

things we can and should do. We need to work with the President, and the President should be working with Republicans and Democrats who are friends of trade to do several things. One would be trade promotion authority. We used to call this fast track. This is where the administration can negotiate an agreement, and then the House and Senate either vote yes or no on that agreement. It is the only way to get agreements done in the world we live in today.

Right now, the administration has no realistic way of passing trade agreements through the Congress. The President needs to work with Congress so that we will give him the authority. He needs to ask for it, and he needs to want it so we can have these agreements. This gives our trading partners the confidence they need to make the concessions that you make in negotiation and know that the agreement is going to be the agreement. It is either going to be that agreement or no agreement at all.

Since the TPA lapsed in 2006, we haven't negotiated a single new free-trade agreement. If that doesn't tell us how important it is that we move back to a way to get these agreements done, I don't know what would.

Second, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. These negotiations seem to me to be languishing right now and need senior administration attention in order to gather the steam they need. A strong Trans-Pacific Partnership is the most effective way to consolidate our leadership in that part of the world.

At a time when China is aggressively moving into east Asia, we also need to look at the Philippines. Senator INOUE and I have a bill that would strengthen our relationship with the Philippines called the SAVE Act. I would like to see the administration work with the two of us to see what we could get done to have that relationship that has been so strong and has lasted so long become even closer as we figure out how to trade with that economy in a way that makes them more stable and closer friends of the United States. Frankly, we will benefit, our workforce will benefit from that agreement.

There is a Trans-Atlantic Free Trade Agreement that puts us in a better situation to trade with the European Union. This should be one of the easiest agreements we have ever done because we have two mature economies trying to trade with each other. The normal negotiations about labor and environment and other things that sometimes take so long in these agreements, frankly, shouldn't take long. The Presiding Officer has spent a lot of time with our NATO partners, and they would be the same partners that would be our EU trading partners if we will move forward there.

Finally, we need fresh trade policies with the Americas. We now have trade agreements with six countries that were part of the Dominican Republic

CAFTA agreement with Mexico, Canada, Panama, Colombia, Chile, and Peru, and we have a trading preferences agreement with Haiti. But we really need to look to see what we can do to trade in this hemisphere, improve our economic relationship with the South American giant country and giant economy of Brazil.

Your best trading partners should be your neighbors. Certainly, Canada and Mexico have proved that. When we send Canada \$1, they traditionally send us back somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1. Right now it is about 91 cents. In our trade with Mexico, Mexico now sends us back, a year ago probably—and this number continues to grow—75 cents. That is why on the energy front, when we deal with them, it makes a difference. So they have proven that your neighbors should be your best trading partners.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BLUNT. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds.

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

Mr. BLUNT. We need to expand the economic partnerships to our neighborhood. The Western Hemisphere needs more attention. Trade makes sense for America. Trade creates jobs. Trade creates opportunity. I am glad we are voting on this trade agreement today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

#### TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

##### OLYMPIA SNOWE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, many of our colleagues will be leaving us at the end of this Congress, and I wish to take time this morning to pay tribute to some of my colleagues, particularly those with whom I have worked most closely. Of course, I must start with my colleague and friend from Maine, OLYMPIA SNOWE.

In ancient Sparta, there was a saying that roughly translated as this: It seems all the world knows what is the right thing to do, but it is only the Spartans who will do anything about it.

As my friend, colleague, and senior Senator from Maine, OLYMPIA SNOWE, ends her service in the Senate, I rise to pay tribute to this descendent of that legendary civilization. Olympia is a true leader who has always devoted her considerable intellect, energy, and commitment to doing what was right for Maine and for America. OLYMPIA SNOWE has dedicated her life to public service: 18 years in the Senate, preceded by 16 representing Maine's Second Congressional District, plus 5 in the Maine legislature adds up to a remarkable record of commitment to our Nation and the great State of Maine.

But that span of nearly four decades tells us only part of the story, for

OLYMPIA has truly set the gold standard for public service. From the State house to the U.S. Capitol, OLYMPIA has built an outstanding reputation as an informed, thoughtful, and effective legislator. She can always be counted on as a leader with integrity who pursued solutions and who had no interest in just scoring partisan political points. It is OLYMPIA's character that has made all the difference.

