

the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, participated in a weeklong space flight on the Columbia. What most folks don't know, however, is that the launch for the mission was aborted not once, not twice, but three times. Eventually, though, the liftoff was achieved, and BILL became only the second sitting Member of Congress to leave Earth's atmosphere, where, in his words, he saw "the blue brilliance of the earth from the edge of the heavens."

There is a name given to the shift in perspective experienced by astronauts called the overview effect. Seeing the Earth from the window of a space shuttle—that pale-blue marble in the vast emptiness of space—makes you realize how fragile and also how beautiful our planet truly is. Senator NELSON experienced something of an overview effect, and although he already cared about the environment, he became a lifelong champion of environmental causes.

BILL NELSON protected and preserved the Everglades, Florida's beaches, and offshore waters by standing against offshore drilling. There is none in Florida, and I have to say that the reason is sitting right to my left—BILL NELSON. Time and again, when rapacious companies and others wanted to drill and risk the beauty of Florida's coastline and its economic vitality, there was BILL NELSON, like Horatio at the bridge, preventing it from happening. After the BP oilspill, BILL NELSON made sure Florida's gulf communities got the restitution they deserved from BP's settlement.

Senator NELSON has always been a loud voice speaking about the need for action on climate change, as his beloved State of Florida gets hit by ever more powerful storms and the low-lying areas, like Miami, get flooded regularly.

Of course, seeing the Earth from space didn't just focus BILL's eyes downward. This man is capable of doing many things at once. He kept them firmly fixed on the horizons as well. It will be a long time before the Senate sees a champion for NASA and space exploration like BILL NELSON. It may never see one as committed again.

The Senate, the State of Florida, and the country will miss BILL NELSON, as will Iris and I. He was even-tempered even in tempestuous times. He was always civil in the midst of such incivility. When so many of us are prone to looking backward, trying to figure out what we did wrong or what we could have done differently, BILL was always looking forward and upward.

I have had the pleasure not only of being BILL's colleague but being his friend. What a fine human being. One of my greatest regrets here is that some fine human beings are not going to be with us next time, and this Chamber and this country will show they are missed.

There is nothing BILL is now looking forward to more than spending time with his beloved Grace and visiting his children, Bill Junior and Nan Ellen.

Every one of us salutes the great senator Senator from Florida, everything he has accomplished in his distinguished career in the Senate, and just the great man that he is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding previous Senate action on the House message to accompany H.R. 695, today's motions and amendments remain in status quo and the earlier motion to concur and the motion to refer with instructions and amendments Nos. 1923 and 1924 be withdrawn.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report:

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Maguire, of Florida, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks, Senator PAUL be recognized for up to 15 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN CORNYN

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have a message to deliver this morning, but after sitting here and listening through and enjoying the comments that were made, I wanted to at least make one comment about the Senator from Texas.

In my real life, for a number of years, I was a builder and developer in South Texas. I know South Texas very well. I know the border well. That is why I have been down there so much and am so interested in, of course, the border wall, which we are going to have. But we have a wonderful friend and a person who has been a good friend. You would think he is dead, but he is not. He is very much alive, and he is back doing his full-time job.

I want to say that the time I spent with him down there in Texas long before he was even in the position he is in today—he has been a great hero down there not just to the people in Texas but people all over the country.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, as far as the comments that were made by the minority leader from New York, it is easy to stand here and talk about this. Yes, I know the Democrats—they have all gotten together, and they don't want to have a wall, but they are going to have a wall. Walls work.

Look at the record of having walls. San Diego built their wall in 1992, and illegal traffic dropped 92 percent after that. Ninety-two percent. El Paso built their wall—I remember when that was built—in 1993, and illegal traffic dropped 72 percent. Tucson built their wall in 2000, and illegal traffic dropped 90 percent. Yuma, in Arizona, built theirs in 2005, and illegal traffic dropped. It has happened everywhere. Just look at Israel and the successes they have had and how many Israelis would be dead today if it weren't for the wall they have.

We are one of the few countries without a wall. We are going to have a wall, and it is going to be funded. So if anyone is listening to what is going on down here, just be assured that we are going to have our wall.

REMEMBERING GEORGE H.W. BUSH

Mr. President, I want to make one comment on something that happened 3 or 4 weeks ago, when we lost an American hero. Everyone talked about George H.W. Bush, and they talked about their experiences. The reason I wanted to wait a while before making any comments on that is because I have known George H.W. Bush for many, many years, before I was actually in politics. My wife Kay and I are praying for the entire Bush family as the Nation mourns and honors one of America's loyal sons.

George H.W. Bush was one of the only men I have ever known who could truly love someone into changing his mind. He loved God. He loved his family. He loved his country and served it tirelessly with passion.

Listen to all of the things he has done. He was a naval aviator, an Ambassador, Director of the CIA, President of the United States, and Vice President of the United States. He has done it all.

George H.W. Bush put service to his Nation and love for his family above all else. Kay and I have known the Bush family for a long time, dating back to their time in the Texas oil fields. He would go back and forth to what he referred to as his second home, which is Tulsa, OK. We were friends before we were in politics, and I am grateful for that friendship. I will always remember that friendship.

This portrays him very well. Back when I was mayor of Tulsa and George Bush was Vice President, he came to Tulsa, OK, to do a fundraising event. It

was a fundraising event. My wife, in spite of her reputation to the contrary, is a pretty shy person. At these events, she always insists, if we are going to be at the head table, that she be seated next to me at that table. She is not insecure or any of that stuff, but nonetheless this is something she got in her head a long time ago, and she has always wanted that.

So on this occasion—this is when George Bush came to Tulsa, OK, to participate in a fundraiser—she snuck up there and looked at the table and the name tags and looked at me and said: You can't do that. You are not seated next to me. I have to be seated next to you.

I said: Who are you seated next to? She said: George Bush.

Well, apparently, one of the security guys or someone went back and told George Bush about that. So he came up behind her—I will always remember—and he put his arm around her and said: I don't bite. He said further: I will take care of you; don't worry about a thing.

Now, during her conversation up there—she conceded, of course, to sit next to George Bush—he said: You don't happen to know someone named Marian Bovard, do you?

And she said: Well, of course, she is a good friend.

He said: I haven't seen her in a long time.

Kay said: Well, she is sitting right over there. You can see her from here.

So he sent one of his Secret Service people over there to bring Marian Bovard, an old friend, to visit.

It turned out that my wife and George H.W. Bush found out that they both had many mutual friends. Every time he would bring someone up, it happened that that person was there. So he would come over and remind her. She became George Bush's social director, I think, for the remainder of the fundraiser. I think she even ate his broccoli for him.

Now, before I got to Congress, I was a builder and developer in South Texas for many years. Of course, Bush was from Texas. We knew each other at that time. He came to see me a few times when I was working down there, and, somehow, it always happened to be on days when I was fishing, because I fish every day down there. That is one of the many hobbies I have, and I enjoy doing that.

One day he said to me, after he was President: You know, I envy you.

This is kind of strange to have the President of the United States say: I envy you. The reason he said that is because he always enjoyed fishing, and he knows I have a whole bunch of kids and grandkids who all like to fish, and he doesn't. So he envies me.

There is a fishing guide, who my old chief of staff, Richard Soudriette—who, incidentally, is one who is very similar to George Bush in that I have never heard him be mad at anyone or dislike anyone or talk in a profane way about anyone, and that is the same as we

have heard so many people say about George Bush. So Richard Soudriette, who also likes to go fishing with me, knew this fishing guide. Not many people are aware of this. Bush had this fishing guide here in Washington, who would sneak in early in the morning, and they would go fishing. His name was Angus. He went to the White House early one morning to go fishing with the President. He was there so early that the Secret Service escorted him up to the residence where he had coffee with the Bushes, who were still in their pajamas.

