

but he was stymied time and time again from getting anything out of that committee. So for the last 10 years that committee has worked really hard, very hard, but they haven't had much to show for that work.

This package protects more than 1 million acres of landscapes. I was waiting in my office and Senator BENNET from Colorado came to my office. He had a great big poster with him. I asked: What is that? It was upside down. You could see immediately what it was when it was right side up. He was looking for time on the floor to show America what was in this bill for the State of Colorado. This beautiful vista he was showing me—and he showed the whole world last night—is something that is in this bill. It will be protected—a stunningly beautiful forest area in Colorado.

One million acres of landscape will be protected. Watersheds will be protected. Historic treasures will be protected. This protects over 140 miles of wild and scenic rivers throughout our country. These bills will create nearly 250,000 acres of wilderness in five States: Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington.

Additionally, the packages convey more than 100,000 acres to local communities for economic development. My friend the PRESIDING OFFICER understands how important that is, being able to convey to the private sector the ability to develop Federal lands. It has to be done carefully. It can't be done on a massive scale. If we did that, the rich people would wind up owning all the nice places. These are places I think should be shared by the American people. But 100,000 acres go to local communities for economic development.

The legislation continues our country's rich history, establishing national parks. It designates a number of new areas—for example, the Harriet Tubman Historic Park.

I read in a period of a month two books on Harriet Tubman. They both came out at about the same time. I can't imagine why a movie hasn't been made about this dynamic little 5-foot woman who did such remarkable things. What a story of this woman—this slave. She was a slave—bringing people out of the South into freedom in the North. She took them as far as Canada. She did it alone. So I hope some day someone will make a movie of this stunningly powerful woman. We are recognizing an area that will be named on her behalf.

The bundle of lands bills is good for America. It stretches literally from the shores of Alaska to the coast of Maine. It is especially important to Nevada, my State. It protects over 75,000 acres of wilderness in Humboldt and Lyon Counties in northern Nevada, the first new wilderness protections in the State since 2006.

One of those areas is named after a famous Indian, Wovoka. There was a man who was a famous Indian. He es-

tablished a dance that really brought Native Americans together. Even though it started in Nevada, it swept the country. This is going to be in Lyon County, it contains sage-grouse, bighorn sheep habitats, and some of the best fly fishing opportunities in Nevada and the Nation.

Now there is a pine forest wilderness in Humboldt County which has been championed by the local community. They have been working on this for years. We couldn't get it out of the House of Representatives. Over here, of course, it was a lost cause, and don't even think about getting it out of the energy committee.

Environmentalists, ranchers, hunters, anglers, and off-road vehicle enthusiasts came together to protect 20,000 acres of scenic lakes, amazing rock formations, and prime sage habitat.

But it also allows a mine there to have some more land from the Federal Government which they need from enlarging that land. It is a copper mine. It is extremely important that we develop copper and don't have to import it from South America and Russia.

Southern Nevada established the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument on the edge of North Las Vegas. This area is the largest deposit of ice age mammals in the United States. Imagine that basically in the middle of thousands of homes. People couldn't understand what they were digging up out there, ice age mammals that are so unbelievably large and preserved over these thousands of years. When the resources are developed, catalogued, and better understood, it will likely be the largest deposit in the entire country.

The package sells 10,000 acres of land to the city of Yerington. Lyon County was a county that probably suffered more from the economic shutdown. They had huge problems of unemployment, and now we have that mine there that will help. This will allow them to make even more jobs there.

The agreement also provides lands to the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Fernley, Carlin, allocates tracts for three universities and college campuses, and expands Nellis Air Force Base and the Fallon Naval Air Station.

This is good for Nevada. It is good for the country. This legislation promotes jobs, protects the environment, helps our Armed Forces, and gives Americans the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful landscapes this country has to offer.

It is not perfect legislation. No legislation is. But this is really good legislation. So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these critical lands bills which are part of the defense authorization bill.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the business now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the message to accompany H.R. 3979, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 3984 (to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3985 (to amendment No. 3984), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 3986, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3987 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 3986), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 3988 (to Amendment No. 3987), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, in 1986 the people of South Dakota elected me to serve them in the 100th Session of the Congress in the House of Representatives. In 1996 they gave me the honor and privilege of being their junior Senator.

When I ran for the House in 1986, I told the people of South Dakota that neither party has all the answers, and that both parties have good ideas, as well as men and women of good will. My job, as I understood it, would be to work in a bipartisan manner, listening to all parties and reaching a good fit—also known as a compromise. That is what I still believe.

However, in each year of my 28 years of service this has become more difficult to achieve. Each party, rather than working cooperatively for the American people, is more and more focused on winning the next election. Today, days after the 2014 election, you can walk into the call center for either party and find Members dialing for dollars for 2016. Tonight there will be fundraisers across DC where Members will discuss policy not with their constituents but with organizations that contribute to their campaigns. We have lost our way.

My thoughts are not original. My colleague and dear friend from South Dakota, Senator Tom Daschle, in his farewell called for finding common ground that “will not be found on the

far right or on the far left. That is not where most Americans live. We will only find it in the firm middle ground based on common sense and shared values.”

Ohio’s Senator Voinovich in his 2010 farewell speech said that his greatest frustration was the difficulty in finding common ground on significant issues, saying that “it doesn’t happen enough.”

In fact, the need for bipartisanship and the lack of it in the Senate is a hallmark of Senate farewell speeches. Rather than expounding on this topic, I would like to share the instances where I have experienced it.

I found it working with my colleague Senator JOHN THUNE, as we put aside our political differences and worked as our constituents expected two Norwegians to work. We worked side by side as we pushed for farm bills, highway funding, emergency relief from droughts and from floods. We successfully fought the proposed BRAC closing of Ellsworth Air Force Base. However, honoring our Norwegian heritage, we never hugged.

I found it on the banking committee, working closely with Ranking Member CRAPO. Together, we reached middle ground on reforms in which both parties gave up significant priorities, compromising, finding the middle ground to pass bills out of committee.

My best and most enduring memory of this magnificent body occurred during my 9-month absence following my AVM, a long and humbling journey. During this journey my committee assignments were respected and my friend from Rhode Island Senator JACK REED graciously accepted extra responsibilities until my return. Senator HARRY REID told me that during my long absence my colleagues on the other side of the aisle never once tried to take advantage of my absence. More importantly, in so many ways the kind words and prayers from you and your spouses, on both sides of the aisle, supported both Barbara and me and gave us strength during my long and continuing recovery.

I was grateful and humbled by your support on September 9, 2007, the day I returned to the Senate when almost every chair in this Chamber was filled. Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL, I thank you for your welcome back to the Senate family.

In the years ahead, I will miss this family—not the bickering that I mentioned earlier, but the blessings that you have all been to Barbara and me.

I would also like to thank another family that has been critical to my work for South Dakota—a family that goes by the name “Team Johnson.” This team is composed of highly talented and caring individuals. They have worked tirelessly in the halls of Congress, in South Dakota, and on campaigns to make our State and our country a better place to live.

I wish I could thank each one of you for your service. Please know how

much I appreciated the long hours and late nights that you put in. In the years ahead I hope we will continue to celebrate the friendships we have forged.

To my friend and chief of staff for 30 years, Drey Samuelson, thank you for joining my fledgling, uphill race for Congress in 1986 and for staying with me until we close the Senate office in a few days. Few Members of Congress have been as fortunate as I have been to have the loyalty, friendship, and thoughtful guidance that you have given me.

My legislative directors have all been remarkable, but time limits me to noting the services of two individuals who have served the longest. Dwight Fettig started with us in the House as a young man fresh from his internship with Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota. Dwight rose through the ranks to legislative director and then became my first director on the banking committee. Todd Stubbendieck is my current LD, and his legislative guidance for over 10 years has guided the staff in moving critical legislation through the Senate. Todd and Dwight have worked on legislation for projects that now deliver water to hundreds of thousands of people across South Dakota, country of origin labeling bills, farm bills, national historic sites for Lewis and Clark and the Minute Man Missile, numerous projects for Ellsworth Air Force Base and the South Dakota National Guard with efficiency and collegiality. To Todd and Dwight, thank you for your outstanding legislative teams.

Our No. 1 researcher, humorist, historian, and go-to person, Luci Weigel, has been with us since we opened the first offices. Thank you, Luci.

To my South Dakota State director, Sharon Boysen, thank you for leading the three State offices, for ensuring that we were responsive to South Dakotans, and for coordinating with the DC office.

Sharon Stroschein, who directed the Aberdeen office, and Darrell Shoemaker, who managed the Rapid City office, have been outstanding leaders for 28 years. You and all the State staff have been great advocates for South Dakota. You made sure that I always knew what was on the minds of South Dakotans, that I visited crisis situations, nonprofits, local and tribal governments, promising businesses, schools, and much more. Thank you.

Linda Robison, thank you for your dedication, willingness to go the extra mile, and your outreach to and service for our State’s veterans for 28 years.

The Senate office only needed one office manager for the last 18 years. Nancy Swenson is the most efficient, precise, and insightful person I know. The University of South Dakota will be forever grateful when they receive the archives Nancy assembled. Thank you.

To the Senate standing committees on banking and MILCON, you have served our Nation well, and I know you

will continue to do so in the future. Thank you for your leadership on important issues.

I am looking forward to the years ahead and the time we will share.

To my wife Barbara and our three children—Brooks, Brendan, and Kelsey—thank you for your unwavering support, for putting up with late-night dinners, for accepting that my work demanded that I be away so many weekends, and for working side by side with me on challenging campaigns. Without your understanding, love, and support, I could not have done the work I love.

Finally, to the people of South Dakota, thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you in our State legislature, the House of Representatives, and the United States Senate. Thank you for working side by side with me to improve the lives of South Dakotans and our Nation.

Pilamayaye.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TRIBUTE TO TIM JOHNSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell to my colleague and friend Senator TIM JOHNSON.

TIM has deep roots in South Dakota and in the towns of Canton and Vermillion in particular. He has served our State for more than 35 years, first in the State legislature and then, after winning a highly competitive primary against two well-known Democratic opponents, in the Halls of Congress. In 1996, after a decade in the U.S. House of Representatives, TIM won his first of three terms in the U.S. Senate. I am well acquainted with his second election because I came out on the short end of that stick. But I have had the privilege of serving with TIM now in the South Dakota delegation for over 16 years, and the last 10 have been here in the Senate. Today I want to pay tribute to his many years of public service and all he has done for our home State.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Senator JOHNSON’s staff for their dedicated work. They have worked closely with my staff for many years, and I am grateful for their efforts.

Like many South Dakotans, I will always remember TIM as a fighter. South Dakotans are tough, rugged folks, and TIM has exemplified that spirit every day in the Senate. A big part of his legacy as a public servant will be his tenacity, his work ethic, and his unwavering focus on the policies he believed to be in the best interest of South Dakota.

TIM and I haven’t always seen eye to eye on every issue, but we have always been able to come together and work with South Dakotans in times of crisis. From drought relief, to flood and tornado responses, to protecting the Black Hills from wildfires, Senator JOHNSON and I have always been able to quickly

respond to the needs of our State regardless of party differences or past disagreements.

Mr. President, when you represent a State like South Dakota—what some people like to call a flyover State, a State some of our colleagues here in the Senate occasionally mix up with North Dakota—there are days when it can seem as though the concerns of rural Americans aren't given fair consideration and the needs of rural America are not being heard by the administration or the more densely populated areas of our country.

I have had the great pleasure of working with TIM to bring a voice to the concerns of rural America and those of us who hail from the middle of the country. To highlight just one of the many examples I could bring up, since his first term in Congress TIM has fought tirelessly for water infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water to families in South Dakota and throughout the Great Plains. Water is a vital resource in the rural expanses of South Dakota, and TIM's efforts have helped meet this basic need in underserved Indian reservations, small towns, and rural areas across the State. These investments will pay dividends well beyond his tenure in the Senate.

Throughout TIM's long career in public service—from his beginnings in the legislature to his ascension to the chairmanship of the Senate banking committee—he has had a hand in numerous efforts that will help South Dakotans and Americans alike for generations to come.

I know I speak for all South Dakotans when I say thank you, TIM, for your dedication and your service to our great State. It has been an honor to serve with you here in the United States Senate. Thank you for your example, your efforts on behalf of our beloved South Dakota, and most of all for your friendship. On behalf of my wife Kimberly and me, I wish you, Barbara, and your family the very best as you begin your retirement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2992

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. The DOD just reported that in 2014 almost the same number of servicemembers—19,000—reported unwanted sexual contact as in 2010. Still, fewer than 3 out of 10 are willing to report. The overall percentage of those who are reporting openly and seeking justice is declining, and a striking 62 percent retaliation rate went unchanged from 2012. Despite retaliation having been made a crime in last year's NDAA, the Pentagon reports no indication of progress on that front. Despite the Pentagon's spin, these numbers do not show an increased trust in a system that simply isn't working for the men and women in uniform.

I wish to draw attention to comments made earlier this year by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Martin Dempsey. He said:

We are currently on the clock, if you will . . . the President of the United States said to us in December, you know what, you've got about a year to review this thing and show me you can make a difference . . . we understand that just because Senator GILLIBRAND's vote was defeated yesterday doesn't mean that a year from now it may not be re-introduced, and if we haven't been able to demonstrate making a difference, you know, then we deserve to be held to the scrutiny and standard.