The private acts of public figures can tell us a lot about their character, so I wish to share with my colleagues this morning a story about OLYMPIA SNOWE that I witnessed personally. There was a Republican fundraiser going on one night and I was arriving late, driving up in a car. People were streaming out of the fundraiser and each of them was passing by a man who was on crutches, with only one leg, clearly destitute, clearly down on his luck, who was asking for money. Everybody but OLYMPIA SNOWE passed him by without a word, as if he were invisible. OLYMPIA went over to this destitute man on crutches, with one leg, and she not only handed him some money but she took the time to talk with him. I think that tells us so much about who OLYMPIA SNOWE is—her kindness to this individual, when everyone else was passing him by, her kindness to him when no one was watching, her kindness to him was a private act that told all of us so much about her character.

With her retirement from the Senate, OLYMPIA SNOWE will join the pantheon of great leaders our State has produced: Margaret Chase Smith, Ed Muskie, George Mitchell, and Bill Cohen. All of them, similar to OLYMPIA, exemplify the principle that public office is a sacred trust.

OLYMPIA's inspiring record of service is but part of an even more inspiring life story. Several times, from childhood on, OLYMPIA has been visited by tragedy that would have caused most people to become discouraged, disheartened, and negative. But each time OLYMPIA rose, transcended her personal tragedy, and was more determined than before to succeed and to contribute to a better life for others. Her well-deserved popularity among Maine people transcends party lines and is testament to her strength and her spirit.

The people of Maine and America are grateful for her many years of service. I am grateful for her leadership and her friendship. I know OLYMPIA SNOWE will continue to influence national policy for many years to come.

JOE LIEBERMAN

Mr. President, we have a tradition in the Senate of referring to our colleagues on the Senate floor during debate as "my friend from this State" or "my friend from that State," and oftentimes the word friend just means colleague. But there is a fellow Senator whom I call friend in the truest sense of the word. That person is the senior Senator from Connecticut, my dear friend Senator JOE LIEBERMAN.

When JOE LIEBERMAN announced earlier last year that he would not seek reelection to the Senate, he called himself a lucky guy for having had the opportunity to serve his State and his country. I would contend it is we in this Chamber and the people throughout Connecticut and across our Nation who are the ones who are truly fortunate for JOE LIEBERMAN's lifelong commitment to public service, including his 24 years in the Senate.

For more than a decade, it has been my privilege to serve with JOE as the leaders of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Regardless of who has been chairman and who has been ranking member, ours has been a partnership. Indeed, I will never forget when I was losing the chairmanship because of the change in control, JOE leaning over to me and saying: Don't worry, SUSAN, all that will change is that you will pass me the gavel.

It was typical of his thoughtfulness and generosity, and it is not coincidental that ours is the only committee in the Senate where we do not sit with Republicans on one side and Democrats on the other but instead are interspersed because we recognize, given our important mandate, that we must work together in a bipartisan and, indeed, a nonpartisan way.

During the time JOE has been the chairman and that we have worked together, the committee has established a well-deserved reputation for bipartisanship, for thoroughness, and—most important—for getting things done. I know the American people have been so frustrated with the gridlock that has prevented action on so many issues facing our Nation. For the most part, we do not see that kind of stalemate on our committee and that is a tribute to the leadership of JOE LIEBERMAN. That reputation for our committee—of accomplishment and bipartisanship—is the work of many hands, but JOE LIEBERMAN's fingerprints are all over it. JOE has always based his leadership on his unwavering belief that the great challenges America faces—such as combating terrorism, putting our fiscal house in order, and defending freedom—transcend party lines.

The success our committee has achieved in helping to safeguard our Nation is the result of that nonpartisan—some might say independent—spirit that guides him. Those successes are many, from the landmark Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act to providing the tools that strengthen our first responders, to our extensive investigations into the flawed response to Hurricane Katrina, the fatal communication failures in the Fort Hood terrorism case, and our current scrutiny of the attacks in Benghazi, JOE LIEBERMAN has always put country first. His actions are guided by deeply held principles and aim toward progress. He has demonstrated his willingness, time and again, to risk his political career to do what he believes is right for America.

