

committees have served as the primary forum for critical deliberation and amendments in this body.

Bills introduced in the Senate are referred to the relevant committees where Members have the opportunity to consider, debate, and amend the bill at length. Committees are the workhorses of the Senate or at least should be. On the floor we can do only one thing at a time. But any number of committees and subcommittees may operate simultaneously, allowing Senators to work out language and make compromises on multiple bills at the same time.

Committees also perform a crucial investigative function. They hold hearings, call witnesses, and solicit expert opinions on a wide variety of issues, enabling Members to expand their understanding and to better fine-tune individual bills. Lately, however, we have witnessed a disturbing trend of bypassing the committee process altogether by bringing bills directly to the floor for votes.

This practice undermines committee work and frustrates Members who diligently seek to move their legislative priorities through the committee. It also deprives bills of the benefits of committee review, which include more search and consideration of language, opportunities for comment by outside experts, and the ability to address support for amendments without tying up precious floor time.

A healthy committee process is essential to a well-functioning Senate. This body is not a fiefdom. We do not convene merely to give our assent to immutable messaging bills. We are supposed to work together to write, amend, and pass important legislation. When Senators bring up for consideration bills they have written without input from other Members, manipulate Senate procedure to prevent floor amendment on those bills, and then simultaneously file cloture to cut off debate, they act as autocrats rather than agents of democracy.

Let's return this body to one that operates by consensus, not dictate. Let's return the committee process to its proper place in our legislative landscape, as the first line of review rather than an utter irrelevancy. Let's restore the Senate to its proper role in our constitutional system by restoring the traditions that have made this body so great: robust debate, an open amendment process, an active, meaningful committee process.

Equipped with these tools, the Senate historically never shied away from taking on what everyone agreed were the toughest issues of the day. Yes, we had to take tough votes. Yes, we could not rush legislation through as fast as we sometimes would have liked. Yes, we sometimes felt deep disappointment when proposals we championed fell short. But while the Senate's rules can be frustrating and politically cumbersome, they are what allowed the Senate to serve the country so well for so very long.

Restoring the Senate in this manner will not be easy. After years of bitter partisan tension, we cannot expect a complete change to come overnight. But by reestablishing our historic aims and reinstituting our designing modes of operation, including robust debate, an open amendment process, and regular order through committee work, the Senate can once more be about the peoples' business and observe the title of the world's greatest deliberative body.

WISHING SENATOR HARRY REID A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, one of my friends in this body is the distinguished minority leader, HARRY REID. HARRY and I have been friends for a long time. He has served here for a long time. He served well in many respects. He certainly was a tough majority leader. He is a tough guy.

Recently he suffered some very severe injuries. He is mending. These injuries seem to be injuries he can handle, although very strong, tough injuries. I wish him the best, that he may be able to recuperate well, come back again to this deliberative body, and play the role he needs to play for the minority in this illustrious body.

HARRY and I believe many things together, especially in the religious area. He is a fine man. His wife Landra is a very fine woman. I am glad to see that her health has improved. She is a terrific person. Both of them are terrific people in their own right. I pray that the Lord will heal HARRY and make it easier for him to come back as soon as he can. Being a tough guy, he will be back here pretty soon. I wish him the best. It is no secret that Elaine and I have been praying for him. Hopefully, those prayers will be efficacious.

I have great respect for my colleagues on the other side as well as my own colleagues on this side. These are good people. There are very few Senators—not more than 2—in my 38 years in the Senate that I thought might not have much redeeming value. Everybody else has played significant roles in this body, sometimes that I hotly contested and differed with, but nevertheless very good people over all these years.

HARRY REID is one of the nicest people one will ever meet off the Senate floor. He is all right on the Senate floor too. All I can say is that I wish him well. I am praying for his recovery. I want him to succeed in every way. He is from our neighboring State. Nevada is very important to us. We like both Senators from Nevada. Senator HELLER is one of the finest Senators here. They work well in Nevada's interests together. I hope everything goes well with Senator REID and his wife Landra and his lovely family. They are good family people.

I wanted to make those comments on the floor because of the high esteem in which I hold HARRY. Yes, we disagree on a lot of issues, sometimes pretty

strongly we disagree, but great Senators can do that. They can get over it quickly too.

I hope the remarks I made earlier in the day on this deliberative body will be taken up by everybody in the Senate to realize this is the greatest deliberative body in the world. We need to make sure it remains such. That means tough votes. It means tough amendments. It means long days here sometimes, but it also means an ability to have a rapport with my friends, not only on this side but the other side as well and for them to have a rapport not only with their side but with our side.

Let's hope we can build something and let's hope we can bring our two sides together and work in the best interests of the country and get some things done that are sorely in need and do things that both Democrats and Republicans can say: We did it together. Yes, there were tough times. Yes, we differed from time to time. But we did it together, and we did it in the best interest of the country.

I hope both leaders will be able to work together in this manner and that all of us will do our work in the best interest of this country. I do not think we necessarily have to forget politics, but we ought to sublimate them sometimes to the point where they do not interfere with getting very important work done.

I wish HARRY REID the best. As I said, he is in my prayers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

JOBS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, first of all, this is the first opportunity I have had to follow our new President pro tempore of the Senate on the floor. He was just elected yesterday.

I have spoken on the floor at times when he has been in other leadership roles. He is a solid Member of this Senate whom we rally around in so many ways. The comments he just made about the leader of our friends on the other side and the importance of family to Senator REID—that is also important to Senator HATCH. People are important to Senator HATCH. I believe he is going to be a tremendous President pro tempore of the Senate, chairman of the Finance Committee, and a critical leader at a critical time.

The comments he made on the floor today about Senators being willing to take tough votes, to take positions on issues, to let the American people know where we stand—that is not only where the Senate ought to be but in so many ways it is where Senator HATCH has always been as a Member of the Senate and now as the highest elected official in the Senate, the President pro tempore of the Senate. I look forward to seeing him do that job, seeking his advice, and watching his leadership as he leads us now in multiple ways in the Senate.

Mr. HATCH. Would the Senator yield for a comment?