

fury of BARBARA BOXER and the House women, and those hearings were convened. The Anita Hill hearings made an indelible mark on this country.

It really woke America up as to what was going on in the workplaces around the country for women and how little representation women really got in Congress. Watching that all-male Judiciary Committee tear into Professor Hill for daring to accuse her boss of sexual harassment, the women of America took action and elected BARBARA BOXER, DIANNE FEINSTEIN, Carol Mosely Braun, and PATTY MURRAY to the U.S. Senate.

I was thrilled when BARBARA came to me thinking about running for the Senate. I told her it was the perfect time: she can do more in the Senate and be heard in the Senate. I said would be worth the fight to get her here with me, even if just to have someone I could see eye-to-eye with on a daily basis.

BARBARA even started an exercise program in the House when we were there together. She showed up in colorful leotards, and Geraldine Ferraro came looking like a photo op for Vanity Fair, and Olympia Snowe wore this gorgeous outfit. I show up, chunky yet funky, and the instructor is yelling, "Go for the burn! Put your hands on your waist and bend, bend, bend!" And I turned to BARBARA and said, "If I had a waist, I wouldn't be here." Well, those exercise classes may not have lasted long for me, but her energy just couldn't be beat.

Her zip and zest is pure California sunshine, and Californians have more sunshine in their spirit because of her work. Her energy has brought light to California and light to the sometimes dreary Capitol hallways.

I am going to miss my good friend and irreplaceable political partner. Democrats have had a lot of tough fights over the last 25 years, and the two BARBARAS have always been there, side by side. We voted against the war in Iraq, both believing it was a mistake. We were in the minority, but both of us still believe it was one of the best votes we have ever taken as Senators. We stood up for what we believed in and what we thought was right—which is exactly what our constituents sent us here to do.

BARBARA BOXER has been there for our children, leading the way for after school programs and making sure they are kept safe. She has fought against wasteful spending in the Pentagon—the \$400 hammer and the \$7,000 coffee pot. She has defended women's right to choose and protected women against domestic violence. She has held the feet of polluters to the fire as the champion of clean air, clean water, and our natural resources. It is too hard to pinpoint just one thing the Senate will miss about her: her political prowess, her dedication and determination, her undying loyalty and friendship. All of those and more will be missed.

As we end this session of Congress and our careers in the Senate, I wish

BARBARA and her husband, Stewart, many happy days ahead as they start writing this new chapter in their lives. Even if we are on opposite sides of the country, I know I will always have a friend in California.

TRIBUTE TO MARK KIRK

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on January 3, 2013, Senator MARK KIRK climbed the 45 steps to the U.S. Capitol, triumphantly returning to work after a year of intensive recovery from a stroke. To the cheers of colleagues and friends, he called it one of the greatest moments of his life.

It was a moment of courage and determination that defined a life dedicated to serving the people of Illinois and of our Nation. From his service in the Navy Reserve as an intelligence officer, to the World Bank, the State Department, the House International Relations Committee, and five terms representing the 10th Congressional District of Illinois, Senator KIRK brought to this chamber a wealth of experience, wisdom, and commitment.

I had the pleasure of working alongside Senator KIRK on the Appropriations, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Aging Committees. His approach to legislating has been in the highest traditions of the Senate: Informed, passionate, and always civil. He looked at the issues before the Senate not through the lens of a political partisan, but rather through the lens of a pragmatic problem solver and consensus builder.

Senator KIRK has been a valued ally on many fronts. We introduced the REGROW Act to accelerate the development of new therapies for patients living with such diseases as Alzheimer's disease and diabetes and to achieve breakthroughs in stroke recovery. I was proud to be named with him to serve on the Women's and Family Global Health Task Force so that the United States will continue to be a leader in preventing maternal and childhood deaths from treatable causes. We joined together on vital legislation to keep firearms out of the hands of terrorists and in addressing our Nation's opioid addiction crisis. He has always had a deep commitment to good government and was a strong voice for accountability through independent, effective inspectors general.

As chairman and former ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, Senator KIRK has worked tirelessly on behalf of the men and women who serve our country. Following in the tradition of Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen, who helped pass the Civil Rights Act a half-century ago, Senator KIRK has been a leader in ensuring the rights of America's LGBT community.