JOE brings the same dedication to everything he does. Working with him on the Armed Services Committee, I know firsthand how devoted he is to our men and women in uniform and the deep respect he has for their service and their sacrifice. His leadership in bringing about the repeal of the discriminatory don't ask, don't tell law was nothing short of extraordinary, and it gives me great personal pride to have assisted him in achieving that important victory for justice. It was vintage JOE LIEBERMAN. He did what was right. He never gave up. He got the job done.

Throughout his many years of dedicated service, JOE has demonstrated the kind of character America needs and the American people deserve. It is not by coincidence that the PowerPoint slide show I present to students throughout Maine includes a photograph of Senator JOE LIEBERMAN at work. The young pupils of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow could have no better role model than this leader of intelligence and integrity.

A wonderful fringe benefit of working so closely with JOE for so many years has been the opportunity I have had to get to know his wonderful wife Hadasah. She is a person who also demonstrates remarkable strength and compassion. Her devotion to community service spans a range of issues, from advocating for women's health and breast cancer research to providing women with opportunity through microfinance programs.

The integrity and decency JOE brings to public service stands on the unshakable foundation of his deep faith. It is telling that his retirement announcement included these wise words from Ecclesiastes: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

In closing, I offer my dear friend this traditional Jewish blessing: "May you live 120 years."

While none of us expects to attain the longevity achieved by the prophet Moses, I am confident the gratitude of the American people for the service of Senator JOE LIEBERMAN will be everlasting.

JOE KYL

Mr. President, in reflecting on Senator JON KYL's service to this institution and to our Nation, I am reminded of these words by Abraham Lincoln. He said:

Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of, the tree is the real thing.

JON KYL is the real thing. During 18 years in the Senate, preceded 8 by in the House, JON has built a reputation that is a perfect image of his character. National magazines have named him one of America's 10 best Senators, one of the world's most influential people, and one of our Nation's hardest working lawmakers.

His unanimous election in 2008 as our Republican whip and his recognized leadership on the great challenges of our time throughout the Senate reflect

the esteem in which he is held on both sides of the aisle. These accolades confirm what we who have had the privilege of working closely with JON know from experience. He is intelligent, he is informed, and he is fair. He is dedicated to the people of Arizona and exemplifies the principles that are the foundation of our Constitution and of our country.

Of all the words that have been used to describe JON KYL, these five describe him best: As good as his word. JON has been an invaluable ally in the great challenge of defending America against terrorism, a challenge he recognized and worked hard to address long before the terrorist attacks of more than a decade ago.

As the leader of the Judiciary Committee, he worked hard to strengthen our intelligence capabilities and was at the forefront of one of the most crucial antiterrorism issues, tracking, exposing, and cutting off financial networks that bankrolled terrorism. Combating this financing was one of our earliest and greatest antiterrorism successes, although work continues today, and it was JON KYL who played a key role.

Arizona, similar to Maine, has a long international border. The American people fully understand the importance of borders that are close to our enemies as they remain always open to our friends. JON is dedicated to providing those who protect our borders with the personnel, the training, and the technology so America can continue to welcome with compassion those seeking a better way of life while turning away those who would do us harm.

As a member of the Finance Committee, JON KYL has been one of the Senate's most diligent fiscal watchdogs. He has a sharp eye for wasteful spending. He is dedicated to reining in deficit spending, reforming our Tax Code, and making government more accountable.

JON KYL understands the challenges that confront America, and he also empathizes with the challenges that confront American families. His record is one of strong advocacy for our most vulnerable citizens, including victims of crime, children, and our seniors.

JON often compares his work in the Senate to that of a teacher. Whether addressing constituents or colleagues, he strives to educate with facts, with evidence, and with the truth. None of us has ever heard JON try to win an argument by belittling or berating an opponent. It is simply not in his character to do so.

It has been said that a politician thinks of the next election and a statesman thinks of the next generation. This statesman from Arizona expresses his philosophy of government and the obligation of government leaders this way:

We owe future generations the chance to live their dreams, to be successful, and—most important—to achieve true happiness by their own efforts.

Senator JON KYL's commitment to the security of our Nation, to fiscal responsibility, and to helping those in need have earned him a reputation that is worthy of his character.

The people of Arizona and America are grateful for his service. I am thankful for his guidance over the years and for his friendship. We wish him all the best in the years to come.