There is no other mission in the world for our military where this much failure would be allowed. Based on General Dempsey's own timeline, our men and women in uniform deserve a vote on this broadly bipartisan reform because the military has not been able to demonstrate that they have made a difference; therefore, they should be held to the scrutiny this year.

Throughout last year we continued to see the evidence of how much further we have to go to solve the problem of sexual assaults in our military. We saw BG Jeffrey Sinclair—one of the highest ranking officers ever charged with sexual assault—walk away with a slap on the wrist, reportedly over fears that the commanding officer had rejected a plea deal on lesser charges for political reasons despite stated concerns over evidence.

That case brings up the very important issue of undue command influence—another reason why an independent justice system is needed. We should all be able to agree that our brave men and women in uniform deserve blind justice. The scale should not be tipped in either direction—in favor of a victim or an accused. Why should our servicemembers enjoy a lesser standard of justice and fairness than you and I, whose freedoms they risk everything to protect?

According to a recent story in the New York Times, an attendee of a sexual assault prevention seminar was asked if things were improving. She said:

We all laughed. Sinclair was happening then. He proved that it was a joke.

The Times also chronicled the story of a survivor they called Kris, from Ellsworth Air Force Base. On April 12, 2013, about two dozen male officers of the 37th Bomb Squadron gathered at a strip club at the beginning of a pub crawl—including her commander. She was assaulted later that night. According to the Times:

What Kris encountered since reporting the assault was the same kind of cold-shouldered skepticism on the part of her commander that Christensen had seen in a vast majority of sexual assault cases—behavior that was supposed to have changed with the military's recent vows to support those who reported sex crimes.

Further, she was retaliated against, which is now supposed to be a crime, and was told by a commander, "It's illogical for you to think that there won't be negative consequences to your reporting."

She said: "I was put on a shelf."

Why in the world would we want this commander who takes his team to a

strip club and retaliates against a sexual assault victim to have the authority to decide if a crime was committed? It is insane, and it is beneath our military members.

I could read many more troubling cases, but perhaps the most eye-opening instance showing the ongoing lack of accountability was revealed in testimony by a witness at a court-martial on September 24, 2014—just 2 months ago. In this case, former Fort Leonard Wood drill sergeant Angel Sanchez was found guilty on multiple accounts of sexually assaulting female trainees. According to the witness, the command sergeant major at Fort Leonard Woods said—and remember this was just 2 months ago—"If any more sexual assault cases come forward" the whole company of soldiers won't graduate—not "I don't want to see any more sexual assaults"; rather, "I don't want to see any more reports."

Here is how we really know the system is broken: When a cadet is instrumental in obtaining the first sexual assault convictions in over a decade at the Air Force Academy, he is expelled. When a chief prosecutor is too good at his job and briefs Members of Congress, he is retaliated against and forced out. When a survivor comes forward, she is put on a shelf.

Time is short, but there is more than enough left for this Congress to actually do its job. We should not have more calls for just a little more time. The DOD has failed on this issue for over 20 years now, and the scandals of the last 12 months and the latest data show they still don't get it.

As USA Today said:

Over the decades, sexual scandals have spurred cycles of Pentagon apologies, congressional handwringing, half-baked attempts at action and nibble-around-the-edges changes. Isn't it time that women and men who serve their country so nobly have a justice system that will serve them when they are victims of crime?

I agree. Congress should vote to remove the chain of command from these crises before year's end. Our servicemembers deserve no less.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 644, S. 2992, the Military Justice Improvement Act, that there be up to 1 hour equally divided between the proponents and opponents of the bill prior to a vote on passage of the bill; that the vote on passage be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; finally, that there be no amendments, points of order, or motions in order to the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think it might be appropriate for the ranking member of the appropriate personnel subcommittee to be heard on this. In

my opinion, he is the most knowledgeable person on this subject at this time, and that would be Senator GRAHAM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I join in the objection with Senator INHOFE. I appreciate what Senators INHOFE and LEVIN have done over the last couple of years, working in a bipartisan fashion, to make sure we deal with a problem in the military that is a problem in society, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and to set a zero-tolerance policy, but at the same time keep the military in a position to defend this country.

What can we say about our military? We heard Senator GILLIBRAND's view. My view is that this is the finest military in the world—great people. But within that construct, you have people doing things that are criminal, wrong. But is it any different in the military than it is anywhere else?

My argument is this is a societal problem, and in the military it is a problem that is being addressed in, I think, a very aggressive fashion. Contrary to what the Senator from New York offers the Senate, I like where we are headed.

In March, we rejected her approach. Her approach was to fire every commander and replace the commander with a bunch of military lawyers to make decisions not just about sexual assault but about aspects of military life far beyond that.

I know the Presiding Officer has been a military commander, and barracks theft is a very big deal in the military. When you are in the military and you find out someone has stolen from another member of the unit, and you are all living together on top of each other, side by side, that is a very big deal, and the commander responsible for that unit needs to make sure something happens fairly.

The last matter I will ever agree to is the following: Sir, or ma'am—this is the first sergeant going to the commander—last night we think there may have been a rape in the barracks, and the commander says, well, that is no longer my problem, send that over to the lawyers. What a terrible thing to do to a military unit. The commander needs more accountability, not less. The commander is the person whom we choose to send people to war.

It is odd, to me, that we will give the commanders of the American military the power of life-and-death decisions, but somehow they are so morally corrupt or incapable of rendering justice in a situation such as this.

All I can say is that I respect the passion of the people who are behind this to a point, but you are going too far. Members on the other side of the aisle have been threatened with money being cut off if they vote against this idea. This is no longer about reforming a system, this is a political cause going out of control.

In my view, the good thing about the Armed Services Committee is that we

have always been able, for the most part, to work out problems that affect our military.

And I say to Senator LEVIN, through the Chair, above all others, I appreciate my colleague's maturity and leadership to make sure we get the right answer. The right answer is to purge the military of the heinous crime of sexual assault, sexual harassment, clean up this mess, but do not destroy the structure that makes it the finest military on the planet, and we are well on our way.

Senator GILLIBRAND's bill last year did not make it through the Senate, but another bill did. Senator AYOTTE, Senator McCASKILL, Senator FISCHER, along with the chairman, and others, came up with a reform package that I think was passed unanimously last March.

What do we now know from the recent report? You would have to have such a bias about your view to believe that this report doesn't show progress. By any objective measurement, the reforms we have been working on in a bipartisan fashion are beginning to bear fruit.

I will give an example of some of those reforms. Every victim of a sexual assault or of sexual harassment allegations in the military is to be assigned an individual lawyer—a judge advocate—to represent their interests.

I don't know about other States, but in South Carolina, we are miles away from that. The goal of the Senators that I have just mentioned, and myself, is to make sure that the military is the most victim-friendly legal system in America, but a person can still get a fair trial. That should be the goal of all of us, to ensure that every victim has a lawyer.

I have been a judge advocate for 32 years now. I have thought long and hard of the times that I have known a lawyer in the legal community recommend to the commander: Go forward on a sexual assault case, and the commander says no. There is literally a handful, or less, that I can think of. However, I do know that there are a lot more cases where the lawyer says: Sir, or ma'am, we don't think we have enough here to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt, and the commander will say: Go for it anyway. I want to make sure we air this out. That is the most common use of a commander's discretion vis-à-vis their lawyer.

But to those who are worried about making sure the commanders and lawyers understand where we are coming from, we made a wholesale change of how they report and dispose of these cases. If a judge advocate recommends to the military commander in question to go forward and the commander says no, that commander's decision to say no is reviewed by the Secretary of the Service. In my case, it is the Secretary of the Air Force. If an Air Force commander is given legal advice by their JAG, informing us that we have a good case in the area of sexual assault, and

the commander says no, it goes all the way up to the Secretary of the Air Force. As anybody who has ever been in the military knows, that is a very big deal. That is the ultimate sign that we expect people to treat these allegations seriously.

If the JAG and the commander say no to the prosecution, it goes to the next step in the chain of command. What did this report say—and I will let Senator LEVIN detail some of the results. The big takeaway is that more people are coming forward, which is a good thing. More people are telling us they feel better able to come forward because the system is more understanding. The lawyer who has been provided to the victim has been received very well.

The number of reports, restricted reports—where a victim says, I am going to tell you about what happened to me, but I don't want to go through the process of prosecuting somebody because I don't want to go through that process myself—that are now unrestricted has gone up fairly dramatically, meaning that the victim believes there will be somebody there helping them through the system.

Retaliation is a problem all over society. I don't know of any law in South Carolina that makes it a specific crime in the eyes of the victim to retaliate against bringing an allegation forward.

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, it is a crime to retaliate against someone making an assault complaint. The retaliation portion of the report—where 62 percent felt retaliation—mostly came from peer, lower level members of the unit, not the commander.

Here is what I would say: Once the commander goes forward and gives his blessing to the allegation, retaliation is going to be less likely because it was the commander who made the decision in that unit and not a far-off lawyer.

I will now turn this over to Senators INHOFE and LEVIN.

There are so many more reforms that are paying dividends. So many of them have not even started yet.

I have to say we are on the right track. Let's give this a chance. We are taking this seriously. The military is responding in a positive fashion and now is not the time to retreat from these reforms. I do believe what we have done today will help us tomorrow, and our goal is common—to eliminate the scourge of sexual assault and sexual harassment, but keep the military command structure the way it is because it is necessary to hold our commanders more accountable.

I will end with this thought. There is no problem in the military that can be solved without commander buy-in. That is the role of the commander. To everybody who wonders about what is going on in the military legal community, this colonel who feels put upon—if I am the head of the subcommittee—will get a chance to come to our committee with Senator GILLIBRAND and

myself, if I am there, to give an accounting of what they think went wrong with the system and how they were treated, and the Air Force will be required to respond.

Every judge advocate of every branch of the service opposes the Gillibrand approach. Every commander and every member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff oppose what Senator GILLIBRAND is proposing, for very good reason. Give these reforms a chance.

To all of those who worked on this, congratulations. We are moving in the right direction, but we have a long way to go.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. We are going to vote soon on cloture on—by the way, I understand there was an objection to the unanimous consent request by Senator GILLIBRAND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. LEVIN. It is an objection which I join. I understand she wishes to respond for 1 minute. I have no objection, as long as we can really do it in 1 minute because I would like to close the debate prior to the vote on cloture. My friend from Oklahoma, the ranking member, also wants to make a comment.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I ask for 1 minute.

Mr. LEVIN. I will yield for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I wish to clarify a few things that are very misleading about this debate.

First of all, we are not making commanders less responsible. They are the only ones who can prevent retaliation from happening, whether it is by them or lower ranks, and they are failing in that right now. The only difference this bill makes is that 3 percent of commanders—the highest ranking commanders, generals—will no longer make this decision, but instead trained military prosecutors should make that decision. Ninety-seven percent of commanders' jobs do not change. They have to train their forces, bring them into battle, instill order and discipline, and make sure these victims are not retaliated against, and that is where they are failing. We are making commanders more responsible, not less responsible.

What I want is not the most victim-friendly place in the world. I want no victims, and that is where we are failing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. We are going to vote on cloture on H.R. 3979 soon, which represents the agreement between the Armed Services Committees of the Senate and the House on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

I urge my colleagues—I know my good friend from Oklahoma, the rank-

ing member, joins in this urging—to support cloture so we can enact this important bill into law.

The Armed Services Committee approved the defense authorization bill by a 25-to-1 vote in May.

In June, Senator INHOFE and I came to the Senate floor to urge Senators to begin to file amendments to the bill so we could work on a package of cleared amendments and try to identify relevant amendments that would need votes. We made the same request in July.

When our efforts failed to bring about a unanimous consent to bring the committee-reported bill to the floor with an opportunity to offer relevant amendments, we began to meet with the House Armed Services Committee in an effort to reach a bipartisan agreement that could be presented to the two Houses for approval in the form of a new bill.

We also established an informal clearing process pursuant to which we were able to clear 44 Senate amendments—roughly an equal number of Democratic and Republican amendments—which are included in the bill that is now before us. The process is far from ideal, but it was the best we could do under the circumstances.

We now have before us a bill that is the product of a bipartisan, bicameral agreement between the Armed Services Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The House has already passed this bill by a vote of 300 to 119.

This bill includes hundreds of important provisions to authorize the activities of the Department of Defense and provide for the well-being of our men and women in uniform and their families. The bill will enable the military services to continue paying special pays and bonuses needed for recruitment and retention of key personnel. It strengthens survivor benefits for disabled children of servicemembers and retirees. It includes provisions addressing the employment of military spouses, job placement for veterans, and military child custody disputes. It addresses military hazing, military suicides, post-traumatic stress disorder, and mental health problems in the military. It provides continued impact aid to support military families and local school districts.

The bill includes 20 provisions to continue to build on the progress we are starting to make in addressing the scourge of sexual assault in the military. It provides continued funding and authorities for ongoing operations in Afghanistan and for our forces conducting operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria—ISIS. It takes important steps to respond to Russian aggression in Ukraine. It adds hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to begin to restore the readiness of our Armed Forces. And it begins to make some of the structural changes that are needed to enable DOD to perform its essential missions in an era of tight budgets.

