day in office, Dennis worked as assistant director of the Senator's Rhode Island office. He was a trusted employee of Senator Pell, and, more importantly, Dennis remains close to the Pell family today.

As Senator from 1961 to 1997, Senator Claiborne Pell's legacy includes establishing Pell grants as well as creating the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Senator Pell was also noted as a diplomat, and he served with distinction as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Pell's legacy is a model for all of us, particularly for myself. Dennis Riley is a testament and a part of that tradition of talented and conscientious public servants who labor, perhaps in the shadows, but it is their work that is decisive in our success on the floor.

After Senator Pell retired, and the people of Rhode Island gave me the chance to continue his good works, Senator Pell spoke so highly of Dennis that I asked him to join my staff. It is one of the best decisions I have ever made. He brought with him a keen knowledge of the workings of the Senate, a history and knowledge of Rhode Island politics, good judgment, great wisdom, and great character. In the en-

suating years, we have become dear friends, and he is a trusted adviser.

During his tenure with my office, Dennis has worked on special projects and has assisted hundreds of agencies and organizations as they sought Federal assistance and thousands of Rhode Islanders who needed help, who needed someone to listen to their stories, and to let them know there is a government that cares about them, because Dennis Riley is a person who cares deeply, not just about Government but about the people we serve.

In Rhode Island, he has been involved in crafting many public policy initiatives, and he has been particularly active as my point person on Federal grants and the applications process for the Appropriations Committee.

He has shepherded projects through. He has brought people together for the common good. He has made a significant impact on the economic vitality of my State. Although Dennis's name will never be lauded in the news reports or press releases, his hand is seen in so many efforts to make our State an even better place to live, work, and raise our families.

Everyone who knows Dennis sees him as a kind and decent man, with a great heart, a great mind—someone we are proud to call a dear friend.

His compassion and quick Irish wit are legendary. For years, transplanted Rhode Islanders in Washington, DC, and politicos in our State eagerly awaited, every day, the "Riley Report"—a carefully crafted summary of the day's topical stories, political news, and a retelling of the events of the day in Rhode Island. This complete and unbiased commentary of the author provided the "real story," very often, of what was going on in Rhode Island.

Well, after his distinguished service to the Senate for 34 years, Dennis now will be retiring to his beloved home in Little Compton, RI, with his wife—the love of his life—Kathy McLaughlin Riley. Kathy is a warm and lovely person, who has devoted her life to educating children. She is an elementary teacher at the Elizabeth Baldwin School in Pawtucket, and she will soon join Dennis in retirement.

In their well-deserved retirement, Dennis and Kathy plan to travel extensively. They are avid baseball enthusiasts, and they plan to visit all the ballparks they have not yet seen. It will be an inspiring and interesting trip for both of them.

He will also be spending time caring for his family, including creating more memories with his many nieces and nephews who so treasure his company. I wish both Kathy and Dennis much happiness and fulfillment in the years ahead.

Now, on behalf of myself—and also I will take the liberty to speak on behalf of my esteemed predecessor, Senator Claiborne Pell—I would ask all my colleagues in the Senate, who treasure, as I do, the loyalty and the devotion of

their staffs, to join me in paying tribute to a stellar Senate employee, Dennis Riley.

Rhode Island has been honored by his service, and the Reed staff will fondly remember his time with them. We formed a lasting bond that will never be severed, and we treasure that bond.

As Dennis files the final "Riley Report," I wish him every good wish.

Now, Dennis is Irish, and that means he has a rather somber view of the world. He has a saying on his office door that reads: "There is nothing so bad that it can't get worse." That is a typically Irish sentiment. As we send him off, however, let me offer another sentiment, Dennis:

May the saddest day of your future be no worse

Than the happiest day of your past.

Thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your service.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

FOOD PANTRIES

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, on Monday, in Hocking County—a small-town, rural county in southeast Ohio—residents began forming a line at the Smith Chapel United Methodist Church Pantry before dawn. By 8:30, when volunteers began distributing food, the line of cars stretched for more than a mile and a half. By early afternoon, more than 2,000 residents had received food. That is over 7 percent of the local population. Mr. President, 1 out of 14 people in this county had received food from this food pantry. Eight years ago, the same pantry was serving 17 families a month. Two thousand people in one day; 17 families for the whole month 8 years ago.

The Freestore Foodbank in Cincinnati, OH, has seen a 52-percent increase in demand this year. Many of these new patrons are working people. They are working minimum-wage jobs. Some hold two jobs. They are not just the homeless. They are not just the dispossessed. They are all kinds of people who have had a series of bad luck in the last several months.

With food prices going up, fuel prices going up, wages stagnating, and subprime foreclosures continuing to hit home, working middle-class Americans are finding it difficult to find room in their budgets for food.

More Americans in need; less food available—the result is far too much human suffering. Think of this. In the wealthiest Nation in the world, people are waiting in line for a subsistence level of food, and some of them are not even receiving that. The men and women and children waiting in line for food are men and women and children you have passed on the street—mothers and fathers trying to feed their kids, children too proud to admit there is no lunch money in their pocket, no food in the refrigerator, no holiday meals ahead; no food.

Grandmothers raising their grandchildren, living on fixed incomes, relying—because they have no choice but to rely—on food pantries, on food donations, on food banks.