Mr. President, there is one more tribute I would like to give this morning if there is time remaining. Could the Chair inform me if we are under a time agreement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may proceed.

RICHARD LUGAR

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in his 36 years of service in the Senate, RICHARD LUGAR has established a reputation as an extraordinary leader on such issues as foreign relations, national security, energy policy, agriculture, and economic growth. He is the Senate's most senior Republican and the longest serving Member of Congress in Indiana's history.

Senator LUGAR has established a well-deserved reputation as a true statesman. At a time when the coarsening political discourse across our Nation and in Congress is a growing concern, DICK LUGAR is a shining example of civility and mutual respect we must regain if our Nation is to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Thirty-six years in the Senate is a part of DICK LUGAR's long time of service. After attending Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, DICK volunteered for the U.S. Navy in 1957, eventually serving as an intelligence briefer for the Chief of Naval Operations. As the two-term mayor of Indianapolis, beginning in 1968, he was a trailblazer in unifying local government, setting his city on a remarkable path of economic growth and prosperity as well as efficiency. As mayor, he served three terms on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and as president of the National League of Cities. It is evident DICK LUGAR always rises to the top of any organization because his colleagues recognize his extraordinary capability and his outstanding leadership.

DICK's life experiences and character have served the people of Indiana and our country so well. He has been the leader in reducing the threat of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. What better tribute or legacy could anyone leave the world than to reduce the inventory of these dangerous weapons. The bipartisan partnership he forged in 1991 to destroy these weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union has resulted in the deactivation of more than 7,500 nuclear warheads that once were aimed at the United States.

As chairman of the Agriculture Committee, DICK LUGAR has led the way for reforming our Federal farm programs and has promoted research advancements and increased export opportuni-

ties that have generated higher net income for America's family farms. Through the Lugar Energy Initiative, he has combined his foreign policy and agricultural expertise to promote policies to spur economic growth.

In the dark days following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Senator LUGAR set forth a set of principles to guide our Nation in these difficult times. The Lugar doctrine calls upon the United States to "use all of its military, diplomatic and economic power—without question—to ensure that life threatening weapons of mass destruction everywhere are accounted, contained and hopefully destroyed."

In addition, the Lugar doctrine asserts that America should encourage democratic institutions and decrease reliance on foreign energy sources.

These accomplishments, and so many more, stem from a profound intellect combined with character. There is nothing I love more than to hear DICK LUGAR give a tutorial on any country in the world, and he can talk knowledgeably and teach us about any country in the world. That is the depth of his experience, his knowledge, and his expertise.

DICK has also always been a voice of reason in the Senate. No matter how bitter the debate, he has always stood by his values and engaged in thoughtful discussions that result in solutions. That is why his advice has so often been sought by Presidents, military leaders, Cabinet Secretaries, Governors, and so many of his colleagues, including me.

As DICK LUGAR returns to the private life he left behind so many years ago, his advice will continue to be sought after and I hope heeded. His knowledge and insight will still be valued, and the example of his decency and civility he has set throughout his life should guide us all. The people of Indiana and America are grateful for his service, and I am so grateful for his friendship and guidance over the years we have served together.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, as our office is winding down from my Senate term beginning this week, the field offices in Virginia ceased their functioning, and it is going to be my pleasure later on today to host a lunch for all my staff and to thank them for the work they have done. I just want to take this opportunity to talk about why I have said so many times since I came to the Senate that my greatest legacy will be the work of our staff.

When I first came to the Senate, people were asking: Will you be remembered for the GI bill if you get it done—which we did—or maybe some great transportation project or something of that sort? I said: No, the most important thing a leader can do is to bring good people around him or her and to work them to the full extent of their capacity and then to provide them the

opportunity to grow professionally in the spirit in which we have worked together.

It is not going to surprise the Presiding Officer or anyone else when I say the greatest learning experience for me in that regard was when I served as a rifle platoon and company commander in the U.S. Marine Corps. When we were in training to go to Vietnam, we got a lecture from a battle-hardened lieutenant colonel who fought as an enlisted marine in World War II, rifle platoon commander in Korea, and then as a battalion commander in Vietnam.