The process may have been flawed, but we have done everything we could to overcome those flaws and produce a defense bill that does the right thing for the national defense and for our troops.

I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

We have produced a defense bill that does the right thing for our national defense and for our troops. I hope our colleagues will vote for cloture. I hope I have a minute left to yield to the ranking member.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. I know we are out of time. The vote is going to take place in 1 minute and we all appreciate that.

I will repeat what I think is most significant: We have to pass this bill. The House is going to go home. There is no way of making any changes at this point. It has to pass. If it doesn't pass, when December 31 gets here, there will be 1.8 million enlisted personnel throughout the country at all of our establishments who are going to lose their benefits. I am talking about pilots' pay, flight pay. I am talking about the SEALs who have extraordinary duties and all the rest of them. These benefits will be taken away from our enlisted personnel if we don't pass this bill. In order to pass this bill, we have to pass this procedural vote that will take place right now.

So I encourage everyone to keep in mind, if my colleagues truly want to help our enlisted personnel, they have to have this bill and this bill has to pass now.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979.

Harry Reid, Carl Levin, Brian Schatz, Martin Heinrich, John E. Walsh, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher A. Coons, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Charles E. Schumer, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979 shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 85, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 322 Leg.]

YEAS—85

Alexander	Graham	Murphy
Ayotte	Grassley	Murray
Baldwin	Hagan	Nelson
Barrasso	Hatch	Portman
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Heller	Reid
Blunt	Hirono	Roberts
Booker	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Boozman	Inhofe	Schatz
Boxer	Isakson	Schumer
Brown	Johanns	Scott
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Sessions
Cantwell	Johnson (WI)	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Shelby
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Kirk	Tester
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Thune
Coats	Landrieu	Toomey
Cochran	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Collins	Levin	Udall (NM)
Coons	Manchin	Vitter
Donnelly	Markey	Walsh
Durbin	McCain	Warner
Enzi	McCaskill	Warren
Feinstein	McConnell	Whitehouse
Fischer	Menendez	Wicker
Flake	Mikulski	
Franken	Murkowski	

NAYS—14

Coburn	Gillibrand	Risch
Corker	Lee	Rubio
Cornyn	Merkley	Sanders
Crapo	Moran	Wyden
Cruz	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Harkin

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 85, the nays are 14.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer falls as being inconsistent with cloture.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, following in the traditions of the Senate, I come to the floor to speak about my experience in the Senate. Unfortunately, this will not be the last time I speak, much to the chagrin of many of you, as I have some adamant opposition to some of the things we are doing.

But I nevertheless will try to put in context some of my feelings and thoughts about the great privilege that has been granted to me by the people of Oklahoma. We hear a lot of speeches in this place. As Members who are elected, it gets reflected on us, but nothing could be further from the truth. Because the things that really make this place operate are the people who work

with us, the people who support us, the people who help guide us, the people behind the scenes who are both brilliant and committed and dedicated to the founding principles of this country.

We all have them working for us. Yet they are rarely recognized. So whether our accomplishments are big or small, those accomplishments come through the work, efforts, and labors of those who join with us as we come here to try to make a difference. So I first wanted to say there are a lot of people I need to say thank you to; from our Parliamentarian Elizabeth to all of the staff who work in the Senate, to the people who work at GAO, wonderful people, CRS, the IGs, legislative counsel—they have written thousands. I mean literally thousands of amendments for me. They probably are going to have some real mixed feelings about my departure. Then I have personal staff, one of whom—all tremendous—but one of whom I found to be a phenomenal, brilliant person. His name is Roland Foster. There is not anything he has ever forgotten. You can ask him anything. He will find it. He knows it. So I mention him. I have hundreds of others whom I could equally speak about, from my former chief of staff Mike Schwartz, who passed away from Lou Gehrig's disease, to those in my office and staff who each knows what a difference they make—they did—the cloakroom staff and the help we get from Laura Dove and David Schiappa and Mr. Duncan on our side—same on the opposite side. We are only able to function because of all of the people who enable us to do that. So with those thank-yous, I actually wanted to move to a different topic. The topic is believing in our country. I tell people wherever I go: We do not have one problem we cannot solve. There is nothing too big for us. They are all solvable.

To prove that is my chairman, TOM CARPER, on homeland security. He has been a phenomenal chairman. He is not in my party. We do not agree on everything, but the one thing we agreed on was that we were going to work together to solve problems. We have. We did not solve them all, but I would suggest if we look at what has come through this place, even in this dysfunctional place at this time, we will see more coming out under his leadership than any other pieces of legislation. Why is that? It is because the focus was not about him, it was not about me, it was about solving the problems of our country.

To those of you through the years whom I have offended, I truly apologize. I think none of that was intended because I actually see things differently. You see, I believe our Founders were absolutely brilliant, far smarter than we are. I believe the enumerated powers meant something. They were meant to protect us against what history says always happens to a Republic. They have all died. They have all died.

So the question is, What will happen with us? Can we cheat history? Can we

do something better than was done in the past? I honestly believe we can, but I do not believe we can if we continue to ignore the wisdom of our founding documents. So when I have offended, I believe it has been on the basis of my belief in article I, section 8. I think we can stuff that genie back into the bottle.

E pluribus unum. "Out of many, one." But you do not have one unless you have guaranteed the liberty of the many. When we ignore what the Constitution gave us as a guideline, to protect the individual liberties, to limit the size and scope of the Federal Government so the benefits of freedom and liberty can be expressed all across this land, that is when we get back to solving our problems.

I think about my father—he had a fifth-grade education—a great believer in our country. He would not recognize it today. The loss of freedom we have imposed by the arrogance of an all-too-powerful Federal Government, ignoring the wisdom and writing of our Founders that said: Above all, we must protect the liberty of the individual and recognize that liberty is given as a God-given right.

So my criticism isn't directed personally, it is because I truly believe that freedom gains us more than anything we can plan here. I know not everybody agrees with me, but the one thing I do know is that our Founders agreed with me.

They had studied this process before. They know what happens when you dominate from a central government. This didn't mean intentions are bad; the intentions are great. The motivations of people in this body are wonderful, but the perspective on how we do it and what the long-term consequences are of how we do it really do matter.

We see ourselves today with a President whom we need to be supporting and praying for, with an economy that is not doing what it could be doing, and we need to be asking the question, Why? Is there a fundamental reason? And there is.

We are too much involved in the decisionmaking in the economy in this country that inhibits the flow of capital to the best return, which inhibits the growth of wealth, which leaves us at a standard of living the same as what we had in 1988. That is where we are, yet it doesn't have to be that way.

I am going to read some words we have all heard before, but they are worth rereading.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . .

All of us.

. . . that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness—

I look at legislation and say how does that have an impact on those two things, and too often it has a negative impact.

. . . That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving

their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it.

I don't know where we are on that continuum, but I know we are not where we were intended to be in the vision of our Founders, and we are suffering, no matter where you are in the country, as a consequence.

We established the Constitution to try to protect those rights and to delineate those rights. We put in the limitation of the government and outlined the rights of each individual citizen upon which the government shall not infringe. Yet what comes out of this body and this Congress every day, to my chagrin, infringes those guaranteed rights.

Every Member of the Senate takes the same oath and this is where I differ with a lot of colleagues. Let me read the oath, because I think it is part of the problem.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.

Your State isn't mentioned one time in that oath. Your whole goal is to protect the United States of America, its Constitution and its liberties. It is not to provide benefits for your State. That is where we differ. That is where my conflict with my colleagues has come. It is nice to be able to do things for your State, but that isn't our charge. Our charge is to protect the future of our country by upholding the Constitution and ensuring the liberty that is guaranteed there is protected and preserved.

The magic number in the Senate is not 60, the number of Senators needed to end debate, and it is not 51, a majority. The most important number in the Senate is one—one Senator. That is how it was set up. That is how our Founders designed it, and with that comes tremendous amounts of responsibility, because the Senate has a set of rules or at least that gives each individual Member the power needed to advance, change, or stop legislation. That is a tool that has to be mentored and refined and wise in its application.

Most of the bills that pass the Senate never receive a vote. We all know that. It is a vast majority of the bills. They are approved by unanimous consent. It only takes a single Senator to withhold consent to stop most legislation.

There are many other rules and procedures a Member can use. They are often referred to as arcane, but that is only because they are rarely used. They are not arcane. They were designed to protect liberty, to secure liberty, to make sure that we don't all follow history and fail.

Every Senator has the power to introduce legislation and, until recently, offer amendments.

No single Senator should be allowed to decide what the rights of another Senator should be. That is tyranny. It has nothing to do with the history and classics of the Senate.

To exercise the rights we have been entrusted with, we must respect the rights of others. That is the true power of our Constitution. That is also the true power of the Senate. It is what binds our Nation together, and it is what is needed to make the Senate work properly again.

The Senate was designed uniquely to force compromise, not to force gridlock—to force compromise. One Senator had the power to stop everything for the first 100 years, but it didn't because compromise was the goal.

Our Founders understood there were many differences between the States—in size, geography, economy, and opinions. They united the States as one country based upon the premise that the many are more powerful than the one. As Senators, we have to follow this example. I have not always done that; I admit that freely to you. I should have. As Senators, we must follow the example, stand for our principles, but working to find those areas of agreement where compromise can be found to unite and move our country forward. My colleague Senator CARPER has my admiration because he has worked tirelessly the past 2 years to try to accomplish that.

Not all of the powers of the Senators are exercised on the Senate floor. Each Member of the Senate has a unique role to participate and practice oversight, to hold the government accountable, and that is part of our duties, except most often that is the part of our duties that is most ignored.

To know how to reach a destination, you must first know where you are, and without oversight—effective, vigorous oversight—you will never solve anything. You cannot write a bill to fix an agency unless you have an understanding of the problem, and you can only know this by conducting oversight, asking the tough questions, holding the bureaucrats accountable, find out what works and what doesn't, and know what has already been done.

Effective oversight is an effective tool to expose government overreach and wasteful spending, but it also markedly exposes where we lose our liberty and our essential freedoms.

I have had some fun through the years, taken some criticism for the waste vote—and it is opinion, I agree. Everybody who has seen the waste book has a great defense of why it is there. But the real question is will we become efficient at how we spend the money of the American people? This is a big enterprise. There is no other enterprise anywhere close to it in size in the world. It is not manageable unless we all try to agree to manage it and have the knowledge of it.

I think there ought to be 535 Wastebooks every year, and then we ought to have the debate about where we are not spending money wisely and have the information at our fingertips so we make great decisions because, quite frankly, we don't make great decisions because we don't have the knowledge. Then what knowledge we do have we transfer to a bureaucracy to make decisions about it when we should have been guiding those things.

True debates about national priorities would come about if we did effective oversight. It is the Senate, once hailed as the world's greatest deliberative body, where these differences should be argued. Our differences should be resolved through civil discourse so they are not settled in the street.

Just as the Constitution provides for majority rule and our democracy while protecting the rights of the individual, the Senate must return to the principles to bring trust of the electorate, and it can. Our Founders believed that protecting the minority views and minority rights in the Senate was essential to having a bicameral legislature that would give us balance and not move too quickly against the very fundamental principles upon which this country was based—and not out of guessing, but out of thorough knowledge of what had happened in the past. We have to be very careful to guard both minority rights and the rule of law.

There is no one who works in the Senate who is insignificant, whether it is the people who serve us when we have lunch, to the highest of the high. They all deserve our ear. Each of us has value.

I would end with one final comment. The greatest power I have not used as a Senator, which I would encourage you to use in the future, is the power of convening. You have tremendous power to pull people together because of your position.

To convene the opposite opinions—CHUCK SCHUMER has been great at that for me. When we have a difference, he wants to get together, convene, and see how we work. That power is the power that causes us to compromise, to come together, to reach consensus. So my encouragement to you is to rethink the utilization of the power of convening. People will come to you if you ask them to come.

Again, I end by saying a great thank you to my family for their sacrifice, a great thank you to the wonderful staff I have, and a thank you to each of you for the privilege of having been able to work for a better country for us all.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

TRIBUTES TO TOM COBURN

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, we have all just heard a very moving, a very inspirational and what I considered a motivational speech from our dear friend TOM COBURN.

Twenty years ago, in 1994, there were a bunch of wild and crazy folks who got elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Republicans took the majority for the first time in 42 years. They ran on a Contract with America and were led by a group of firebrand leaders. TOM COBURN was in that group of folks who got elected in 1994 to the U.S. House. I was in that group. Senator GRAHAM was in that group. Senator BURR was in that group. Senator WICKER was in that group.

There were a few Members of that class who became known as real bomb throwers. TOM COBURN was a bomb thrower. TOM COBURN would object for the sake of objecting to anything that was going on. It didn't make any difference which side of the aisle it was coming from. But let me tell you, TOM COBURN matured into a class act, No. 1, which he always was; and No. 2, he matured into a legislator second to none.

TOM did not hesitate to object to any spending bill that came from either party if TOM COBURN believed that was not provided for in the Constitution and was something the U.S. taxpayer should not be paying for. There is nobody who has guarded the pocketbook of the taxpayers of the United States like TOM COBURN.