The unemployed, the sick, the aged, the homeless, the mentally ill. And in Hocking County, 1 out of 14 people went to one food bank on 1 day. There are people who live in the communities that all of us serve. Food banks in Ohio, in Montana, Michigan, Illinois, Arizona, New York, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Rhode Island and in every State of the Union are underfunded and overextended. Food banks too often are rationing rations, trying to prevent children and families from going hungry over the holidays. In Lorain, OH, my hometown, the Salvation Army Food Pantry ran out of food completely and was forced to close temporarily. The society of St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in Cincinnati has been forced to give families 3 or 4 days of food instead of the customary 6 or 7 days of food when people come to see them. In Athens County, OH, earlier this month, the director of the Family and Friends Choice Pantry was actually “praising God we are in a snowstorm and not many people showed up” because if they had, her pantry would have run out of food. In Ohio as a whole, 70 percent of food pantries don’t have enough food to serve everyone in need.

That is why earlier last week I offered legislation to act to alleviate the current food shortage. That is why I want to see us include \$40 million in emergency food aid for food pantries across my State and across the country. I appreciate the leadership of Senator DURBIN and Majority Leader REID in wanting to include this at the next opportunity come January to get this \$40 million out to the States, out to churches and food banks and food pantries so that the 1 out of 14 people in Hocking County and people in need all over this country can get the assistance we can afford to give them.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the Senator from Ohio yield for a question?

Mr. BROWN. I yield to the senior Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to ask through the Chair—I want to first thank the Senator from Ohio for his leadership on this issue. He is new to the Senate but not new to this issue.

Times have changed in America, and not for the better when it comes to food pantries. People need help. I just this Sunday visited the Greater Chicago Food Depository and learned that there is an 11-percent increase over last year in the number of people coming into food pantries served in the greater Chicagoland area, and most of them have jobs. These are people who, when they fill up the gas tank and need another \$20 to fill the tank, realize they are not going to have enough money to buy food for their children that they planned on buying, and they make a stop at the food pantry.

I would like to ask the Senator from Ohio whether he is familiar with Second Harvest, which is a major national organization that involves itself in the processing of contributions from private industry and from the Federal Government into food pantries, and whether he has any experience in dealing with the Second Harvest food pantries in his area or other food pantries.

The last point I would like to make is that we were told on Sunday that people who care, particularly during this holiday season, should go to secondharvest.org, but find their local pantry, find where they can drop off food, volunteer for an hour, make a donation, do something that will make you feel good about yourself this holiday season.

But I would like to ask the Senator from Ohio whether he has been contacted by these agencies dealing with Second Harvest.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Illinois for his work on food issues and on other issues, including everything from subprime to minimum wage and all issues where we can play a role in improving the lives of people who, as the Senator from Illinois said, are working, in most cases, full-time jobs.

Second Harvest is one of the great organizations in this country—in Illinois, in Ohio, in Nevada, and in Vermont, all over this country. I urge people, understanding that Second Harvest is not getting the donations they used to get, they are not getting enough help from the Government, they are not getting as much from supermarkets and from businesses as they got before, and they, frankly, are not getting as many charitable donations because people who gave before sometimes are in need themselves because it is often people who don’t make a lot of money who are the most generous with their money and with their assistance, to plea to people in our States, businesses, individuals who are as lucky as we are in this Chamber, to help Second Harvest, to go on Web sites and look in the yellow pages and look around their communities where they can help people so that this will actually make a difference. So I thank the Senator from Illinois for his interest.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I mentioned to my friend from Ohio a fact that I just heard. I hope it is wrong, but if it is wrong, it is not much wrong. The average income of people who vote in America today is \$70,000 a year. I am very happy we have people who have a little—people of means who are voting, but the reason I mention that is the last two issues that have been brought before the Senate, one dealing with LIHEAP—that is, how people stay warm in the wintertime; that was by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS—and now the Senator from Ohio is talking about food banks. In Nevada, 25 percent of the homeless are veterans, and we have a very difficult problem, especially in Las Vegas. The weather is

warm most of the time. We have people who are homeless there who are destitute. Food banks is the difference between being very hungry and having something to eat.

I, at one time, in disguise, spent 2 days with the homeless. It was a number of years ago that I did that, but it is something I will never forget. People are not there because they want to be. They are not there because they are lazy. There are some who are alcoholics, and there are some who have drug problems, there is no question about that. But there are so many of these people who have emotional problems who have no community health centers where they can go, so they are just down and out.

All the Senator from Ohio is saying is that food banks, the places where the poorest of the poor go to get a meal, don’t have food. I want the attention to be directed to the last two things we have tried to work on: keeping people warm in the wintertime and helping people so they are not starving. So I appreciate this.

The people who are cold in the wintertime don’t have people to come and lobby for them. People who are homeless don’t have people here lobbying for them, coming in their limousines and parking over on Constitution Avenue, and sometimes they are in their Gucci shoes and they have to walk all the way across half a block to come and lobby for some of the tax breaks they want. For people who are hungry and people who are cold, that isn’t the case. So I appreciate very much the Senator from Ohio bringing to the attention of the Senate something that needs to be done.

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay before the Senate the message from the House on H.R. 2764.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Chair lays before the Senate a message from the House.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2764) entitled “An Act making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes,” with amendments.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to concur in the amendments of the House. I have a cloture motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion, having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendments to