

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AN ENJOYABLE DIVERSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, no matter what work or occupation one has, it is always good to have a diversion away from their duties of the day.

I am very careful about never speaking for the Republican leader, but I will make an exception today and talk a little bit about my friend the Republican leader.

We both find a diversion during baseball season. We can leave here—it really doesn't matter what time; usually the games are at night—and we can watch the Nationals play baseball. The Republican leader and I have talked about this often—how much we enjoy the games—and we have enjoyed the games much more since this young man from Las Vegas, Bryce Harper, is on the baseball team, the Washington Nationals. He comes from a great family, a working family. His father was an ironworker. They are a close family.

Prior to the Nationals even having a team here—I have been here a long time—I followed the Orioles, and just as a side note, I should mention how happy I am for Peter Angelos, the owner, that fine man, that his team is doing so well this year. They are 7 and 0.

So Senator MCCONNELL and I enjoy baseball season. It gives us an opportunity to focus on things other than what is going on in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE CATUCCI

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I join with the Republican leader today in honoring Christine Catucci on the occasion, which has already been mentioned, of her 40th anniversary of working for the U.S. Senate.

In any given year, about 2½ million people visit this beautiful building. Bill Dauster, who is here with me and is with me virtually every day, every place I go, was just commenting before the prayer was given how fortunate we are to work in this magnificent building. And as the Republican leader mentioned in his comments about Ms. Catucci, people become starry-eyed looking at this building. We are here all the time, and we may not appreciate it as much as we should every day. It is a beautiful building.

For those of us who are fortunate enough to venture over to the place where she works—down on the first floor is where she spends most of her day, and that is where most of the people come into that floor—you will see a great smile. That smile belongs to her. I first saw that smile many years ago. We had a Senate retreat. She was there to help staff us, and she played a vital role in making sure the retreat worked well. I have always remembered her

from that one experience. She does have a disarming smile, for which we should all be grateful. I know I am.

She has been here for 40 years. The only person who has been here as a Senator longer than Christine is PAT LEAHY from Vermont. She has seniority over everybody except Senator LEAHY.

Her career began in the last year of Gerald Ford's Presidency. She worked as a tour guide, chaperoning people through the Capitol and giving people explanations as to what they were looking at at the time. In 1980 she moved to the Office of the Doorkeeper of the Senate and moved through a number of positions there for 11 years.

In 1991, she arrived at the Senate Appointment Desk, where she has worked for the last 25 years. She is the director, overseeing a staff of nine.

Over the years, she has developed a close relationship with Senators and staff, and she can recount with pleasure the times that Senator Robert Byrd—the legendary Robert Byrd from West Virginia—would invite her and some of her coworkers to have lunch with him in his Capitol office. He didn't eat much, if anything, but he talked all the time, telling stories. I was the recipient of a number of the stories of the late, great Senator Byrd.

The Senate is her family, literally. Her father was a Senate doorkeeper from 1967 to 1977. Her daughter Nichole works in the cloakroom right behind us. That is three generations of Senate staffers.

It was Nichole who summed up everything great about her mother for me when she said: "My mom raised me all by herself and did an amazing job as a single mom while working full-time."

So this is Christine Catucci. It is her work ethic and caring dedication that she has brought to the Senate every day for the last 40 years—four decades. Thank you very much for being a part of our Senate family.

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, throughout his career in the Senate, the senior Senator from Iowa has styled himself as an advocate for transparency in government. A number of years ago he said:

I believe in the principle of open government. Lack of transparency in the public policy process leads to cynicism and distrust of public officials. . . . As a matter of principle, the American people need to be made aware of any action that prevents a matter from being considered by their elected Senators.

He reiterated his beliefs just a few days ago here in this Chamber, and here is what he said last week:

The principle of government transparency is one that does not expire. . . . Open government is good government. And Americans have a right to a government that is accountable to its people.

So Senator GRASSLEY's commitment to transparency is as shallow as the shallowest puddle you could find.

All it took was one phone call, obviously, from the Republican leader for Senator GRASSLEY to abandon any pretense of transparency and shut the American people out of the Supreme Court nomination process—shut them out.

This is the same Senator who once said, "As a matter of principle, the American people need to be made aware of any action that prevents a matter from being considered by their elected Senators."

Nothing that Senator GRASSLEY has done with respect to the Supreme Court vacancy meets his own standard for transparency.

There was no transparency when the Judiciary Committee chairman and his Republican committee members shut Democrats out and met with the Republican leader behind closed doors. There was no transparency when he twisted the arms of his own committee members to sign a loyalty oath, again behind closed doors. There was no transparency when he sought to move a public committee meeting behind closed doors just to avoid talking about the Supreme Court nomination. And there was certainly no transparency on Tuesday—yesterday—when at 8 o'clock in the morning he met downstairs with Judge Merrick Garland in the private Senate Dining Room moments before slipping out the back door to avoid reporters. This is how CNN reported it: "The Iowa Senator left the high-profile but out-of-sight meeting via a backdoor that leads to his private 'hideaway.'"

One television station in Iowa put it this way: "Grassley evaded reporters."

This is the same Senator who once supported cameras in Federal courtrooms, including the Supreme Court. Why? To increase transparency, so he said. But Senator GRASSLEY only wants transparency to apply to others, I guess not to himself. When it comes to transparency, his attitude is strictly: "Do as I say, not as I do."

He won't even apply a degree of that same openness as he blocks a nominee to the highest Court in the land. There will be no transparency if Senator GRASSLEY fails to call an open hearing where Chief Justice Garland can present himself to the American people.

I have had people ask me: Why wouldn't there be a hearing? Well, it is obvious. They are all afraid. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee is afraid that this good man, if the American people see him, will understand why he is a nomination that couldn't be better. They are afraid to allow this man to be seen by the American public. Talking about transparency, there won't be any if the Republican Senators aren't going to be able to even have a vote on the nomination.

All of this that has been going on is not like the Senator GRASSLEY who I have served with for more than three decades. By carrying out the present leader's failed strategy to undermine