It is remarkable that those of us who were elected with TOM have had the opportunity to see him over the last 20 years take on major subjects that most veterans said, you know, in the end, we are going to prevail. But guess what. They never did. TOM COBURN, even though he may have lost a vote from time to time, in the end, TOM COBURN prevailed.

TOM is one tough guy too. He has been through a lot physically and, boy, what a survivor. I mean we think we have issues to deal with. None of us can imagine what TOM has gone through. When somebody comes up to me as I am walking through an airport—and they will have seen TOM COBURN on TV—and they say: What about this guy COBURN, there are two things that immediately come to mind when I think of TOM COBURN, family and faith.

First, family. TOM and Carolyn have had such a solid marriage. He tried to date her as an eighth grader and she wouldn't go out with him. But he kept pestering her long enough that she finally did and what a great marriage they have had. They have three beautiful daughters and a household of grandchildren whom he absolutely loves to death and likes to spend time with, as opposed to being here.

Secondly, TOM's faith. There is nobody I have ever met who has a stronger faith than TOM COBURN. He exhibits it on the floor, he exhibits it one-on-one, he exhibits it in the Prayer Breakfast every Wednesday morning. He is one person who has probably counseled more people in this body, on both sides of the aisle, than anybody other than the Chaplain.

On top of that, he is just a class act. He has been a dear friend. We have

spent many hours on the road together, many hours on the golf course together and socializing together. There is no finer individual who ever served in the Senate than TOM COBURN. He is one of the things I am truly going to miss about leaving here. But actually, as we have already talked, we will probably now spend more time together than ever since both of us are retiring.

But, TOM, to you, I thank you for that great friendship but also thank you for what you have done for my children and my grandchildren. You are a great American and you have served this country well.

God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, along with many of my other colleagues, I pay tribute to one of the most decent and principled men I have ever met, Senator TOM COBURN.

Washington is going to miss TOM, but the irony of that is TOM really can't stand Washington. When he first got here, the feeling appeared to be mutual. Some just didn't know what to make of this doctor from Oklahoma—so frequently on the losing end of lopsided votes, so often pressing ahead on his own and never giving up. That was apparent from his days in the House, when we hear he led the only “filibuster” in the House anybody can ever remember. He may have placed more holds than any equivalent Senator in history. He apparently held his own bill once.

Fast forward to today. The pundit class has declared TOM COBURN a card-carrying member of the establishment. The rebel who once described himself as a kamikaze pilot has now been branded, incredibly, with a scarlet “E” right on his forehead. It may seem contradictory, but TOM always fought smart battles—the kind you might lose today but win later—and he forged an amazing bond with the people he represents. For TOM that meant spending as much time away from Washington as possible and making himself available when he was home.

TOM published his address, and Oklahomans were never shy about coming over to share their opinions. TOM was never shy about sharing how he felt either. He believed his constituents deserved the truth. He gave it to them absolutely unvarnished, but he did it in a respectful way.

It reminds me of the two posters he has framed on either side of his desk. One says: “NO.” N-O. The other says “KNOW,” K-N-O-W. That is TOM in a nutshell. It is why TOM has made so many friends on both sides of the aisle. It is why you can't flip on MSNBC most mornings without seeing him.

I think TOM actually prefers these settings. It is a challenge he relishes. Not only is TOM confident enough to tangle with anyone, he usually wins, and he rarely—rarely—makes lasting enemies. It is a trait that has served him well, particularly at the beginning of his career.

TOM first came to Washington representing a district that was heavily Democratic. He won a close race that year. I am told he also gained a friend, and that friend was the Democrat he defeated. His opponent's grandson actually ended up joining TOM's staff, which obviously is a great honor.

But it is no picnic being on TOM's staff. TOM works his staff hard. It is difficult even to take a sick day over there. TOM has always got the stethoscope nearby. If the doctor is in, so are you. Yet the people on TOM's team seem to love him. “Once a member of COBURN's family, always a member.” That is their motto.

It doesn't mean they love everything about him. Take his handwriting; it is just what you would expect from a guy named Dr. COBURN. It is absolutely awful—a mix of chicken scratch, hieroglyphics, and vocab from the extra credit section of an MCAT.

Back in the 1990s one staffer made the mistake of letting TOM take a yellow highlighter back to Oklahoma. TOM spent the entire weekend marking up a massive bill. There were handwritten notes and questions in nearly every margin. It took literally days to decipher any of it. It was like something out of a Dan Brown novel. Needless to say, an office ban on yellow highlighters was quickly implemented.

So the legacy of TOM's former profession gets him in trouble sometimes, but it remains the job he enjoyed most: helping to deliver new lives into the world. It brings a unique perspective to TOM's work in the Senate. It instilled a lasting appreciation for life too.

Even though TOM has stopped delivering babies these days, he still travels back to Oklahoma a lot. There is nowhere he would rather be than his hometown of Muskogee, and there is almost nothing he would rather be doing there than mowing his lawn or eating a sandwich at his favorite barbecue joint or sipping a cold Coors with olives. He prefers these things over almost anything else, except spending time with his grandkids and of course his wife Carolyn.

TOM has known Carolyn since grade school. She has always been the one to keep him balanced and grounded. She doesn't care that he is a Senator. She frequently reminds him of that too.

Carolyn is also the reason TOM is such good friends with President Obama. Both men came to the Senate the same year. At freshman orientation, Carolyn spotted Michelle Obama from across the room. “She looks like fun,” Carolyn said. “Let's sit next to her.” The rest, as they say, is history, and it is also remarkable. Because when TOM announced his retirement, warm sentiments poured in from across the political spectrum. It was a day—listen to this—when Barack Obama and Jim DeMint found something to agree on. It must have brought some joy to TOM at such a difficult time.

As he departs the Senate, TOM will leave one battle behind to confront another. We are sending him every best

wish in that fight. We are keeping him in our prayers. We know he will prevail, but he is really going to be missed around here. He is just the type of citizen legislator our Founders envisioned.

TOM has poured over more oversight documents than anyone cares to imagine. His “Wastebook” has become an annual phenomenon. It helps drive the conversation on spending. He has led on issues like HIV and malaria.

The Senate will lose a critical leader on intelligence oversight when he leaves. TOM played an invaluable role on the Intelligence Committee, where he brought a unique blend of integrity, analytical rigor, and dogged determination. He served our Nation selflessly, toiling for hours every week in a secure hearing room, learning many sensitive matters he could not discuss with others.

He worked closely with another extraordinary departing colleague, Vice Chair SAXBY CHAMBLISS, to ensure that our Nation’s intelligence community retains the tools necessary to defend our country.

If anyone thinks our Nation’s classified programs aren’t overseen rigorously, they certainly haven’t met TOM COBURN. He brought a skeptic’s eye and a professional determination to the task. His probing lines of questioning earned the respect of his colleagues and helped the intelligence community craft stronger programs, while also reminding us of the value of many other intelligence activities.

Now, TOM has obviously done a lot to earn his reputation as a hawk on the budget, too. His interest there was never about the baubles of office. It is about solutions. That is why TOM actually volunteered for Simpson-Bowles. That is why he lobbied me to actually take him off—believe it or not—of the Finance Committee.

You always know where TOM stands. I am told he was overseas with a couple of other Senators when a government minister launched into a finger-wagging harangue about our country. TOM couldn’t take it after he listened for a few minutes. He cut him off, told the minister what he thought of him, and caught the next flight home. So TOM is literally one of a kind. We are not likely to see another one like this guy.

Here is what former Senator Kyl had to say about him:

Tom’s like your conscience. You can try to ignore him, but you know he’s right even when you wish he weren’t.

Some people may think TOM is a member of the establishment now, but the truth is TOM never changed. Washington changed. America changed.

People recognize the wisdom of his ideas—about leaving a better country to the next generation, about giving Americans the freedom and the opportunity to achieve real meaning and lasting happiness in their lives.

We are going to miss the Senator who actually likes to get his hands dirty, who actually likes to legislate.

We are going to miss the Senator who is so devoted to procedure that he sleeps next to Marty Gold’s book, and we are going to miss a friend who understands that honest compromise is necessary to achieve anything in a pluralistic society. We are all going to miss TOM a lot. But he can retire with pride, and he should know that we are sending him our best wishes for a speedy recovery and a joyful retirement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I was not at all surprised as I listened to the words of our colleague Senator TOM COBURN that he quoted extensively from the Declaration of Independence and he referred to our Constitution—the founding documents of our great country.

When America’s Founders conceived of a nation of citizen legislators, they had leaders like Senator TOM COBURN in mind. Indeed, throughout his service in Congress, he has remained a compassionate physician, a devoted husband and father, a fierce defender of the rights enshrined in our Constitution, and an unwavering opponent of excessive spending.

Senator COBURN may be best known as our most diligent fiscal watchdog, relentlessly hounding wasteful spending. His annual “Wastebook” report is a call for transparency and accountability in the Federal Government that has guided oversight investigations and policy debates.

The aspect of his service in the Senate that deserves just as much acclaim is his work on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence. Serving with Senator COBURN on both of those committees for many years, I have seen firsthand his brilliance, his tenacity, and his determination to strengthen our Nation and the safety of our people. He has a keen understanding of the grave and ever-evolving threats that our Nation faces.

As a citizen legislator, Senator COBURN leads by example and with compassion. With his expertise as a physician, he has been a leader in promoting wellness, disease prevention, combatting HIV/AIDS, and advancing biomedical research. When it comes to fiscal responsibility, he walks the walk, having returned more than \$1 million from his Senate office budget to the American taxpayers.

We have heard many descriptions of TOM COBURN today, but the word I most associate with him is “integrity.” He is a man of the utmost integrity, who always stands tall for his principles and for what he believes in. He sets an example for all of us who seek to serve the public.

On a personal note, I want to thank Senator COBURN for hounding me into joining a women’s prayer breakfast that meets each week and has introduced me to a number of wonderful

women from the House of Representatives who have become my close friends as well as colleagues. And I use the word “hound” appropriately. He mentioned it to me so many times that eventually I gave in and went to one of those breakfasts, and, indeed, it has been a spiritually enriching experience that I never would have had but for TOM continuing to press me to attend.

This past January Senator COBURN announced his intention to leave the Senate, due in part to his deepening health problems—problems he has faced with extraordinary courage. This somber news was counterbalanced by his overarching concern, not for himself, but for his family and for the people of his State and our Nation.

As he now returns to the life of a private citizen, I wish him every success in combatting his illness, and I thank him for his truly extraordinary service to our country. To quote from Scripture, I think everyone would agree with these words when it comes to TOM COBURN: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I have no prepared remarks. I am trying to speak right from my heart, and my heart is full.

I want to start off by thanking TOM for the very kind comments he made about serving with me. We met 10 years ago. He was that bomb thrower—still is a little bit—that SAXBY talked about when they were elected 20 years ago. I was one of the people who came up, along with LAMAR ALEXANDER, George Voinovich, and MARK PRYOR, for an orientation for new Senators so that when they got here we could actually spend some time and teach the new guys and gals the ropes.

I remember the first day we convened and put them all in a big circle in Ted Stevens’ office, a beautiful office here in the Capitol, and out of those 3 days TOM and Carolyn and Michelle and Barack began to bond and became friends. I didn’t know how close friends they were until about 4 or 5 years ago. Barack Obama had given the State of the Union address. I was sitting on the Republican side. There was a time when we actually went back and forth to try to mix things up. The President finished his speech, and there is no rope line at those speeches. The President came along to shake hands with people. I was sitting next to TOM, and we walked down so we could say hi to the President.

I will never forget what the President said to him. In just the quiet between the two of them—they embraced, and the President said to him: Are you still praying for me? And very quietly, TOM COBURN said: Every night.

Just like that—they didn’t agree on everything, but they were friends. They are friends, and they will always be friends. I hope TOM and I will be as well.

I remember sitting up there where CORY BOOKER, our new Senator from

New Jersey, is sitting now, listening to MIKE ENZI talking about how he worked so well with Ted Kennedy—Ted Kennedy, one of the most liberal Democrats in the Senate, and MIKE ENZI, one of the most conservative—and how they got extraordinary amounts of stuff done.

I just want to say that the legislation coming out of our committee—and Senator COLLINS has led that committee before—is moving through this body and the House—it is really pretty amazing—to strengthen our cyber defenses, to take the chemical facility antiterrorism law that SUSAN COLLINS authored and to make it better and make it real, to better protect our Nation's information from attacks from all over the world, to try to make our Postal Service not just relevant and not just hanging on but actually vibrant and real.

But that day, MIKE ENZI talked about the 80/20 rule with Ted Kennedy. He said: Ted Kennedy and I agree on about 80 percent of the stuff, and we disagree on 20 percent. He and I decided to focus on the 80 percent we agreed on and set aside the 20 percent we didn't agree on to another day.

I call that the “Enzi Rule,” and that has helped guide me here in the Senate, and it certainly has helped to guide me in the work I have been privileged to do with Dr. COBURN.

When I became chairman of the committee about 2 years ago and Dr. COBURN was going to be the ranking member of the committee, somebody asked me what it was going to be like. How are you going to work with this guy?

