

After graduation, to save for law school, he spent a year on a boat that supplied oil rigs in the North Sea. He pitched in on everything—did whatever it took to help the team—and helped the crew navigate the ship through choppy waters.

These qualities will sound familiar to everyone who has worked with LUTHER since.

He built a sterling reputation as an up-and-coming lawyer in private practice. He then set it aside to serve the people of the State he loves as Alabama's attorney general.

In the fine Alabama tradition of public servants, like his friends and mentors Jeff Sessions and RICHARD SHELBY, he combined a steel spine with a servant's heart. Whenever the people of the State needed defending—their businesses, their religious liberties, their Second Amendment rights—their attorney general was there for them.

Then as now, he fought fiercely when times required it and his principles demanded it, but no matter how important the issue at hand, from the Supreme Court to the Senate floor, LUTHER never loses his good humor or his conviction that we serve in order to help our constituents, not to aggrandize ourselves.

LUTHER STRANGE reminds us that character counts. He reminds us that deeply held conservative values do not in any way stand opposed to collegiality and common decency. To the contrary, our values require these things.

He reminds us that the American people need not choose between leaders who share their principles and leaders who dignify public service. They should hold their elected officials to a high standard and demand that we do too.

If you cannot tell, LUTHER's colleagues look up to him in more ways than one. We are sorry to see him go.

In the farewell speech that Senator STRANGE delivered on this floor, he challenged his colleagues to revive greater comity in this body. He implored us not to give up on bipartisanship or on building friendships that run deeper than policy disagreements. He reminded us that the Senate's Marble Room, across the hallway from this Chamber, used to be a popular gathering place. Senators from both parties would relax and get to know one another above and beyond the specific disputes of the day. Today, LUTHER pointed out, this room often sits empty.

His advice is well taken, and I have an idea how we could begin to put it into practice. All of us on both sides of the aisle could try to approach our work with more of the optimism, can-do spirit, and reverence for this great institution that LUTHER STRANGE has brought to work every single day.

Of course, the Senate's loss will be a happy gain for LUTHER's beloved family.

Despite the fact that his bright idea for a first date with Melissa was a trip

to the Talladega Superspeedway to take in the Talladega 500, he convinced her to marry him anyway. Their loving partnership has now spanned 36 years and counting. They have raised two sons. I hear that Luke is just an inch shy of his dad's height and that Keehn is an inch taller. In recent years, LUTHER and Melissa have become the proud grandparents of two young boys.

I have it on good authority that a certain black Lab named Sophie might be the most excited of all the Stranges to welcome the Senator back home to Birmingham.

Wherever LUTHER's distinguished career takes him next, I know he is glad it will involve more time with the people he loves most.

He has served with distinction in the Senate during a year of historic achievements. On behalf of Alabamians, he has made vital contributions on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Armed Services; Budget; and Energy and Natural Resources Committees. He has cast votes to help middle-class families and set America on a brighter trajectory for years to come.

We thank him and wish him every success in his future endeavors, and we salute him for the dedicated service he has rendered to his country and to the people of the great State of Alabama.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### WORK OF THE REPUBLICAN-LED CONGRESS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, often here in Washington, it can be difficult to focus on what counts.

We live in an information environment which is increasingly atomized and persistently polarized. Almost all will inevitably focus on who is up and who is down in the endless cycle of partisan gamesmanship. News cycles come and news cycles go. Poll numbers jump, then fall, then jump again, and fall again, but nobody should forget that

what really matters around here, at the end of the day, is policy, and the first year of unified Republican government has delivered plenty of that.

In 2016, the American people faced a stark choice. The Republicans promised a new era of deregulation and limited government—a new policy approach that would entrust free markets and free citizens to drive us forward. The Democrats, on the other hand, renewed and restated their faith in the effectiveness of government, centered here in Washington, to direct and command the national welfare. The American people spoke loudly, and they spoke decisively. The Republicans were given the reins and were instructed to sort all of this out.

Nobody needs to remind me that elections are the beginning of the challenge, not the end. The Republicans may have prevailed in the campaign, but an election won is nothing more than an opportunity seized. It is nothing more than a charge to carry out the promises offered on the trail, and that is precisely what we are doing.

Here in the Senate, despite fits and starts, we are moving the ball forward. Notwithstanding often vicious treatment by the media and the constant obstruction of the Democrats here in Congress, we are getting work done. Promises made in 2016 have become promises kept in 2017. The American people were promised the removal of redtape and infuriating bureaucratic encumbrances on economic growth. As soon as we took office in early 2017, we moved to do just that.

We confirmed Neomi Rao as the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Under her stewardship, the Executive has cut over a dozen old rules for every single new rule created. Regulation has been subjected to actual cost-savings analysis, and, likely, billions have been saved in the process.

Here in Congress we passed a dozen CRAs to cut down on costly and ineffective rules passed in the twilight hours of the Obama administration. The list of deregulatory items speaks for itself: restoration of free markets and free competition on internet, done; new environmental policy to unleash the potential of American energy production, done; reform of public lands designation and renewal of State and local control over western territories, done; Labor Department reform that restores bargaining power to employees and employers rather than unions and bureaucrats, done. On nearly every front, from education to justice issues and everything in between, there has been substantial progress.

Personnel are often the catalyst to policy, and we still have nominations in several agencies to come. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is in good hands with Mick Mulvaney and will eventually be handed off to a capable permanent Director. Federal Trade Commission nominations should be arriving shortly, and just recently the