One of the things he said to us was, You may carry a side arm, you may carry a 45 pistol, you may carry an M-16 rifle, but a Marine officer is only successful if he fights with his marines. It is the same concept here. A person is no better as a leader than the people he or she leads. We worked hard on our staff for 6 years to find the most talented people in America, to work them to their full capacity, to instill in them my personal views of the principles of leadership and the philosophy of governance which are at the core of what I wanted to bring to the Senate, and I believe we did that.

We started with Paul Reagan and Kathy Wilmoth. Paul Reagan, my chief of staff, is a veteran with 25 years of Democratic politics and governance inside Virginia. He worked for Congressman Rick Boucher. He worked for JIM MORAN as his chief of staff. He worked for two other Members of Congress, and he had been the communications director with MARK WARNER when he was Governor. We were what some people would call the political odd couple early on. Paul was a master of every detail inside Virginia politics. My experience for many years had been on the national level of policy. We worked very hard to screen every single applicant to make sure these were people who met the standards we were trying to put into place.

Kathy Wilmoth, in my view, is something of a legend here. She became our office director. She knows every Capitol Hill policeman. She probably knows every person sitting here working on the Senate floor. She is an absolute gold star administrator. Before she came to work for us, she worked for Senators John and Lincoln Chafee. When I was a 25-year-old marine, I worked on Senator John Chafee's staff when he was Secretary of the Navy. I know I am biased, but I would challenge anyone to rebut that we have had the best run staff on Capitol Hill.

We set up a communications shop. We had Jessica Smith and Kimberly Hunter, two very talented and invaluable communicators, who understood the job was not simply to respond to media requests but to proactively explain what we were doing, what our purposes were, what our goals were, and what the philosophical approach we were taking happened to be to local and national media rather than simply entertaining interview requests and those sorts of things.

On the State level, we were able to have Conaway Haskins and Louise Ware. They set up the State administrative structure. We were constantly able to listen and respond to the needs and to the opinions of people throughout this extraordinarily complex demographic jurisdiction that is the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sometimes we forget about what happens on these phones in our offices when we are off in our meetings. The people who have run our phones and have done our casework at times have astounded me. We go back to the votes on health care reform. We know all the debates that were going on here. We took a count in our office, and we received—just in our office—226,000 pieces of advice just on health care reform; in fact, a total of 300,000 pieces of communication on that debate of which approximately 50.1 percent of the people who called in to us may have been happy with the eventual vote that I took. But I could walk out of the office when that was going on and I could see the young people on those phones and see how battered they often were, from the advice which, quite frankly, wasn't always pleasantly given.

With respect to casework, I had the great pleasure and unique experience when I was 25 years old, on the Secretary of the Navy's staff, of how to do casework. It opened my eyes to how many people there are in this country who simply don't know how to open the door to get their needs solved by the government that has set its requirements on them. I did this for John Chafee when he was Secretary of the Navy, and I did it for John Warner when he was Secretary of the Navy. I strongly emphasized to the people who handled our casework what an important job it was they were doing.

In the time we have been in the Senate, our staff has resolved more than 40,000 personal cases. More than 40,000 people who had not known, in many cases, even how to approach their government have received personal assistance that has helped them solve other problems in their lives. In fact, Andrea Trotter, JoAnn Pulliam, Debra Lawson, Gwen Sigda, and Debby Burroughs are on our staff, and each one of them resolved more than 3,000 cases during the time I have been in the Senate.

On legislative and political issues I would say that before I came to the Senate, I made promises on the campaign trail and we kept those promises. The greatest achievements, in my view, during this term were made right out of our office, not because we were responding to the suggestions of some committee work or from the executive branch saying they wanted something, but because we continually made suggestions to those committees and to the executive branch about what we thought needed to be done.

My first day in office I introduced a new GI bill. I had talked about it for years. The logic was very simple. These

people who had been serving since 9/11 deserved the same chance at a first class future as those who had served during World War II. Within 16 months, with the strong support, by the way, of Leader REID, we were able to pass this legislation, the most important piece of veterans legislation since World War II.

Most of that effort, again, came directly out of our office from the work of people on our personal staff, led by Mike Sozan, who at that time was our legislative director and has since moved on to be the chief of staff for Senator MARK UDALL.