The past election brought disappointment, but it also revealed character. Senator KIRK ran a vigorous but honorable campaign and never compromised

his principles. When the decision went against him, he conceded graciously, reminding Americans that what unites us is far stronger than what divides us.

It has been an honor to serve with Senator KIRK in the U.S. Senate. It has been a joy to develop our friendship, one I will cherish always. I wish him all the best in the years to come, and I know that he will meet any challenges that lie ahead with the strength and fortitude he brought to those 45 steps of the U.S. Capitol.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA MIKULSKI

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my friend, colleague, and mentor from Maryland, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who is retiring at the end of this year. BARBARA has an impressively long and distinguished career in public service, representing her home State of Maryland in Congress for nearly 40 years.

Since I came to the Senate in 2013, it has been a pleasure to serve alongside titans like Senator MIKULSKI. As a matter of fact, my first official Senate office was tucked in-between hers and then-Senator Rockefeller's on the fifth floor of Hart. As neighbors we formed a friendly bond, and I oftentimes would stop by to chat with her or sometimes just Mrs. O'Malley, who runs a tight ship. On occasion, Senator Rockefeller and I would overstay our welcome, and Mrs. O'Malley would kick us out and send us back to our offices. For those of you who don't know, Mrs. O'Malley has played a critical role in Senator MIKULSKI's office for nearly 30 years and has helped instill the values of hard work and dedication to a generation of Hill staffers.

As the longest serving woman in Congress, Senator MIKULSKI has inspired a generation of women to pursue careers in public service and run for higher office. As dean of the women Senators, BARBARA worked to mentor new women Senators on how to be effective legislators and build coalitions across party lines to advance landmark legislation. The bipartisan women's group has met regularly under her leadership, helping bridge partisan divides that so often plague this Chamber by getting Senators to know each other on a personal level over her homemade Maryland crabcakes.

One cannot mention Senator MIKULSKI without also mentioning her fierce advocacy and determination to make Maryland and our country a better place to live, work, and raise a family. One of the first bills I cosponsored when I came to the Senate was the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, VAWA, which BARBARA played a critical role in originally passing. Since its passage in 1994, VAWA has been effective in responding to domestic violence. Additionally, she has worked tirelessly in the fight to close the pay gap for women, who currently earn about three-quarters of what men

earn, by advancing the Paycheck Fairness Act, which I have proudly cosponsored twice now. Women shouldn't make 77 percent of what men earn for the same job. This hurts families who are just looking to take care of their kids, put food on their table, and keep a roof over their heads.

Just as Senator MIKULSKI has been an advocate for families, she also understands the critical role science, research, and innovation play in creating economic growth in the United States. Maryland is home to several great institutions, such as the Goddard Space Flight Center, which I had the pleasure of visiting last fall, that are at the forefront of their respective fields. When I was at Goddard, the Director showed me the fascinating work their researchers and engineers are engaged in and how NASA's various missions help us enhance crop production and be better stewards of our planet. Her work on the Senate Appropriations Committee has helped keep the United States at the forefront of scientific discovery and technological innovation.

Senator MIKULSKI is the best of American public service. She is smart, honest, empathetic, and outrageously funny. She has earned her reputation as a force to be reckoned with. And on her next chapter, I wish her Godspeed—and may the force be with her.

TRIBUTE TO KELLY AYOTTE

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my dear friend and colleague from New Hampshire, Senator KELLY AYOTTE, who is departing from the Senate at the end of this year. Over the last 4 years, I have been consistently impressed with KELLY's pragmatic approach to her role as a U.S. Senator. Time and time again, I have seen her be a strong advocate on behalf of her State and have admired her willingness to forge the tough, bipartisan compromises that our country needs.

Senator AYOTTE started her career clerking for an associate justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court. After about a year of clerking, she started practicing law. She eventually moved on to be a prosecutor for the New Hampshire Attorney General's office, quickly gaining experience and know-how to become the first female attorney general of her State—something we have in common.

