

one of the finest orators we have ever had in the Senate while I have been here. She does it in a unique way, but we all listen.

BARBARA MIKULSKI, thank you very much.

We also had to work hard with the Finance Committee. I extend my appreciation to our ranking member, RON WYDEN. He and I have served together in Congress for a long time, more than three decades, but not only do I appreciate his work but also his staff director, Josh Sheinkman. I may not pronounce his name just right, but everybody knows Josh. I want the Finance Committee and all of their staff to know how much we appreciate this product that they were responsible for piecing together.

I already talked a day or so ago about Dennis McDonough, the President's Chief of Staff. He is a remarkably fine man.

Brian Deese, Senior Adviser to the President, was one of the reasons we got the great agreement we got out of Paris with those accords dealing with the environment.

Katie Beirne Fallon, President Obama's Legislative Affairs Director, I have already laid out on the record what a wonderful person she is.

Jason Furman, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, I extend my appreciation to him and his entire family whom I know.

Marty Paone, I talked about him.

We really care a great deal about them.

There are many others who helped craft this compromise.

From the Republican Leader's office: Brendan Dunn and Scott Rabb.

From Speaker RYAN's office: George Callas and Matt Hoffman.

From Leader PELOSI's office: Katherine Monge and Wendell Primus.

From Senator CORNYN's office: Monica Popp.

From the Senate Finance Committee: Ryan Abraham, Brett Baker, Kim Brandt, Chris Campbell, Adam Carrasco, Anne Dwyer, Karen Fisher, Liz Jurinka, Matt Kazan, Jay Khosla, Jim Lyons, Juan Machado, Todd Metcalf, Matt Prater, Josh Sheinkman, Katie Simeon, Tiffany Smith, and Todd Wooten.

From the Senate HELP Committee: Nick Bath and Andi Fristedt.

From the Senate Banking Committee: Mark Powden.

From the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: Angela Becker-Dippmann and Sam Fowler.

From Senator SCHUMER's office: Meghan Taira.

From Senator GILLIBRAND's office: Brooke Jamison.

From Congressman LEVIN's office: Karen McAfee.

I realize I may be missing some people. So to everyone who helped push this legislation across the finish line, thank you. You have done America a great service.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. HATCH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. REID. Madam President, will my friend allow me to interrupt for just a second?

Mr. HATCH. I will be happy to yield.

COMMENDING SENATOR HATCH

Mr. REID. Madam President, I had it in my notes, but I didn't do it.

I wish to express my appreciation for the majority staff on the Finance Committee. The chairman of this powerful Finance Committee is ORRIN HATCH. We have served together in the Senate for these many years. There is not a finer gentleman in the Senate than ORRIN HATCH. I apologize for reading over my notes. I appreciate very much his friendship and his leadership.

Mr. HATCH. I thank the leader, and I feel the same way toward him. He and I are dear friends, and we are going to continue to be dear friends, despite our differences.

PROPER OPERATION OF THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise to discuss the state of the U.S. Senate. My 39 years of service in this body have given me an increasingly unique vantage point to reflect upon this institution. Over the years, I have seen the Senate both at its best—rising to meet the lofty expectations of the Framers—and, unfortunately, I have seen it at its worst.

Last year I came to the floor repeatedly to speak out against what I viewed as the abuse of the Senate by the previous majority, under which this great body fell into great dysfunction. In addition to identifying these abuses, I did my best to lay out a vision for how the Senate ought to function—how we could best live up to the best traditions of our forebearers.

Over the past year, since my selection as President pro tempore, I have endeavored to continue to offer what lessons I have learned and what accumulated knowledge I have acquired over my nearly four decades here to help our new Republican majority to get the Senate working again. After a year of hard work, I can report a significant degree of success. Under the leadership of our new majority leader and his team, the Senate is back to work for the American people.

By the end of last Congress, these best traditions of the Senate that have

allowed it to serve the Republic for so well for so long were left, in my opinion, in severe disrepair. The then-majority leadership curtailed debate on an unprecedented scale, moving to cut off debate before this body could even begin considering legislation. The leader also used the so-called nuclear option to permanently weaken the opportunity to debate nominations, including crucial lifetime nominations to the Federal court. In all of last year, the Senate voted on only 15 amendments, with the majority leadership refusing to countenance any amendment it did not support. The 113th Congress set a record for bills that bypassed committees—this institution's incubators of consensus. Instead of adhering to the committee process, the legislation was crafted in the back rooms of leadership offices and brought directly to the floor.

Thanks to this institutional degradation, the Senate became a wasteland of partisan warfare. Much of the time spent in session was wasted on voting on the previous majority's messaging bills. This legislation had no chance of passing the Senate and was designed simply to buttress the majority's election-year arguments. The time that was not spent on this political gamesmanship was otherwise wasted largely on rushing through President Obama's nominees at a breakneck pace.

Our new majority has thus faced the daunting task of restoring the Senate to its proper function so this body can resume its rightful role as the source of wise legislation. These efforts have produced some impressive statistics.

This year, the Senate has held almost 200 votes on amendments of individual Senators. That figure is nearly 9 times as many as last year. Earlier this year, the Senate brought up more amendments in a single week than all of last year.

Debate has also flourished. The Senate spent over 25 percent more days in session than last year. The majority leader has greatly curtailed the practice of filing cloture as soon as debate begins, restricting it to rare occasions that involve time-sensitive measures and, particularly, sensitive bipartisan legislation.

Furthermore, our committees are all back to work. With only a few exceptions, the legislation passed by the Senate has been crafted by the committee rather than by leadership. The close, collaborative environment that the committees foster helps build bipartisan consensus, even in these polarizing times. In fact, many of our committees posted impressive statistics of bipartisan legislating. The Finance Committee—the accomplishments of which I spoke on yesterday—has passed 37 bills, all bipartisan. The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has passed 71 bills, all bipartisan. The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee has passed 10 pieces of legislation, and all but one was bipartisan.