We said during my campaign and after I got here that the United States desperately needs to reform its criminal justice system. We have 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's prison population. If we ask the average American, two-thirds of them will tell us they feel less safe in their own community than they did a year ago. It is not a political issue. To me, it has always been a personal issue, a leadership issue. I was warned when I first started raising this issue in Virginia 7 years ago that this could actually kill my political campaign. It didn't. People responded.

So since I was not on the Judiciary Committee, we worked on this legislation to create a national commission to examine all the aspects of the criminal justice system, and we did it right out of our office, with Doug Ierley being the point person for the entire country to get this debate going in a way that it hadn't been debated before. We met in our own office with more than 100 different organizations in our conference room. We had a bill a little more than a year ago that reached the floor of this Senate.

I would ask the Presiding Officer or any of my other colleagues when is the last time they have seen a criminal justice bill endorsed by—I have two pages of organizational endorsements—the National Sheriffs Association, the Marijuana Project, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the ACLU, and the Sentencing Project. We got a buy-in from across the philosophical spectrum for a mere \$14 million commission where we could receive the advice from the experts in this country on an issue that we have not received their advice on since the 1960s.

One of the great disappointments of my time here has been the fact that this simple, sensible piece of legislation was filibustered. We got 57 votes on it. For some reason, the people on the other side of the aisle decided this shouldn't happen. We did get four votes from the other side of the aisle. Even the National Review, which is one of the most conservative magazines in the country, said filibustering this piece of legislation was "insane."

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD at this time the endorsers of that legislation for the historical record.

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

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL ENDORSEMENTS

Innocence Project; National Sheriffs' Association; NAACP; ACLU; Fraternal Order of Police; American Bar Association; International Association of Chiefs of Police; Sentencing Project; Families Against Mandatory Minimums; National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators; American Probation and Parole Association; National Association of Evangelicals; American Society of Victimology; Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance; International Community Corrections Association; International Organization for Victim Assistance; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards; National Center for Victims of Crime; National Children's Alliance.

National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center; National Organization for Victim Assistance; The Renée Olubunmi Rondeau Peace Foundation; Legal Action Center; Correctional Education Association; Middle Atlantic States Correctional Association; Mennonite Central Committee; Safer Foundation; Just Detention International; Justice Policy Institute; Law Enforcement Against Prohibition; Union for Reform Judaism; Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights; Church of Scientology; United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society; American Humanist Association; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; Healing Communities Prison Ministry and Prisoner Reentry Project; Marijuana Policy Project; Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE).

National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws; Corporation for Supportive Housing; National Employment Law Project; United Church of Christ/Justice and Witness Ministries; National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc; American Probation and Parole Association; Women of Reform Judaism; Students for Sensible Drug Policy; The Fortune Society; Black Law Enforcement in America; Therapeutic Communities of America; National Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities; National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; National Association of Social Workers; NETWORK—A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Community Action Partnership; Safe Streets Arts Foundation; November Coalition; TASH—Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities; Drug Policy Alliance; American Civil Liberties Union; National Council of La Raza; National Association of Evangelicals; National Alliance of Faith and Justice; The Episcopal Church; National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund.

Mr. WEBB. We have had a lot of discussion over the last 6 years about the so-called pivot to Asia. I will say as someone who has spent a great deal of time in and out of east Asia that this pivot was heavily influenced by the actions, again, taken directly out of our office. We looked for people to come and work with us who had expertise and the intellect to work not only on the Hill, not only with Members of Congress, and not only with the State Department, but with our embassies around the world, with foreign leaders, with validators, to take a different approach and to refocus the energy of the United States on this most vital part

of the world. David Bonine, Marta McLellan Ross, Gordon Peterson, and Philip Brady were among them.

Our many visits to this part of the world sometimes included five countries in 2 weeks, traveling solely via commercial air rather than with military codel support, and included repeated meetings with the top leadership of countries such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and Burma, all of which represent the future of the United States in terms of trade, security, and cultural growth in the coming decades.

With respect to Burma, it was a great moment for me to be able to sit down with and see Aung San Suu Kyi, recognized by the Congress a month or so ago, coming to this country as an elected member of their Parliament. We began the change in that relationship directly from our office based on work I had begun and become interested in over a period of 6 years before I was elected to the Senate.