When I came to the Senate in 2013, KELLY and I were the only female former attorneys general in the Chamber at the time. She had been elected to her first term 2 years before me, so as new Senators, we bonded through our common experience that later pushed us to pass laws and create real change. Our shared knowledge of the issues, dedication, and common interests led us to become good friends. I am also proud to say that our relationship extended beyond the Senate Chamber, as we played together on the congressional women's softball team.

KELLY and I worked with each other to make real and substantial progress on many issues using common sense and our desire to do what is best for our States and the country. We both came to the Senate with an understanding of rural America. As the wife of a small business owner, KELLY understands the real life implications policy can have on small businesses, which she displayed as we worked together on the Small Business Committee. We also sat next to each other on the dais for 4 years as we served together on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Her commitment to keeping our Nation safe shined through time and time again as our committee worked on border security, cyber security, and improving our Federal Government's efficiency and effectiveness.

Together we passed two bills, one of which has been signed into law and the other which awaits the President's signature. The first was the Breast Cancer Awareness Commemorative Coin Act, which created a commemorative coin to help fund the Breast Cancer Research Foundation's efforts to fight breast cancer. Her dedication to help the one in eight women who will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of their lifetimes will not be forgotten. The second bill was the Northern Border Security Review Act to ensure that our Nation's northern border gets the attention and resources it needs to keep our communities safe. I am extremely proud to have worked with her on these issues.

Senator AYOTTE has been an outstanding public servant for the people of New Hampshire and this country. I know that she is proud of her accomplishments in her time as a Senator, and I am proud to be a part of some of those accomplishments. The women's softball team will definitely miss her because, let's face it, she is a better softball player than I am. I know KELLY will continue to be a champion for New Hampshire no matter what she does. And since we each have taken our turns in the batting cages, we never step down from the plate. I guess imitation truly is the best form of flattery. I truly wish her the best.

TRIBUTE TO VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, in a political world getting more contentious by the day, with even greater divisions and an increasing lack of civility, JOE BIDEN has always stood out.

The reason so many Republicans and Democrats appreciate him is because he has touched us all in a special way. When it comes to JOE BIDEN, his word is his bond. He is a fierce competitor, but never takes the fight too far. If he can help you, he always will. He tries, as much as possible, to ensure every decision is a win-win.

As Vice President, he served President Obama extremely well with un-

questionable loyalty. He has proven to be one of the most successful negotiators for the President.

I have traveled the world with JOE and the private man is exactly what you see in public. JOE BIDEN is articulate, determined, kind, gracious, funny, and an eternal optimist. I am confident he will continue to serve the nation he loves so much.

Vice President JOE BIDEN stands out in all the right ways.

21ST CENTURY CURES BILL

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I wish to address the 21st Century Cures Act legislation, which the Senate passed yesterday with my support. I voted for this bill and support many of its provisions. However, I also have some serious concerns regarding the manner in which the bill is funded.

I would like to congratulate two of my Senate colleagues for their remarkable commitment to this bill: the senior Senator from Tennessee, LAMAR ALEXANDER, and the senior Senator from Washington, PATTY MURRAY, who worked long hours in good faith to forge a bipartisan compromise on both sides of the Capitol.

Washington State is a laboratory for health care innovation. From Spokane to Seattle, my State has a culture of collaboration and inventiveness in which the entire health care community—including researchers, providers, insurers, employers, policymakers, and others—come together to find better ways of preventing, managing, and treating disease. This collaboration makes my State unique and on the cutting edge of developing innovative health care delivery.

That is why Washington is the original home of the Basic Health Plan, a State-run option that gives working people without employer-sponsored health care the negotiating leverage to get a better deal on health insurance.

It is why the Boeing Company has partnered directly with health care providers like the Everett Clinic to reduce sick days and improve the health of its workers.

It is why community leaders in Yakima and Spokane have banded together to break ground on new medical schools to fill unmet primary care needs in their regions.

And it is why so many lifesaving medical discoveries and treatments, including immuno-oncology, dialysis, and the mapping of the brain have their roots in our State. Many of these discoveries started with NIH-supported basic research at public research universities like the University of Washington and Washington State University.

The 21st Century Cures legislation gives a big boost to Washington's health care innovators.

First, the bill's investment in President Obama's Precision Medicine Initiative will help get the right treatment into the hands of patients, building on the longtime work of renowned