This is a good story. You should read the whole thing. It was in the Washington Post, and it is on my website.

But President Bush was restless and sometimes impatient, which are not usually characteristics that make a really good fisherman. But because he was steady and dedicated to the task at hand, he did OK, and he even got a few fish, they told me, on that day.

When he was running for President, he came to Tulsa for a fundraising function at the Mayo Hotel. He knew everyone in Tulsa. We did the normal routine we always do. We greeted supporters, gave remarks, and then opened it up for questions. I will never forget this. Ellen McGuire, who is a person who is kind of a party regular in the Republican Party, stood up and said: Are you part of the international communist conspiracy?

George Bush didn't even blink. He looked over at the organizer and said: Where do you find these nuts? Next question.

When he was Vice President, he and Barbara came to Tulsa another time, and I went with a group who was in charge of picking them up at the airport. I was mayor at that time. So we had a guy on my staff named Charlie Burris, also a security guy. So we thought he would be the perfect person to pick up Barbara and George Bush and take them into town.

So we get there, and Charlie goes and picks up the luggage and hands it to the person behind him, thinking it was me, and said: Take this to the hotel.

He turned around and saw that instead of it being me, it was Barbara Bush. She looked a little stunned, but she took the bags and took them and off she went. The cars that came to pick him up were the cars we always used when we had somebody coming to Tulsa. Why invest in limousines down there? They were funeral home limousines. Vice President Bush took one look at them, looked in the back, which I think still had a wreath that said "Rest in Peace" on it, and said: You must have a cheap mayor. Well, that mayor was me. I told him I preferred the word "frugal."

George Bush knew Oklahoma better than any President in history. Before that date, he was even telling reporters that he wanted this to be his turf, his State. He frequently called Tulsa, OK, his second home. Bush regularly held up Oklahoma as an example of "points

of light," a State that knew how to use public-private partnerships to do all of the right things and thrive and be successful.

These are just a few stories about a man who strived to make every man, every woman, every child whom he met feel valuable in his eyes.

George Bush saw life as a series of missions, and he completed those missions with fervor and grace. He never wasted a minute, and for that, I am grateful.

As the Nation continues to mourn one of her most loyal sons, let us find solace in the fact that he is holding hands, reunited with Barbara again.

President Bush, you are a true American hero. Mission complete. God bless you.

One more thing, today, December 19, Kay and I are celebrating our 59th wedding anniversary. I just want to say: Kay, I still love you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Kentucky.

DRONE ATTACKS

Mr. PAUL. Do drone attacks work? Well, you might say: Of course they work; they kill their intended target.

But do drone attacks really work? Do drone killings make us safer? Do drone killings bring victory nearer? Do drone killings kill more terrorists than they create? I think these are valid questions and questions that should be debated and discussed.

There are those who have been involved in the drone killings who actually believe that they aren't helping our country. This is a letter from four American servicemen in the Air Force to President Obama from a year or two ago. It reads:

We are former Air Force servicemembers who have been involved in the drone program. We joined the Air Force to protect American lives and to protect our Constitution. We came to the realization, though, that innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism in groups like ISIS, while also serving as a fundamental recruitment tool.

This administration—

then, referring to the Obama administration—

and its predecessors have built a drone program that is one of the most devastating driving forces for terrorism and destabilization around the world.

The question is this: Do drone killings actually kill more terrorists than they create?

As the brothers, sisters, and cousins from the village gather around the mangled bodies, do they say, "Oh, well, I guess we are now going to put down our arms and make peace," or are they excited, are they engendered, are they somehow motivated to become suicide bombers themselves?

Do the drone killings simply steal their resolve? Do the drone killings cause surviving members to strap on suicide vests? Is there a limit? Is there an end to how many we will kill with drones?

The power to kill anyone, anywhere, anytime is an ominous power. I think most of the people involved in the program, including President Obama, had motives to kill our enemies, to kill those who they thought might come someday and kill us, but the program has become so extensive, and it has extended across so many different countries that there is concern, No. 1, about the civilians—the women and children who are being killed in these strikes as collateral damage—but there is also some concern about whether or not that kind of ominous power—the power to kill anyone, anywhere, anytime in the entire world—is so ominous that there should be checks and balances.