I said: It is going to be a little like a marriage. You have to work at it every day. Everybody has to give and meet somewhere in the middle.

I love to ask people who have been married a long time what the secret is for being married a long time. Some of you have maybe heard me talk about this. I get some really hilarious answers but also some really terrific and insightful answers.

I think the best one I have ever gotten when I asked what is the secret for being married 40, 50, 60, 70 years is the two c's. It is not COBURN and CARPER. It is the two c's: communicate and compromise. That is not only the secret for a vibrant, long marriage for two people; it is a secret for a vibrant democracy.

I believe the reason why TOM and I have had this partnership that I think has been productive is, one, we surround ourselves with people—certainly for me—smarter than us. The second thing is we believe in communicating, we believe in compromising, and we believe in collaborating. I think the American people are the beneficiaries of that.

We have a reception later today for TOM, and I hope he comes. We will have the opportunity to say some more things, as well. He is not the kind of person who likes to be praised, so this

is probably punishment. There is a verse in the Scriptures talking about heaping with praise, pouring praise all over. This is probably a little like that. But I want to close with this. His words on the Bowles-Simpson Commission are for the ages, and I hope we will never walk away from the lessons he showed us with his courage in supporting that work and helping to craft that work.

There are words in the Scriptures, in Matthew 25, that talk about the least of these in our society. When I was sick, when I was hungry, when I was thirsty, when I was naked, when I was in prison—those are the questions. The answer: If you have done it to the least of these, you have done it also to Me.

Senator COBURN believes we have a moral responsibility, a moral obligation to the least of these in our society. He also believes we have a fiscal obligation, a fiscal imperative to meet that moral obligation in a fiscally responsible way. And I think those two ideas guide him in his work, and, frankly, it is an inspiration to me.

Last word. Leaders should be humble, not haughty. Leaders should lead by our example, not “do as I say” but “do as I do.” Leaders should have the heart of a servant. Leaders should have the courage to stay out of step when everyone else is marching to the wrong tune. Leaders ought to be committed to doing what is right, not what is easy. Leaders should treat other people the way they want to be treated. TOM has offended just about everybody in this body, but he always comes back and apologizes, and he has already done it here today. Leaders should focus on excellence in everything they do. If it isn't perfect, make it better. It is in the preamble of the Constitution—“in order to form a more perfect Union.” That defines him. Finally, if you think you are right and you know you are right, never give up. That is what a leader should be about.

For the years he served here and for a long time before that and for a long time to come, he has been that leader, and I feel lucky to say he is my friend. God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I feel surrounded by friends and colleagues who are getting ready to leave, and being part of that original class 20 years ago, there is one thing that I have learned is extremely unique in Washington. I am next to two people who are voluntarily leaving. The toughest decision a Member of Congress ever makes is to leave this institution voluntarily. And I know that for my two friends and my third one, MIKE JOHANNIS, this was not easy. It is not easy to stand here and know that in January they are not going to be here any longer, because they are truly friends, and that is tough.

To say that TOM COBURN can be intimidating I think is an understatement, and I think that comes because

his breadth of knowledge based upon his experiences in life enable him to be an expert on a lot of issues.

With that in mind, I remember the day TOM sat down—we were leaving that week, and I said: What are you going to do this weekend? And he said: Well, Sarah's future fiancé is coming to sit down with me to find out whether he can marry my daughter. And I looked at him and thought, I would hate to be that young man.

Well, the truth is that TOM is a very intimidating guy. He plays hard, and he plays to win.

There is not an individual I know who is more fair and more compassionate than TOM COBURN. I remember the day the Bush administration wanted to extend the PEPFAR Program—the AIDS in Africa program—and when TOM found out that they were going to relax the requirement on how many people were treated and that more money would go to education than to actually saving lives, he grabbed me and he said, “We can't let this stand. We've got to fight it. We've got to change it.” And it was TOM COBURN who blocked the reauthorization of President Bush's PEPFAR plan for 6 months—a Republican President, a Republican Senator. Why? On principle.

TOM COBURN, if you didn't know it before this speech today, has never done anything in this institution or in life that wasn't based upon principle. No Member of Congress should ever question whether he thinks he is right because if he didn't think he was right, he wouldn't fight so hard.

It is particularly difficult for me to say goodbye to TOM. We truly are legislative partners. We fought a lot of battles for a long time, and inherently we have a level of trust in each other that I would actually sign on to legislation that I had no idea what it did; I just knew that in that foxhole he needed somebody he could count on, and I knew when he signed on to something that I needed, that there was always somebody there to cover my back.

The institution is losing something significant when we no longer have that legislative expertise TOM COBURN represents.

There are a lot of descriptions that people have used today and that people will use in the future to describe TOM COBURN, but I would boil it down to two words that I think best describe him: TOM COBURN is a good man. In every sense of the word, he is a good man. This institution will lose a great leader when TOM COBURN retires.

Godspeed, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I will be very brief. I know people are waiting to speak.

I guess it would surprise the world in general to know that TOM COBURN and I are true friends, but we are. He is a man of integrity above all.

You don't have to agree with someone—we probably disagree on 90 percent of all the issues—to trust someone's integrity, to trust someone's

handshake, to trust someone that if you make a good argument, understanding their values, they will come along. That is just what TOM COBURN has done time and time again with this Senator from New York and countless others on the other side of the aisle.

On so many issues where TOM was opposed, I said: Let's just sit down and let me give you the logic and then you will make your own judgment. And I knew that would be good enough. Sometimes it didn't work. Sometimes he disagreed. But he always sat and listened. He always asked perceptive questions, not "gotcha" questions. He was trying to figure it out.

Of course the most well known was when we negotiated on the Zadroga bill. Thousands of New Yorkers had rushed to the towers and gotten poison in their lungs and their gastrointestinal systems, and we wanted to help them. We thought they were just like our veterans. TOM knew it was a big expense. He sat with us, listened, made suggestions to make it leaner and trimmer, and then supported the bill. So right now there are people alive throughout the New York area, heroes, because of the integrity of that man from Oklahoma.

TOM, I will miss you. This body will miss you. Regardless of our ideological views and perceptions, we will miss you. You are a great American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. First of all, there is not a whole lot that needs to be said that hasn't been said, but one thing I want to say to my dear friend TOM COBURN is that he made Washington happen for me, if you will. He made it more tolerable. I had a hard time in transitioning. TOM reached out. He saw that. We talked about this before, but TOM made this place more palatable.

TOM, you have expanded my area of friendships with more people than you know and the right type of people, and I appreciate it I think more than you even know.

I will end with this, and I don't mean to say a lot. I have been asked about TOM COBURN. How would I explain him? TOM COBURN's got soul. TOM COBURN's got soul. And I mean that from the bottom of my heart, brother. You have soul, and I thank you for what soul you brought to this place.

God bless.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Fourteen years ago I entered the House of Representatives. I had been elected, but before I took office, I traveled to Washington, and MATT SALMON, the Congressman I was replacing, said: Is there anybody you want to meet? And I said: TOM COBURN. I had watched from afar what he had done on the Appropriations Committee and the stands he had taken, and I admired him. I went and visited with him in his office while he was packing up his stuff. I will never forget that. And

I have to say that today I admire him even more than I did then, having watched him go back into the private sector and then enter the Senate.

Columnist George Will said TOM COBURN was the most dangerous creature that could come into the Senate. Why? Because he is simply uninterested in being popular. I think that is certainly true. But if he didn't care about it, it happened anyway. I have news for TOM. As you can see around, he has become popular. But one thing he never managed to achieve, if he sought it, was becoming partisan. When you hear those across the aisle lavish praise on this man, realize that was never one of his goals and never happened, much to his credit.

I thank you and your staff for your generosity over the years to me and my staff and for what you have done for this institution, for your colleagues, and for me personally.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I probably have known TOM for the least length of time of anybody in this Chamber, and I want to offer some comments from the perspective of only 2 years and really more like a year and a half since we became friends and colleagues.

I have seen Senator COBURN in two contexts—one is intelligence and the other is faith. He and I serve on the Intelligence Committee. We sit directly across from each other. That committee is generally a non partisan one, but it is also one where all the meetings generally are closed. There is no press. You can really take the measure of someone when they ask questions and participate in a debate in that forum.

His questions always struck me as the questions I wished I had asked, and they struck me as the questions I am sure the people of America would have wanted asked. They were penetrating, they cut through obfuscation, and they were always meaningful and helped us move toward the important work that committee has to accomplish.

I have also become acquainted with him through our faith and participation in the Wednesday Prayer Breakfasts, and more recently, for reasons that I am not entirely sure, he has invited me to join him on Tuesday evenings for dinners on the other side of the Capitol that have been very meaningful.

For the 9 years before I came here, I taught a course called "Leaders and Leadership," and I taught it at a couple of colleges in Maine. I taught it really as much for myself as for my students because I wanted to try to understand what leadership was, and I thought if I signed on to teach it, I would have to learn something about it. Every year what we did was go through and discuss the stories of great leaders throughout history, some well known and some not so well known. We always started with Ernest

Shackleton. We talked about Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Thatcher and Martin Luther King and Lincoln and Churchill. We always tried to define the qualities that make a leader, and there are lots of them—perseverance, communication, vision, team work, trust—but the last one on the list and the one that brings me back to TOM is always character. It is an indefinable quality. You cannot really put a specific definition to it, but people like Lincoln had it, Ernest Shackleton had it, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain from Maine had it, Eleanor Roosevelt had it. It involves a combination of qualities that TOM embodies, and almost all of them have been mentioned here today—integrity, intelligence, honesty, faith, belief in principle, and daring to stand for principle. It is the hardest thing to teach, but it is the easiest thing to see. And the reason I felt so privileged to get to know this man for such a short period of time is that he has shown me what character is all about.

TOM, it is one of the great joys of my life to have had these 2 years to get to know you, if only slightly. It is one of the great sadnesses of my life that it has only been 2 years.

Godspeed, TOM. You have made a difference for this country that we all love and honor and respect. Thank you for your service and for sharing your great character with all of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. I was elected in a special election 16 years ago. I was No. 435 in the House of Representatives, so I did what my father told me to do when I went into business. He said: Son, sit in the back of the room, listen to people who are smart, pay attention to them, and do what the smart people do.

After 2 weeks of listening to TOM COBURN, I said no human being could know as much about everything as this guy named COBURN. In 16 years, I have come to believe, yes, there is one who knows about everything he speaks of, and that is TOM COBURN.

Senator COBURN has been a great role model for me. The Senator from Oklahoma has taught me many great lessons, and I have learned a lot from him.

The greatest evangelists in life are those who witness their faith, and TOM COBURN is a true witness for his faith and has changed the lives of many people. I have enjoyed, as much as anything, our walk with faith at the Prayer Breakfasts, in private meetings, and what we have shared together.

Lastly, every Christmas I try to give my grandchildren who can read something to read as a little treasury to put in their book to save so that when they grow up, they can refer to great things and great historical statements that have been made. I doubt if there has ever been a better statement made on the floor of the Senate about our heritage, our country, our future, and our

hopes than TOM COBURN has said today. It will be required reading for my grandchildren this Christmas, and I can assure you that I am a better man for having served with TOM COBURN, the great Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

God bless you, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. The other Senator from Oklahoma.

I wish to make some unscripted comments, but sincere and from the heart. I hope I am accurate when I say this, that I think in some respect I discovered TOM COBURN. I suspect that TOM and I are the only two who have ever been to Adair, OK. I remember hearing that there was a conservative doctor from Muskogee. I remember calling him up at that time and asking him to run for the House of Representatives, which he did. He kept his commitments and did everything he was supposed to do. I always remember that day.

As Senator COBURN knows, we have a place my wife and I built on a big lake in Oklahoma back in 1962—a long time ago. When I drive up there, I go through Adair, and I go by that little sheltered area that is half torn down now. They tore down the biggest bank in town. Every time I go by there, I have to say I recall meeting for the first time with a young doctor named TOM COBURN.

I regret to say there are times in our service together when we have not been in agreement on specific issues, and I think we have a characteristic in common. I think we are both kind of bull-headed, which has created some temporary hard feelings, but there is one thing that overshadows that. Jesus has a family, and His family has a lot of people in it. Some are here in this room. TOM COBURN and I are brothers.

In the 20 years I have been here in the Senate, I don't believe I heard a speech that was as touching and sincere as the speech I heard from my junior Senator a few minutes ago.

I really believe that in spite of all the things that have happened—and there were some differences, but they were minor—that he never ceased to be my brother, and I want to ask the Senator right now to forgive me for the times I have perhaps said something unintentionally that was not always right and was not always from the heart. But I want my junior Senator to know that I sincerely love him and am going to be hurting with him with the troubles he has right now, or might have in the future, and will sorely miss him in this body.

I ask that the RECORD show that I sincerely love my brother, Senator COBURN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. I have been sitting here listening to the respect and the emotion of people recognizing the service of TOM COBURN. I don't have a prepared

speech, but I second everything that has been said about TOM.

My emotions well up in me when I think about TOM. TOM exhibits the conviction that I wish I had more of, TOM exhibits the commitment I wish I had more of, and he exhibits the courage I wish I had more of.

