

I look forward to its passing in the House as part of the funding bill, and I hope the Senate will do the same before the end of the week.

TRIBUTE TO THAD COCHRAN

Madam President, I close by saying a few words about our friend and trusted colleague, the senior Senator from Mississippi, THAD COCHRAN, who has announced his retirement from the Senate. I know the real tributes are about to kick off in a minute when the majority leader comes out, but since I am up here, I thought I would take the opportunity to say a few words.

Senator COCHRAN has represented the State of Mississippi in the U.S. Senate since 1978. He is one of the longest serving Members of Congress in the history of the United States. His career and his life speak for themselves.

He is the son of a school principal and math teacher. Not surprisingly, he was a gifted high school athlete. He is a piano player and a former college yell leader. Yes, even like me, he is a recovering lawyer, but we will not hold that against him.

Before he joined Congress, he served in the U.S. Navy because he loves this country and the opportunities it has afforded him and his family. He is a man with a strong sense of duty and gratitude for the opportunities he has been given in life. After ROTC at the University of Mississippi, he received orders to join the USS *Macon*, and after that he joined the staff of the Navy commandant in New Orleans. Later, he ran for public office. He first served in the House of Representatives. He then, of course, came here to the Senate, where he quickly established himself as a cordial but formidable presence.

Before I came to the Senate, Senator COCHRAN was chairman of the Senate Republican Conference. He has chaired the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee too. Most recently, he has alternated between serving as ranking member and chairman of the all-powerful Appropriations Committee.

Throughout his 45 years in Congress, he has participated in crafting and enacting historic legislation, but his main focus has always been on the people of Mississippi. His highest priority has always been on the men and women he was elected to represent in places like Jackson, Gulfport, Greenville, Starkville, and Hattiesburg. One example is when he fought so hard for recovery funding after Hurricane Katrina had destroyed large swaths of the southern part of Mississippi. Many people forget that that awful storm was much bigger than New Orleans'. Mississippi was hit almost equally as hard, and Senator COCHRAN made sure his State got the help it needed to get back on its feet.

His storied career is one of service and collegiality even amidst the fractious debates. He treats friends and political adversaries with respect. He listens to what people have to say. We need more people like that in public life.

The majority leader has called him the "quiet persuader," one who knows "there's a big difference between making a fuss and making a difference."

Judge E. Grady Jolly, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, who has known Senator COCHRAN as long as anyone, said that back home, he is known for his "modesty and his retiring nature"—not attributes you would normally associate with somebody in politics, but he is a class act. He is also known for the consistent attention he has paid to the Mississippi Delta—one of the poorest regions in the Nation's poorest State. The judge calls Senator COCHRAN the "ultimate model of sincerity," one who "never engages in ad hominem or personal attacks" and always "keeps a sense of humor about himself."

My office spoke to one Mississippi resident this week because we wanted to learn a little bit more about what Senator COCHRAN has meant to her. That woman, who had met Senator COCHRAN only a handful of times, said she had always respected and admired Senator COCHRAN's statesmanship and the dignity with which he represented Mississippi. Her comments are a good note to end on—statesmanship and dignity. Those traits never go out of style.

I know I speak for my other colleagues—and they will speak for themselves—when we all say thank you to THAD COCHRAN for setting a higher standard for the Members of this body. The U.S. Senate will not be the same without him.

KENNEDY-KING NATIONAL
COMMEMORATIVE SITE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4851, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4851) to establish the Kennedy-King National Commemorative Site in the State of Indiana, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Young amendment at the desk be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2215) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To strike a provision relating to a special resource study)

In section 3, strike subsection (d).

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 4851), as amended, was passed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

TRIBUTES TO THAD COCHRAN

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I rise to say a word about my friend THAD COCHRAN, who is retiring from the U.S. Senate.

In 1968, I had the job of recruiting State chairman for Citizens for Nixon-Agnew. I was a very young, wet-behind-the-ears former legislative assistant to Senator Howard Baker. We were working in the Willard Hotel in the fall of 1968. The idea was to try to find outstanding citizens who weren't necessarily Republicans because in the southern part of our country, there weren't a lot of Republicans, especially in the State of Mississippi.

So I called around the State of Mississippi to find out who might be willing to head up this Nixon-Agnew campaign. Everybody I called said: Well, there are two young men here who are just the most outstanding young men, both are cheerleaders at Ole Miss, or had been, and both are going to grow up to be the Governor of Mississippi, which was, at that time, I guess, the nicest thing one could say about some aspiring young man because nobody thought the two U.S. Senators, Eastland and Stennis, would ever retire. So growing up to be the Governor of Mississippi was really a great compliment to a young man in Mississippi at the time. One of those young men was named Trent Lott, and one of those young men was named THAD COCHRAN.

I telephoned THAD COCHRAN, and I invited him to become chairman of the Citizens for Nixon-Agnew. He was a Democrat, but he agreed to do that. We met in October of that year in Indianapolis. The mayor of Indianapolis then was Richard Lugar, a young mayor at that time and later a Member of this body. That was the beginning of THAD COCHRAN's Republican Party activity.

He and that other young man—who were so promising—both ran for U.S. Congress in 1972, and to the surprise of a great many people, they were elected, the first Republicans since Reconstruction, I suppose, from Mississippi—THAD COCHRAN and Trent Lott.

In 1978, THAD COCHRAN did something nobody had done from his State since the Reconstruction; he became a Republican who was elected to the U.S. Senate, and he has been here ever since.

The reason he was able to be successful is not surprising. THAD was and is an engaging, pleasant person. His parents were educators. He learned to play the piano. He was a terrific baseball player—good enough to play professional baseball. He joined the Navy. He was, in every respect, an outstanding young man, just as he has been a distinguished public servant throughout his life.