In our country, no one is killed without not only checks and balances but without the due process of the law. People say: Well, you can't have due process in far-flung battlefields around the world. Shouldn't we at least consider, though, whether or not there should be checks and balances and whether or not one person can make the decision to kill? I think this is something that should be debated, discussed, and we should have oversight from Congress.

You will recall that in Obama's administration, the drone attacks really hit a new peak. You will recall that he made his decisions on whom to approve the killing of on "Terrorism Tuesdays." There were reports that flash cards were used in the discussion of who was to be killed.

There were also reports that John Brennan had complete authority to kill on his own in certain places. John Brennan also responded and said, when asked about the drone program, that there are no geographical limitations to where we can kill.

That is a little bit worrisome, particularly since Congress has never authorized war in the seven different countries where President Obama utilized drones and where drones continue to be used.

People say: Well, this isn't really war, or this has something to do with 9/11.

This has nothing to do with 9/11. None of these people had anything to do with 9/11.

People say: There are associated forces.

That is not in the 9/11 authorization. Congress voted after 9/11 and said: You can go after those who organized, aided, abetted; those who helped to plan; those who helped the attackers of 9/11. It didn't say you could go after any far-flung religious radical or ideologue throughout the world and kill them, but that is what we do. It is an ominous power to kill anyone, anywhere, anytime.

I had this debate with the Obama administration, and I asked them directly: Can you kill an American with a drone?

Interestingly, they hesitated to answer that question. They finally did say: We are not going to kill an Amer-

ican not involved in combat in the United States with a drone. It took 13 hours to get that answer from them.

There are questions about what happens to an American accused and put on the kill list. Can we kill an American overseas?

Often the killings aren't people marching around with muskets. They aren't people marching around shooting each other in a war, where it is like you have a war zone and you are dropping a bomb on the other side of a war. These are often people sitting in a hut somewhere, eating dinner. These are often people whom we kill where we find them. We often don't know the names of those who are killed, and we often have no idea in the end who is killed in these attacks.

Sometimes we do it just simply because it looks like a bunch of bad people all lined up. So we have what we call "signature strikes," where we just kill people whose cars are lined up whom we presume to be bad people.

I think their motives are well intended, but sometimes we end up killing the wrong people. We killed about 12 people in Yemen in 2013 for which we paid \$1 million, saying: Whoops, we got the wrong people. It is an ominous power that should have more oversight and more checks and balances.

One of the statements that particularly bothered me was when the former head of the NSA, Michael Hayden, said: Well, we kill people based on metadata.

That is an alarming statement to me. Metadata is whom you call and how long you talk to them. We remember they said that it was no big deal. Your metadata is not that private. You should just give it up. And for a while they were vacuuming up everyone's metadata—whom you call and how long you talk.

It turns out that they are so competent in metadata that they are actually making kills based on metadata. That is what Hayden said.

So we have before us a nominee for the National Counterterrorism Center who has some involvement with developing these kill lists. So we asked him that question. I said: Do we kill people based on metadata?

The nonanswer was very interesting. He said: Well, I can't tell you because I am not in government.

Well, my guess is he has been in government, and he has been in the military. So he probably knows the answer, but he is saying that he will not tell the answer because he is not in government.

So we said to ask the people who are in government: Do we kill people based on metadata?

Do you know what every one of them said? None of my business.

I was elected to the U.S. Senate to represent an entire State, and the people in the administration had the audacity to say: If you want to know that, why don't you join the Intelligence Committee?

See, a democratic republic is where all elected officials have oversight, not

only a select few—often, a select few who actually are always in agreement with more power for the Intelligence Committee and become a rubberstamp simply for more power. Those of us who are skeptical of power, those of us who think we need to have more oversight are typically not on those committees. But the question is whether we should allow a select few to be the overseers. Often, these overseers aren't a check and a balance. These overseers are people who simply say: We want to be consulted.