I remember my very dear friend Chuck Olson made this statement: Lord, show me the kind of person You would like me to be and give me the strength to be that person.

I feel like God has given a gift to the Senate, and certainly a gift to me, by simply saying, take a look at TOM COBURN. Look at the qualities he exhibits and his commitment to faith. He is a pretty good model to follow.

Thank you, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. I came down to give my farewell remarks, but before I do, I have to make a comment about Senator COBURN. Senator COBURN is absolutely what many people said about his word. Yesterday was an example of that when he resolved an issue.

There is always activity after the Senate, and I wish my friend from Oklahoma the best.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me to speak on my 6 years of serving in this body. It has been a true honor to serve with the Presiding Officer in the short time he has been here and to serve with all of my colleagues, but it has been an even bigger honor to serve my fellow Alaskans.

Alaska is a huge State—660,000 square miles. More than—to my friends from Texas and California, please don't take this personally—double and triple the size of States such as Texas and California.

But Alaska is a very small place in many ways. People make personal connections with their elected official. At the end of the day, we pretty much know everybody one way or another. Alaskans will more than likely will see me at a checkout stand at Andy's Hardware or Home Depot or hanging Christmas lights at my wife's store or doing errands with my son Jacob that at times he is not very anxious to do. It is a small State, and they will more likely see me doing that than on the floor making speeches or on C-SPAN.

When Alaskans contacted me with an idea or complaint or problem, we made sure we responded. After 6 years in the Senate, I am most proud of the work with helping Alaskans and their families. My office responded to more than 360,000 individual letters and emails and phone calls from Alaskans. To put it in perspective, 360,000 is roughly half the population of the State.

Much of my staff is here with me on the floor today. I thank them for their unwavering service to their fellow Alaskans. Truly I have the best of the best. Some of them worked with me when I was mayor and are now working for me as a Senator. Many will go on

and continue to do incredible work not only for Alaskans but for this country. I thank them.

We took on 3,000 individual casework cases to help Alaskans navigate the Federal Government. We helped them get their Social Security checks, made sure the local post office actually delivers the mail, and in Alaska that is important. We fought for benefits for individual veterans.

I am also proud of the great policy work we did. When I say we, it is because sometimes ideas came from Alaskans, sometimes they came from this body, sometimes I would have a crazy idea I would write down on a sheet of paper, but at the end of the day it was my staff that did the work.

Opening Alaska's arctic lands and waters to responsible resource development—NPR-A, CD-5, Beaufort and Chukchi. We also helped to convince the EPA to free up permits for Kensington and Greens Creek mines.

The Arctic. When I first came to the office, I have to say that not everybody knew where the Arctic was. Some didn't even know it was an ocean, to be frank with you, but that is not the case today. Some of my colleagues probably got tired of hearing me always talk about Alaska no matter what they were discussing.

I see my friend AL FRANKEN is here, and I know he remembers this story. He draws incredible maps of the United States, and he does it all freehand. I remember him drawing a map one day, and I said: You missed two things, Alaska and Hawaii.

He said: Well, when I drove around the country with my parents, they were not States, they were just territories, and the maps they bought were maps of the lower 48. So I sent him a dot-to-dot of Alaska, and he sent me back a nice letter with a map of Alaska he had drawn.

No matter what conversation my colleagues might be having on an issue, I would manage to weave in Alaska.

The Arctic has unbelievable potential. We just touched the tip of the iceberg and there is more work to be done.

Working on defense is important to Alaska. It is important that we keep our military bases secure by saving F-16s at Eielson and getting F-35s next. We need to make sure that the benefits for those who are serving continue to be there for them.

It is incredible to hear stories from veterans when they talk about the new model of care we developed over 2½, 3 years ago. Our State has 77,000 veterans. When I was campaigning in 2008, I had an idea that I called the Hero's Health Card, and I remember when I got into office, people said it will never happen. People who know me know that when you say never or no, that means yes, they just didn't spell it properly, and I have to figure out what to do.

Today in Alaska, it doesn't matter if you are a veteran in the smallest rural communities or the biggest cities, you

will get health care and access to it through our tribal health care delivery system—the first in the Nation.

One time when I was in Bethel, this gentleman who was a veteran came up to me when I was in the VFW Hall. A lot of us have been in VFW halls, and you know that when someone comes at you at an aggressive pace, it is probably not a positive situation, but you have to engage them in a conversation. He held his hand out and showed me his scars, and he said that he had to go to Anchorage to get this taken care of, and you told me I could go down to my clinic and get it taken care of, but it didn't happen. I was about to say something, but before I could get a word out, he said: Do you know what I get to do because of what you did? Every single week now when I need therapy, I can go down the street in Bethel instead of flying to Anchorage to get it done. That is a model of how to do the right thing.

Alaska is well known for fisheries. I don't mean to pick on Senator FRANKEN, but I remember him coming up to me because we coined a phrase on modified engineered fish which we called the "Frankenfish." It was not about the Senator, but it was about this fish that was chemically enhanced and would really destroy the fisheries in Alaska and would be bad for the market and bad for consumers. We fought over that issue because Alaskans brought it to our attention every single day.

I just mentioned some of the things we did for native rural health care, which was not just about Alaska. When we discussed an issue in our office, we asked: Can we do it for Alaska, and does it have an international impact? Will it impact the rest of the United States in a positive way?

I remember hearing and reading about the money the Federal Government owed to our tribes which had not been paid for two decades. It was money for clinical services they produced. We did some things, and the net result was Alaska received over \$500 million in settlements over the last year. On top of that, many tribes across the country now have almost three-quarters of a billion dollars, money owed by the government for services delivered to individuals. And earlier this week we were able to pass another piece taking away the restriction on our tribes in Alaska so they can now, under the Violence Against Women Act—and we hope the House passes it—to be able to dispense and do tribal government in the sense of our justice system improving the situation on the ground when it comes to sexual assault, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

There are a lot of examples. It is hard when we talk about these because there are a lot of great things that have been done, not just individually but collectively. But in this place we spend a lot of time talking about doom and gloom and how the sky is falling and always the worst-case scenario.

We have come a long way in the last 6 years. The people who know me know I don't care how bad the situation is, I am positive about it because there is always another day to solve these problems and make things happen.

I think about where we were when I came to the Senate. I remember coming on this floor as a freshman in 2009, and the chaos of this economy was unbelievable. We were losing 600,000 jobs a month—equal to the whole population of my State—unemployed, boom, gone. Unemployment was around 10 percent. The stock market was at 6,500. Two of the largest automobile companies in this country were flat on their backs. No housing starts were happening. The market was crashing. The deficit was \$1.4 trillion per year. As a new Member, I wasn't sure what I had gotten myself into, to be frank. Some of the Members who came with me were trying to figure out, What did we get? But we didn't sit around.

I know we always hear this doom and gloom out there. When we look back over 6 years, we remember we had some battles here, and most people think we don't do anything. But where are we today? We are 17,000-plus in the stock market today.

I can tell my colleagues that Alaskans saw this because every year—I know I hear from other Members who ask me this question all the time—we get a permanent fund check. It is based on investments we make, and it is based on revenues we receive from oil and gas. That permanent fund check doubled this year from \$800 to over \$1,900. Why did it double? Because it is based on the stock market average of the last 5 years. We dropped off 2009, so the market was doing better. Every Alaskan felt what this economy has done. So when the naysayers are out there speaking, it is just not accurate.

GM and Ford and Chrysler have added over half a million good-paying jobs. Unemployment is at 5.8 percent—almost a 50-percent drop. Over 10 million new jobs and the longest stretch of private sector growth on record—56 months. Just last week—I know we always hear it is not good enough. Of course, but it is a heck of a lot better.

I remember the chaos on this floor during those 3 or 4 months and as a new Member what we had to go through.

The deficit has dropped by \$1 trillion a year. We are down to about \$480 billion now. We have sliced off \$1 trillion a year from the deficit.

In Alaska we have seen some incredible things. Anchorage unemployment is at 4.9 percent. There are more jobs in mining and timber than ever before. Tourism has risen to nearly 1 million visitors. There are 78,000 people in the fishery industry.

It is important to remember that this is just a moment in time of challenges we have as a body and as a country. It is important to remember that there is a lot of work ahead of us. But we have accomplished a lot. But we

spend a lot of time on this floor debating what is bad about this country.

A lot of us are coming to the floor and giving our farewell speeches and talking about good things. There are a lot of good things we should be proud of as a country. I am proud of what we have done over the last 6 years. This country is back on track. We have more work to do to make sure people's incomes rise, but that is starting to happen now.

The challenge for my colleagues who are still here and for this country is—it has been an incredible honor to be in this body, but what do we do to make sure we move forward so we don't have this as a platform of negative attitudes and views but about opportunity and possibilities; not about things that we sit here and try to figure out how to kill but what we try to do to improve and give new ideas a chance.

I said it earlier: I am a very optimistic person. I believe what is possible today can be even better tomorrow. But it is incumbent on people to believe it, to want to do it, to put aside their differences where we can. I will tell my colleagues, that is why fewer Alaskans are party registered and more are nonparty registered in our State than in most States—because our view is that we don't care about the party; what we care about is getting things done. We are trying to find the answer to yes rather than trying to find the way to no.

My staff has always, and it is a struggle sometimes—and I have a great staff, as I said earlier, some from Alaska, some from here, and some from across the country, people who I don't understand why they continue to subject themselves to working for me after the mayor's office, and then they came here. I always told them that what mattered was not who sponsored the bill but whether it is a good idea. If it is a good idea, then let's move forward, try to find an answer, try to solve the problem.

The positive attitude we have to have is not only important for this body, but it is important for this country. In a weird way, they love us and they hate us. The poll numbers show they don't love us too much—13 percent. But on the flip side, they look to us. They look to us for certainty and guidance and where we might take them. The pundits are different, but the people look to us. I see it when I go to stores, when I am out and about. People may be angry with us, but they want to know what we are going to do to solve these incredible problems, and it will be incumbent upon the next Congress to sit down and work together. It is going to be tough because the politics of the day are about the moment in time, not about the long term. This is an incredible challenge that has to be dealt with in some way.

I have spent a lot of time trying to, as I said, do what I can; it didn't matter whose idea it was. I listened to Senator COBURN speak. I remember one

day we were working on an issue—essential air service. Some of us have that in our States. Senator COBURN was against it. I remember having a conversation with him and trying to explain that between one airport and the next is 1,200 miles. There is no road. There is no way to get to it. At the end of the day we were able to resolve that issue and move forward.

I think of all the things that have been accomplished in this body but how little people know about it. In an odd way, over these last few days more of the positive issues are out there. I hope the press covers them. We will see. But we live in a world where it is better to talk about the negative because that seems to be what thrives. I hope that changes.

Let me end by sharing a couple of other quick thoughts. There are a lot of great stories about being here in the Senate. Someone asked me one day: Do you write these down? And I said no.

I remember I was in Sitka, AK, and I was headed to the airport. I got to the airport, and the attendant there was checking my ticket, and he said: Oh, wait, Mr. BEGICH. We have something for you.

It was a wrapped gift at the airport. I said: Great.

Now, people who care about the TSA, please ignore what I am about to say. They just handed it to me. I took it. I opened it, and it was one of those empty books that say: Please write down your thoughts and your notes. They are incredible thoughts.

I remember I was coming through—people will remember when it snowed like crazy. Well, people from DC thought it snowed like crazy. I did not. I knew one thing, and that is about how the plows work, being a former mayor. I thought to myself, I can't leave my car on the street because they will plow me in, especially in this place, or they will attempt to. So I and my son Jacob—we got our snow shovels, did our shoveling, and then drove the car to another area. Then I realized—we were dressed in what I call Alaska good garb. And then I realized that I had to get back to the house because I had this snow shovel and he had a snow shovel. It was on the other side of the Capitol. So what did we do? People who know me know I don't really follow all the rules around this place. We started walking through the Capitol with our snow shovels over our shoulders. The place was empty. I realized what an incredible place this is. First, we were allowed to walk through with snow shovels. It was dead silent. If my colleagues have never done that, they should. You walk through the Capitol and you just see the history, and in a small way, we were a part of it.

I did break another rule. This is confession time. I am a Catholic, I can do that. We came into this Chamber. I had the corner desk over here. Why did I pick that desk? A lot of people don't know this story. Why did I do that?

One, I was a junior Member, but No. 2, I wanted that desk because that is where the candy box was, and I knew every Member would have to go there sooner or later, and I thought I could spend some time talking to them. And maybe I would have a candy box, which I did. I had special candies from my wife's store.

One day I came in here late at night with my son, and we sat right there. I know the security guards probably didn't see us. We took a photo. Yes, I broke the rules. I took a photo of my son sitting there, and I will cherish that photo forever.

As my son once said—and I said it on this floor one time—about how important it is to get things done and the battle we were having—I remember I actually quoted my son on the floor, and I think I shocked somebody. I was talking to him about something, and he said: Dad, just suck it up. I thought, only from a young kid do you hear what you have to do sometimes.

Now, I didn't forget her; I just wanted to wait until the end. I know I am breaking the rules, but my wife is right up there. I am pointing to her. Yes, I am, Sergeant at Arms. Too bad. I am acknowledging her. She has been incredible. She has allowed me to do my public service, to fly those 20 hours every weekend to and from Alaska. She has taken care of Jacob when I couldn't. I love her dearly. Thank you.