I am very proud to say we laid the groundwork for a historic visit in 2009 from inside our office—often, I would say, against the will and against the advice of our own State Department. We used validators. We talked to people we knew in the region. I became the only American leader ever to meet with GEN Than Shwe, the leader of the military junta, to express my belief that we could work forward and have a different relationship. We met with Aung San Suu Kyi. I hope those who had some doubts about the wisdom of opening this relationship now can see the benefits as we are seeing the political situation beginning to truly change in Burma.

We worked heavily with Japan. This is a critical yet often overlooked relationship. It involved an effort to resolve basing issues on Okinawa that don't always get the attention they deserve in the Congress but have at times absolutely paralyzed the political debate inside Japan. Ironically, I first began working on these issues as a military planner in 1974 after I left the Marine Corps and was in law school. Our staff has met—and I have been a part of most of these meetings—with more than 70 delegations from Japan, in our office, organized and conducted by our staff.

In Korea, we led an effort to bring Democratic Senators onboard to support the critical free-trade agreement that is so important not only to our bilateral relations but to the signals of the United States in that part of the world, and we began what I believe is something of a pioneering effort to get Korea and Japan to come together at the table to realize their common security interests.

As to Vietnam, I have visited and worked inside Vietnam for 18 out of the last 21 years in addition to having served there as a marine, I would say.

I fought in Vietnam because I believed in the importance of that country to our relationships in Asia. I have

spent a great deal of energy for more than 30 years now in an effort to heal the final wound of that war, which is the relationship between our Vietnamese community here in the United States and the government inside Vietnam.

We have worked in Thailand, Singapore, Laos. I was the first American Senator to visit Laos in 7 years, the first Member of Congress to visit Cambodia in 2 years when we visited Indonesia. We worked hard on the sovereignty and maritime issues in the South China Sea. We initiated and sponsored two important Senate resolutions regarding China's recent aggression in the South China Sea. Again, we initiated this from the staff members in our office.

I could go on. Let me just say that the other areas—important areas—that our staff has worked on in the past 6 years include our pioneering work in economic fairness, the need for stronger programs in the area of adult education, the efforts from inside our office to encourage a full spectrum of energy development, the preservation of Civil War battlefields, and the vital need to rebalance the constitutional relationship between the Congress and the Presidency, which I have pursued in both administrations that have been in office while I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, at this point, because I really will not have time to list all of the contributions by my staff members, I ask unanimous consent that the names and the positions of my staff members be printed in the RECORD.

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

Kathryn M. Wilmoth, Administrative Director  
 Staff Arthur B. Scott Assistant to the Chief of Staff  
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Mr. WEBB. So to my staff, a heartfelt thanks, and to each of those who have served with us, I say again, thank you for your contributions to our staff and, most importantly, to our country. And I say also again that I will continue to expect great things from you in the future. You are my legacy. Never forget that the people you might have the honor of leading as you move forward in your careers, wherever you end up, will someday become your legacy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). The senior Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to first, of course, commend the Senator from Virginia for his great leadership here in the Senate on a whole range of issues. He has served with great distinction here, and it has been an honor for me to serve with him. So I congratulate him on the various issues he discussed and the various issues he has worked on. I have had the good fortune to work and support his efforts on many of those issues.

#### WORK TO BE DONE

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes to speak about what needs to be done before we leave town, before we shut down this session of the Congress. In my view, Congress needs to do five things before the end of the year to head off difficulties for our economy.

First, as many have said, the House needs to take up and pass the middle-class tax cut—a bill that was already passed here in the Senate. That is the first item. That has been given a lot of attention.

Second, both Houses of Congress need to head off most if not all of the scheduled sequester. I hope we are able to do that.

Third, Congress should pass the tax extenders bill that was reported out of the Senate Finance Committee this summer, and that is going to be the subject of most of my comments this morning.

Fourth, the Congress should repeal the SGR. This is the law that governs the rates of reimbursement to providers under the Medicare Program. Unless we repeal that law, we will have to once again patch the law, as we have done for many years now, with a so-called Medicare doc fix. I think the time has come to go ahead and repeal the law.

The fifth item I want to mention is that Congress needs to give the President the power to raise the debt ceiling. At the same time, Congress should retain Congress's right to disapprove of that increase. But Secretary Geithner

has made a proposal to the Congress that I believe makes good sense. It is based upon the arrangement that was agreed to that Senator MCCONNELL had put forward in the 2011 debt ceiling crisis that we all lived through.