When the President comes to you or the CIA comes to you and says "We are going to kill this person; oh, you have been consulted—often consulted after the fact, but you have been consulted," that, to me, is not a check and a balance. That is being a rubberstamp for the policy.

The question has come up time and again, and the media looks and says: Oh, my goodness, this is a conspiracy theory, the deep state. There actually is a deep state, and the deep state has been around for decades and decades. In fact, the Church commission in the 1970s was set up to investigate the deep state.

Who was the deep state in those days? It was Hoover. Hoover was using the enormous power of the intelligence agencies to investigate people he didn't like—civil rights leaders and protesters of the Vietnam war—so he illegally used this power of intelligence gathering to spy on Americans.

Americans were rightly upset. The Church commission tried to rein in the intelligence communities. But the interesting thing is, in those days, the power to do intelligence was some guy sneaking into your house and placing a little magnet on your phone. It is not done that way now. They can scoop up every phone call in America like that. They can scoop up every international phone call, every phone call to a country. We can listen to what anybody is saying anywhere around the globe any time we want, and then we can kill anyone anytime, anywhere in the world. These are ominous powers and deserve more oversight. So when people refer to the deep state, that is what we are talking about—more oversight.

What happens now is there are eight people in Congress who are consulted about intelligence, consulted about targeted killings—eight people. But they are not given a check and a balance. They are consulted. They are told often after the fact. So, really, there are no checks and balances. This is an enormous, ominous power, and it is not checked. Those eight people are the leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, and the chairman and ranking member of the Intelligence Committee. It is the same on the House side. So eight people know anything.

You say: Well, this certainly can't be true. Certainly, they must brief all of you.

Do you remember when they were collecting all of your phone data and

storing it in Utah? Everybody's phone data, every phone call you were making, was being stored in Utah.

One of the authors of the PATRIOT Act who had been involved in and had actually been supportive of this said that he was unaware of it and said that he didn't believe the legislation that wrote the PATRIOT Act actually authorized that.

There is not enough check and balance. There is not enough oversight. We have seen it recently with the killing of the Washington Post journalist and dissident, Khashoggi. The CIA concluded, according to media reports, with high probability that the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia—with a high degree of probability—was responsible for the killing. Was everybody told that? No, the public was not told that. Most of Congress, most of the Senate—I was not told that because the briefings are only for a select few.

What happens is you get imperfect and not very good oversight; the checks and balances are not working because the only people being told about what the intelligence community is doing are the people who are rubberstamps for what they are doing. The skeptics, those who believe there is too much power, are not being told.

My point in bringing that up with this nominee today is not the individual being nominated but that the deep state has circled its wagons, and they are preventing me from finding out: Do we kill people around the world based on metadata? It is a very simple question, it is a very specific question, and they are refusing to answer it.

So I have been holding this nominee and will vote against the nominee because I believe that the deep state needs more oversight. I believe that we shouldn't kill anyone, anywhere, anytime around the world without some checks and balances.

I also believe that our drone program, our targeted killing, actually makes the country less safe and makes us more at risk for terrorism. I think we should reevaluate this. We have had a top 20 kill list for 20 years. We just keep replenishing it with more and more and more. It is a never-ending top 20 list. I think we should reevaluate it. I think we should talk about, is there a way we can declare victory?

I am proud of the President today to hear that he is declaring victory in Syria. Most of the voices around here like to stay everywhere for all time, and they believe that it doesn't work unless you go somewhere and stay forever. The President has the courage to say that we won in Syria, and we are coming home—the first President in my lifetime really to do that. That is why President Trump is different, and that is why I think President Trump is one we should all look to for some changes and for some reform of the deep state.

I yield back my time.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Joseph Maguire, of Florida, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Mitch McConnell, Jerry Moran, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Thom Tillis, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, David Perdue, Pat Roberts, John Barasso, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Boozman, John Cornyn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Joseph Maguire, of Florida, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Montana (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other SENATORS in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 272 Ex.]