To end, I will just say this: It has been a true honor to serve in the U.S. Senate, to serve the people of Alaska, and to know every day we—me, my staff, and my colleagues who work with me—contributed a little bit to making life better for Alaska, for Alaskans, and for this country. There is no experience like serving in this body and doing what I could to make a difference.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WALSH). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I know a number of my colleagues are going to want to talk about our friend MARK BEGICH. When we came to the Senate—I see a number of folks here—we came in 2008. I see a lot of other Members who are newer Members as well. I think when you come in with a class, you get kind of confused about what is going on and you form a bond.

I remember my first—our first—Senator FRANKEN wasn't here yet, but Senator MERKLEY, Senator HAGAN, Senator BENNET, and a number of others. And we were in Senator DURBIN's office. There was still a question about what was going to happen in the election because there were thousands of votes out. So being giddy new Members, we got on the phone to call Senator BEGICH to say we wish him well and we are counting on him. He said: Hey, Jacob and I are leaving on vacation because I already know where the votes are coming from. I am going to be there.

He knew his State that well.

As someone who is a former chief executive and as some others here who are former chief executives, I remember him coming here, and many of us new Members were kind of scratching our heads about the notion of how this institution would work or didn't work sometimes. But, as Senator BEGICH mentioned and as Senator MURRAY mentioned at our dinner the other night, there are a lot of people in this body who are chronic optimists. I am blessed to have an optimist in my colleague Senator KAINÉ. I don't always fit in that category. But Senator BEGICH, week in and week out, would always try to remind us that it is not quite as bleak as it might seem at the moment, that there was good news and there was progress being made.

I think, looking back, I am not sure some of us fully realized, particularly that first year and a half or two when so many things happened—controversial things and things that are still being relitigated in many ways but that have allowed this country to make progress, and Senator BEGICH was an incredibly important part of that.

He was also, as one of the newer Members, liaison to management. So whenever anything didn't happen right with leadership, it was always the fault of Senator BEGICH.

But I just want to say—and I know Senator HAGAN was here a little bit earlier—I fear at times that our elections are almost becoming like parliamentary elections in the other countries where people are voting for or against a leader not based upon what a leader has done individually—such as Senator LANDRIEU and all the things she has done for Louisiana. Lord knows—but, as Senator BEGICH just mentioned, there was not a bill or an issue where he didn't find an Alaska connection and where he didn't make a difference for the people of his great State.

So I know I am just the first of many who want to say to my colleague, to my friend, to a great Senator, Godspeed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I was a part of that class. I was a little late getting here, my colleagues will recall. But I was part of that class and campaigned with the class, and I remember being with MARK UDALL and TOM UDALL and MARK BEGICH at a campaign event, and they kind of looked at me and said: So your dad wasn't like a public servant.

I said: No.

And they said: Well, that is unusual. No, no, that is fine.

What a lot of people don't know about MARK is his father died very famously in a plane crash.

MARK is the only Member of this body, I believe, who did not graduate from college, did not go to college.

There are a lot of things about MARK—and MARK WARNER just referred to it—he was a chief executive.

We need more mayors here. Sometimes we say we need more diversity. Sometimes we say we need more women. God knows we need more satirists—but mayors, wow. Having that mayor's perspective—CORY BOOKER looking a little smug—is very useful.

MIKE ENZI, a mayor—am I forgetting a mayor?

Mr. BEGICH. TIM KAINE, Richmond.

Mr. FRANKEN. BOB CORKER.

Whom are you pointing at? TIM, were you a mayor?

Mr. KAINE, Richmond.

Mr. FRANKEN. Oh, Richmond, you just kept saying Richmond. I don't know anybody named "Richmond."

Mr. WARNER. He was also a lieutenant governor.

Mr. FRANKEN. So he was a lieutenant governor too—OK. So he is the most qualified.

This is what it is like when we are together. Being a Senator, a lot of people ask: Is being a Senator as much fun as working on "Saturday Night Live?" The answer of course is no. It is not close, but it is the best job I have ever had.

It means so much to us what we can do for our State, and no one knows more about his State—and I know MARY LANDRIEU is sitting here, no one knows more than MARY and MARK—and that it is an incredibly long flight he took every weekend to go back to Alaska.

Minnesota had a happy warrior, one of the great, great Senators who has ever served this body, Hubert Humphrey. We may have noticed during MARK's speech he teared up a few times, the most when he was talking about his wife.

That is good for you. That works out well.

But Hubert Humphrey said: "A man who has no tears has no heart."

This man has a tremendous heart. Humphrey was a happy warrior, and this guy is a happy warrior—and you brought joy, humor, and optimism to this body, and I thank you, my friend, for that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I rise to say a word about my dear friend MARK BEGICH and to add some words on behalf of him.

We saw, when he presented himself in his final remarks to this body, his compassion, his heart, and his emotions were clear in relation to his family, his son, and to us—because he was truly an amazing friend to many. He is always in a good humor, always upbeat.

As the Senator from Virginia said, we could never quite understand it, but he was—and still is—an amazingly optimistic and positive person.

Having served as mayor, as a small business owner, as a passionate champion for Alaska, what he didn't mention—I thought I might because it might be too hard for him to remember today—but I want this body to remember that MARK comes from a distinguished line of public service.

A lot of us say that, but in MARK's case his father literally gave his life to Alaska. His plane went down on October 16, 1972. The plane has never been found.

So when MARK walked in the first day I met him, I don't know what I was expecting, but I was expecting someone to have a heavy burden on his shoulders because of that. As the eldest daughter of nine children, I take responsibility so much for my brothers and sisters, and I don't know how I could have gotten where I have gotten without both parents literally lifting me up every day.

So as I have sat across from MARK all these years in very close leadership meetings on Tuesday mornings—and he has walked in with such optimism, such extraordinary confidence in himself, in what he is doing, and in encouraging us—I was always just so struck by the fact that he grew up with a large family, six children. His mother was widowed at a young age. He took on so much responsibility, and yet he came to the Senate ready to serve.

I know his father is truly honored that he didn't get bitter, he wasn't angry. He grew up to be a man who accepted that as God's will, which is a hard thing to accept.

He did so much for the community that his father loved and the State that his father loved. I wanted to add that to the RECORD because a lot of people watching us think we are one-dimensional robots and that there are no other dimensions to our lives and our family.

But it always struck me, MARK, that you have been such a man of courage, such a great inspiration to your family, and truly an inspiration to all of us.

I know your parents are very proud, both of them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. I wish to add a word to honor my good friend Senator MARK BEGICH. I think there is a special connection with those of us who were elected on the same day.

We share something else in common, which is on that election day in November 2008 neither one of us knew if we had won. We both had to wait some length of time—in my case 2 days and in Senator BEGICH's case a couple of weeks—but it kind of makes us ponder the future: Are you going to serve or are you not going to serve and how will you utilize that opportunity.

There is another connection that comes from being western Senators. When we talk about salmon—and MARK BEGICH mentioned a while ago "Frankenfish." Well, we are very concerned. We have a collective concern about the health of our salmon runs.

It is not just a fishing economy, although that is very much a part of the economy of our States, it is about the soul of our States, the traditions of our State, the natural resources of our States.

When we talk about timber, we have a connection. Sitka was mentioned. Sitka spruce is a common tree in our State of Oregon.

When we get concerned about the rescues off the Oregon coast because the water is so cold one can't be in it for very long without dying—which makes it much more important to have advanced helicopters, and just last night we were able to keep a key helicopter on the coast due to Senator MARK BEGICH's considerable involvement and advocacy. Thank you so much for doing that.

Why is our water so cold off the coast of Oregon? Because it is coming down with the currents from Alaska. In so many ways our States are tied together.

As I have served this first 6 years, I have turned to my friend from Alaska for advice and counsel time after time. His seasoned policy judgment and his core political instincts are on a par with any other Senator in this Chamber and certainly far in advance of my own.

I say to the Senator, I appreciate your friendship. I appreciate you sharing your judgment, and I appreciate your buoyant spirit that reminds us, when we are discouraged, that so much can be accomplished. What an honor it is to have a seat in the Chamber of just 100 Senators, where we can add our voice to a conversation about truly how to make this a better world.

Thank you, my friend, for your service. We will miss you greatly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I just want to add my words to what my other colleagues have said about someone I am going to miss dearly. Senator MARK BEGICH and I worked together on many things. When I passed the reins from the steering and outreach committee and suggested to our leader that he should seriously consider Senator BEGICH for that responsibility, he made us all proud as part of the leadership in presenting a very important perspective every single day.

I have frequently referenced an energy committee trip I took to Alaska with Senator BEGICH where—I thought Michigan was big. Michigan is big. But we not only had to travel a long way to get to Alaska, once we were in Alaska we had to travel a long way from one end to another.

I remember I ran into a number of people from Michigan because in our Upper Peninsula we also have a lot of snow, and we have a lot of people who were working there. But everywhere we went—and we traveled to Native American villages. We flew to Barrow. We were in every part of the State. Some areas you could only get into by helicopter.

We would get there—we went to a Native village that needed a new post office. Senator BEGICH took me out. We had boots on because there was water coming up. We looked at this little,

tiny post office that was maybe a little bigger than a closet, not much. We came out. The whole community was there to urge us to support this post office.

To see not only the information, the depth that Senator BEGICH had about that before we got there, but the way he interacted, his commitment to them—everywhere we went he knew about that community, the leaders in the community. He had a relationship with them.

This is somebody who loves Alaska. In his bones, in your DNA, MARK, is your State. I love seeing that. It was so inspirational to see that. I know the Senator has wonderful family support at home. It has been my pleasure to be at your home for dinner and to watch your son. He is growing up. I know we have a lot more that we will benefit from, from your leadership. I know you have a lot more to contribute to Alaska, to our country.

Just know you are leaving with incredible respect from colleagues and love and affection. We wish you every Godspeed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise to add my sense of gratitude and appreciation to someone who has become a dear friend. I am his newest colleague and have had the privilege of working with him for these past 13 months. I just want him to know and state very publicly that he was one of the anchors to me as I was getting to know a very different place from being a mayor of a big city.

Your sense of fierce pragmatism was a light to me, coming down into a place known for partisanship and gridlock, and demonstrated to me your ability to bring people together and get things done, but even more than that, being a model for me, a role model for me in the early stage of my career in the Senate.

I have to confess, and do it with pride, that I love this country with the depth and the core of my being. My parents taught me that sense of pride. But you expanded that, incredibly, by bringing me out to Alaska. Of all my experiences in these 13 months, that was one of the highlights. It taught me a lot when I saw that a Senator still had such a powerful touch and connection and knowledge and love of the people of that State. You have made me love Alaska even more and know Alaska in my heart.

What was extraordinary to me, in knowing you in your short career, was how much you got accomplished, how steadfast you were in pursuing the interests of your State and this Nation. One thing I have to say, I felt uncomfortable as I saw you—I will never forget being at Bartlett High School, with the Bears, and seeing your love and connection to those kids. It made me feel very uncomfortable, the negativity that was being hoisted upon you during a campaign.

It made me think of something as I was out there, and I thought about it again as you talked of history. There is a very famous poet named Maya Angelou, who said these words:

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I rise.

The truth is, you are one of those people who are at your ascendancy. You have risen above it all. You have risen above the things in Washington that try the spirits, not just of those of us here but of the Nation. You have risen to a level of accomplishment in your life that is extraordinary and as awesome as some of the vistas I saw in the State of Alaska.

The beauty I have right now, the confidence and the joy I have right now, is the simple fact that I know that God ain't finished with you yet.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I just want to rise, similar to others in our class, and many other Senators have risen, to talk a little bit about MARK BEGICH and his service to Alaska and praise him for his service, because I think he has been—since I have been here, the 6 years I have served with him; he was in my class—I have seen a remarkable Senator who truly cares about his State and has been an incredible advocate for his State.

I was not here for his entire speech, but I turned it on. The good thing about our offices is you can tune it in. I caught the point where he got a little bit choked up about Deborah and Jacob. I got choked up, too, in the office. I can cry but not in public. In any event, the first thing I know about MARK is how much he cares about his family and how much the toll of serving in the Senate takes on that family.

His travel—I am a westerner, and I have to travel out 5 hours, 6 hours, 8 hours to get home. His flight is always—we heard the description the other day from Senator MURRAY. He flies all the way out to Seattle at the end of the day. It is 12:30 our time when he arrives there. Then he gets on another flight for another 4½ hours up to Anchorage, just to get home. It is not a very long weekend. Then he has to get on a flight and come back.

His family is so important. I have seen him with his son Jacob. We live just across the alley from each other. I can look out my back window and look down and see the light—just four houses down—and know whether MARK and Deborah and Jacob are in town. We have spent many good times in his house there. That is the first thing I would like to say.

The second is—I have seen this over and over again with Senators. You are one of the best at it—taking the issues that are involved with Alaska and that Alaskans care about and that you knew so well when you were a mayor and fit-

ting them into this vast Federal landscape and making sure Alaskans are heard. I think you are one of the best at doing that. You stepped out on so many different issues. I remember the Native American corporations and how you would reach out in a number of areas with Senators throughout the Senate and try to reach some compromise there.