Obviously, this is a significant to-do list. I do not intend to speak about all of these items. I would like to focus my remarks on the need for Congress to pass the extenders package of tax provisions. I think this has gotten too little attention. It deserves to be dealt with as a major component of the response to the so-called fiscal cliff. This is, in fact, the Family and Business Tax Cut Certainty Act of 2012.

While I hope the negotiations to avert the fiscal cliff are successful, in my view, we should not wait for a grand bargain in order to finish our work on this important tax extender legislation.

Tax extenders are different from the other fiscal cliff issues for three basic reasons. Let me describe those reasons.

First, tax extenders are much less contentious than the other end-of-year problems that need to be resolved. The tax extender bill on the Senate calendar has strong bipartisan support. In August the Finance Committee approved it by a large margin. We had support from six Republicans, including the ranking member, Senator HATCH. All 13 Democrats supported it. I believe many more Republicans will vote for this legislation if it is brought up for consideration here in the Senate.

The bill consists entirely of tax cuts. It should not be difficult to get Senators to vote for tax cuts, right before Christmases especially. Most of these tax cuts have solid bipartisan support. Many of these tax cuts will help the economy and will help the middle class. For example, the bill includes the deduction for tuition expenses, which is a \$4.2 billion tax cut for college students and their families. It includes the deduction for State and local sales taxes. This is a \$4.4 billion tax cut, mainly for people who live in States that do not have an income tax, States such as Alaska and Florida and Nevada and Tennessee and Texas and South Dakota and Washington and Wyoming. It includes an increase in the section 179 expensing limits. This is a \$2.4 billion tax cut for small businesses. And it includes an extension of the production tax credit for wind energy. This is a tax credit which has bipartisan support. It has helped create thousands of jobs.

The production tax credit for wind energy is a vital component of our Nation's energy policy. Its extension is crucial to taking advantage of our domestic energy resources and fostering a vibrant and globally competitive industry.

In just the several short years the wind industry has enjoyed this production tax credit, wind installations have grown immensely and manufacturing facilities have grown to where today

we have over 400 of these manufacturing facilities that have sprung up around the country. The United States now has over 50,000 megawatts of wind capacity and the wind resources to grow that industry substantially more.

My home State of New Mexico has the 10th best wind resources in the country, and has built close to 800 megawatts of capacity. While traditional fossil fuel plants use significant amounts of water to generate electricity, wind facilities use almost none—meaning that by promoting the development of wind power, we can conserve even more of that precious resource.

The production tax credit for wind is set to expire in 3 weeks, as these other provisions are as well. With it, tens of thousands of jobs will be lost. In fact, most wind-related companies have already begun to lay off employees. Orders for new turbines and gearboxes have fallen off significantly, and new wind installations are expected to decline dramatically in 2013 unless Congress takes action.

Uncertainty comes from many places for those who are in the business world. Congress should not continue to add to that uncertainty. Instead, we should extend the production tax credit for wind and extend the other expiring provisions passed by the Senate Finance Committee on a bipartisan basis.

A second reason the tax extenders are different from other issues related to the fiscal cliff is that we have a tax extenders bill that has already been voted on in committee. By contrast, none of us know how the disagreements about the Bush tax cuts or sequestration will be resolved. Those negotiations are yet to conclude. But the tax extenders bill has already been negotiated in the Finance Committee. The committee agreed to omit provisions costing billions of dollars. It modified other provisions to make them work better or to scale back on them. The Finance Committee approved this bill by a vote of 19 to 5.

That level of support means the Family and Business Tax Cut Certainty Act, or something close to it, is the tax extender bill the Senate is likely to pass this year. Six Republicans voted for it in committee. We would need just one more Republican vote to overcome a filibuster.

Some Senators believe tax extenders should only be approved as part of a plan to do comprehensive tax reform. I would agree that each tax extender and each tax expenditure should be examined again during comprehensive tax reform. Each should be made permanent or phased out based on that review. But realistically, the Congress will not make those decisions before the end of this year. Tax reform will take the better part of a year to accomplish or perhaps even longer. We will need to pass an extenders bill before then, and we have one before us today that is worthy of being passed.

A third reason we should pass the tax extenders package now and not wait