I have a large Native American community. We, too, have the same kinds of issues on that front that you do. We also share many Native American tribes. As the Senator knows well, it was my father and my uncle who stood up in the 1960s and 1970s to make sure the Natives got a fair shake in Alaska. MARK—that is the way he serves when it comes to Native Americans, caring about them, caring about their issues, going up to the North Slope where it is cold.

My understanding is that during this campaign he got frostbite on one occasion, being out in that terribly tough environment. Thank you for that and for working with me and working with everyone else who tries to make sure Native people get justice. They look to Washington for justice. They look for justice at the Supreme Court. They are not getting much of it over there at the Supreme Court any more. We are the last refuge. We served together on the Indian Affairs Committee.

One final thing to talk about. I have been working on an issue, it is the chemical substances act, for the last couple of years with Senator VITTER. We have tried to do everything we can to bring people—extraordinary piece of legislation—12 Republicans, 12 Democrats on this piece of legislation.

We have been working to make it better. We have had Senators start joining us on both sides of the aisle. MARK, you were one of the key people to work on that. As Senator WARNER said earlier, you were our liaison to the leadership. You were in all of those leadership meetings. Whenever I told you there was a problem, you would surface it, whether or not it was going to blow up the meeting. You stuck in there when it came to truly caring about issues and caring about getting things done.

I think if anything is your hallmark, it is wanting to put aside the partisanship and try to get things done. So that is something that you should be tremendously proud of.

Just as a final word, I love your State of Alaska. I have climbed your highest mountain. My cousin, MARK UDALL, has also done the same thing, climbed Mount McKinley, which has now returned to its Native name, called Denali. I remember going up to your State as a State attorney general. It was the only State in the Nation that put in money for our conference of attorneys general and put us on an 8-hour train across Alaska so we could see all of Alaska.

Alaska is a terrific State. You and I have some disagreements on what we

protect in Alaska, but the wonderful thing is we understand each other's position. We are still very good friends. It has been a real honor to serve with you. I wish you and Deborah and Jacob the very best. Wherever you land—I hope to see you in Alaska again because I know I am going to come up there. But wherever you land, our door will always be open to you.

Thank you and God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, we have heard a lot of people honoring our wonderful colleague Senator BEGICH today. We are all going to miss him dearly. We are especially going to miss him in Minnesota. I have heard many positive statements about Alaska today, but no one can come from a State where they can say they have one of the main streets in Anchorage named after them; that is, Minnesota Street in Anchorage.

That is because there are many Minnesotans. Believe it or not, it was not cold enough in Minnesota so they moved to Alaska. One of those people who moved to Alaska was MARK's dad. MARK's dad actually grew up about 30 miles away from my dad. It is rough-and-tumble country up in the Iron Range of Minnesota. MARK still has relatives in northern Minnesota, and particularly he has an uncle named Uncle Joe—Joe Begich—who served in the legislature for many years and also is a Korean War vet and was truly the heart and soul of the Iron Range delegation in the Minnesota State legislature.

For any of our colleagues who think MARK BEGICH is a character, they should meet his Uncle Joe. I know Uncle Joe. I hope he is watching because nothing made him happier than the day MARK BEGICH got elected to the Senate. And when MARK once came up there with me and we were greeted by Uncle Joe, it was like a hero's welcome when MARK BEGICH appeared on the Iron Range of Minnesota. People came out, and we did an event with veterans. Then, of course, the problem was we went to a bar, and we could get no pictures that didn't have a Budweiser sign on them.

But MARK is a hero up there, and he is a hero across our State just for the work he has done for rural communities. When I say we have rural communities in Minnesota, he always says we have extreme rural communities in Alaska.

He has done work in conservation, which we care about so much. He has done work on tourism. We are cochairs of the tourism caucus, and I still remember the hearing we had right in the middle of the downturn, where every Senator came to talk about all of the things that were happening in their States with tourism. MARK was actually able to cite the price of cruises you could take in Alaska. It was written up in the Washington Post about all the Senators hawking their States,

but no one was prouder to hawk Alaska.

The other thing about MARK, which I know was mentioned, is he doesn't believe politics is about standing in the opposite corner of the boxing ring. He believes politics is about working together in the middle and trying to find common ground.

The last thing I will say is how much we love Deborah and Jacob, and we know we will see them around and they are not going to go away.

One time Deborah, Jacob, and MARK came over to our house for brunch. My daughter is about 6 years older now. She was about 13. Jacob and my daughter were playing a game in the other room, and the adults were talking over breakfast. I will never forget Jacob Begich. From the other room, he heard his dad talking about him and, as any politician's kid would do, he said: Stop talking about me, dad. So that kid has inherited that MARK BEGICH sense of fierce independence. When he left, my daughter said: I love that kid, mom. He knows how hard it is to be a politician's kid.

So MARK has left here the legacy of Alaska, the legacy of good work, the legacy of a great staff, and the legacy of a great family. So we will see you around, and thank you for your service.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO MARK PRYOR

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I am honored to stand here and recognize my colleague and friend, Arkansas's senior Senator MARK PRYOR, for his service to our State, his contributions to our country, and his work across the aisle.

I have worked with Senator PRYOR during his entire service in the Senate, both as a Member of the House and as a colleague in the Senate. While we don't always agree on policy, we always agree that we need to do what is best for Arkansas and what is best for our Nation.

MARK is always ready to step forward, find a solution, and resolve an issue. He is always ready to extend a hand to the other side of the aisle to get support, and he always has Arkansas on his mind.

Over the last 4 years, we have introduced several pieces of legislation together, and you will find our names as cosponsors of several other pieces of legislation that all have one goal—helping the people of Arkansas and helping the people of our country.

There is a longstanding tradition of collaboration in the Arkansas delegation. When I was elected to the House in 2001, long-time Arkansas Congress-

man John Paul Hammerschmidt gave me some advice I have tried to live by since coming to Washington. He said: JOHN, always remember that once the election is over, it is time to put away the political differences and focus on helping the people of Arkansas. That is how the delegation worked during John Paul's 26 years of congressional service, which included service with MARK's dad, Senator David Pryor, and that is how MARK and I operated as well.

I appreciate the welcome MARK gave to me and the help his office offered to my staff when I moved over here to the Senate in 2011. I value his friendship, thank him for his service, and appreciate all he has done for the people of Arkansas. I wish him well in the next chapter of his life.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. BOOZMAN. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

BAILOUT PROVISION IN OMNIBUS

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, yesterday I came to the floor to call on House Democrats to withhold their support from the omnibus spending bill until one provision is removed. The provision was slipped in at the last minute to benefit Wall Street. In fact, it was written by lobbyists for Citicorp. That provision means big money for a few big banks. It would let derivatives traders on Wall Street gamble with taxpayer money—and when it all blows up, require the government to bail them out.

Just to be clear, I want to read the title of the part of the law that will be repealed if this provision is not stripped out of the omnibus. The title is "Prohibition Against Federal Government Bailouts of Swaps Entities." That is what is on the table to be taken out of the law.

Now, I am here today to ask my Republican colleagues who don't want to see another Wall Street bailout to join in our effort to strip this Wall Street giveaway from the bill. This is not about partisanship. This is about fairness. This is about accountability and responsibility. This is about preventing another financial collapse that could again wipe out millions of jobs and take down our whole economy.

If big Wall Street banks want to gamble with their own money, so be it. Let them take their risks with their own money, and let them live with the consequences of those risks. That is how markets are supposed to work. But they shouldn't get to gamble with government-insured money, and they shouldn't get to run to the government when the deal goes sour.

Opposition to government bailouts of Wall Street is not a liberal or a conservative issue. The current law, the one about to be repealed, was put in place years ago because after the 2008 financial collapse, people of all political persuasions were disgusted by the

prospect of ever having to use taxpayer dollars to rescue big banks from their own bad decisions.

This morning, Senators from both parties—SHERROD BROWN, a Democrat from Ohio, and DAVID VITTER, a Republican from Louisiana—called for this provision to be taken out of the spending bill. Here is what they said:

If Wall Street banks want to gamble, Congress should force them to pay for their losses, not put taxpayers on the hook for another bailout. Congress should not gamble on a possible government shutdown by attempting to tuck this controversial provision into a spending bill without having been considered by the committees of jurisdiction, where it can be subject to a transparent and rigorous debate.

Senators BROWN and VITTER are exactly right. This provision has no place in a must-pass spending bill.

Conservative activists have jumped in as well. They are raising their voices today to say that this provision has no place in a must-pass spending bill. Here is what one front-page contributor on the conservative blog RedState said this morning:

I have no way to refute the basic point that Democrats are making about the CRomnibus fight right now. In fact, I might even go so far as to say they are right. . . . what possible good faith reason can Republicans have for threatening to gum up the whole works over doing a favor to Wall Street? . . . generally speaking, if Nancy Pelosi is opposed to something then instinctively I know I should be for it. Beyond that I haven't the slightest clue why the proposed tweak to Dodd-Frank ought to be anything resembling a hill the Republicans should die for.

These conservative activists are right. If you believe in smaller government, how can you support a provision that would expand a government insurance program and put taxpayers on the hook for the riskiest private activities? If you thought the Ex-Im Bank exposed taxpayers to risk—even though it has never cost the taxpayers a dime—how can you support a provision to prevent another calamity such as the one that cost taxpayers billions of dollars just 6 years ago?

House Republican leaders are moving quickly to try to jam this bill through today before their own Members have had a chance to digest this Wall Street bailout provision. The fact sheet that Republican appropriators sent around to their Members explaining the provision doesn't even describe it accurately. According to the fact sheet, the provision in question would "protect farmers and other commodity producers from having to put down excessive collateral to get a loan, expand their businesses, and hedge their production." Whatever you think about the bill, that description is flatly wrong. In fact, that description applies to yet another Wall Street reform roll-back that the Republicans are pushing right now, which is attached to a completely different bill.

Now, I don't know if Republican leaders in the House are deliberately trying to confuse their Members into voting

for a government bailout program or whether they just can't keep straight all their efforts to gut financial reform. Republican leaders are about to bring this bill up for a vote. So here is the bottom line. A vote for this bill is a vote for future taxpayer bailouts of Wall Street. When the next bailout comes, a lot of people will look back to this vote to see who was responsible for putting the government back on the hook to bail out Wall Street.

To Republican leaders in the House, I would ask this. You say you are against bailouts on Wall Street. I have heard you say it again and again for 5 years. So why in the world are you spending your time and your energy fighting for a provision written by Citigroup lobbyists that would increase the chance of future bailouts? Why, in the last minute as you head out the door and a spending bill must be passed, are you making it a priority to do Wall Street's bidding? Whom do you work for—Wall Street or the American people?

This fight isn't about conservatives or liberals. It is not about Democrats or Republicans. It is about money, and it is about power right here in Washington. This legal change could trigger more taxpayer bailouts and could ultimately threaten our entire economy, but it will also make a lot of money for Wall Street banks. According to Americans for Financial Reform, this change will be a huge boon to just a handful of our biggest banks: Citigroup, JPMorgan, Bank of America.

People are frustrated with Congress. Part of the reason, of course, is gridlock. But mostly it is because they see a Congress that works just fine for the big guys but won't lift a finger to help them. If big companies can deploy their armies of lobbyists and lawyers to get Congress to vote for special deals that benefit themselves, then we will simply confirm the view of the American people that the system is rigged.

This is a democracy. The American people sent us here—Republicans, Democrats and Independents. They sent us here to stand up for them, to stand up for taxpayers, to protect the economy. Nobody sent us here to stand up for Citigroup.

I urge my Republican colleagues in the House to withhold their support from this package until this risky giveaway is removed from the legislation. It is time for all of us to stand up and fight.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UKRAINE FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT OF 2014

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 573, S. 2828.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2828) to impose sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, to provide additional assistance to Ukraine, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italics.)

S. 2828

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Statement of policy regarding Ukraine.
- Sec. 4. Sanctions relating to the defense and energy sectors of the Russian Federation.
- Sec. 5. Sanctions on Russian and other foreign financial institutions.
- Sec. 6. Codification of executive orders addressing the crisis in Ukraine.
- Sec. 7. Major non-NATO ally status for Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.
- Sec. 8. Increased military assistance for the Government of Ukraine.
- Sec. 9. Expanded nonmilitary assistance for Ukraine.
- Sec. 10. Expanded broadcasting in countries of the former Soviet Union.
- Sec. 11. *Support for Russian democracy and civil society organizations.*
- Sec. 12. *Report on non-compliance by the Russian Federation of its obligations under the INF Treaty.*

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ACCOUNT; CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT; PAYABLE-THROUGH ACCOUNT.—The terms "account", "correspondent account", and "payable-through account" have the meanings given those terms in section 5318A of title 31, United States Code.

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(3) CONTROL.—The term "control" means—

(A) in the case of a corporation, to hold at least 50 percent (by vote or value) of the capital structure of the corporation; or

(B) in the case of any other entity, to hold interests representing at least 50 percent of the capital structure of the entity.

(4) DEFENSE ARTICLE; DEFENSE SERVICE; TRAINING.—The terms "defense article", "defense service", and "training" have the