YEAS—95

Alexander	Gardner	Murphy
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Barrasso	Graham	Nelson
Bennet	Grassley	Perdue
Blumenthal	Harris	Peters
Booker	Hassan	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Reed
Brown	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cantwell	Heller	Rounds
Capito	Hirono	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sanders
Carper	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Casey	Inhofe	Schatz
Cassidy	Isakson	Schumer
Collins	Jones	Scott
Coons	Kaine	Shaheen
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Smith
Cortez Masto	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cotton	Kyl	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Tester
Cruz	Leahy	Thune
Daines	Lee	Tillis
Donnelly	Manchin	Toomey
Duckworth	Markey	Udall
Durbin	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Enzi	McConnell	Warren
Ernst	Menendez	Wicker
Feinstein	Merkley	Wyden
Fischer	Moran	Young
Flake	Murkowski	

NAYS—1

Paul

NOT VOTING—4

Blunt
Johnson

Warner
Whitehouse

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 95, the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of the senior Senator from Texas, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on the Maguire nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just for the information of our colleagues, I expect the Maguire nomination to go by voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I rise to speak for the last time on the Senate floor as majority whip. With the swearing in of our colleagues in January, will come the changing of the guard in our elected leadership in which I have been proud to serve since 2006.

As we all know, the whip is also known as the assistant majority leader, and I have been proud to assist our majority leader in all we have worked on together to accomplish in the Senate. I often tell people that "whip" sounds a lot more coercive than it really is because in the Senate, you can't really make somebody do something they don't want to do.

I understand the term comes from the old country. It referred to the person in fox hunting who was responsible for keeping the dogs from straying during the chase—something I have never done and, no doubt, will never do.

One of the fathers of modern conservatism, Edmund Burke, in the middle of a contentious debate in the British House of Commons, used the term as far back as 1769. When he used it, he was talking about enforcing discipline, not as a way to punish disobedience but as a way to stay focused on your goal. I think that meaning still holds because the overarching goal of anyone who serves in this position is to keep the team together.

The first Republican whip was James Wadsworth, elected in 1915. He served in the Spanish-American War. He opposed Prohibition, and he was chairman of what was then known as the Committee on Military Affairs.

In more recent times, the whips have been great Senators and friends, such as Don Nickles, Trent Lott, JON KYL, and of course, the current majority

leader, MITCH MCCONNELL. All of these men have provided good examples and sound counsel to me at one time or another.

What we have tried to do together is to build consensus, to make progress, little by little, for the American people, to seek to inform and gently persuade. Mainly, you listen, and then, one by one, you address your colleagues' concerns. Then it is the job of the whip to count the votes, as the Senate leader passes or defeats legislation, and provide advice and consent on nominees.

It is the job of the whip operation to keep its finger on the pulse of the conference, to help the leader find a way to get from point A, a bill introduced, to point B, getting it to the floor, and then to point C, when the bill passes and becomes law. That road can be awfully bumpy at times. Sometimes, it is just like riding a roller coaster.

As with any job, there are parts of the job you love more and those parts you love less. There has been a lot of handshaking after big victories, such as the Criminal Justice Reform bill we passed with a huge bipartisan majority last night, and then there is the headshaking after disappointments.

It is true that occasionally in this job you come up short, but you learn from your mistakes, you course correct, and that failure can help you succeed later on down the road. That is what happened to us in tax reform. We learned from our disappointing outcome on healthcare and applied it to our next major objective. With tax reform, we laid the groundwork by going through the Finance Committee—regular order. We helped inform. We corrected misinformation, and we responded to feedback. We incorporated input from all Senators who wanted to be constructive and get to yes, and the final bill changed a lot along the way.

Another victory I can think of is the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act in 2016, which I think helped lay the groundwork for what we were able to achieve this Congress with the passage of landmark opioid legislation.

Of course, there were a historic number of judges we were able to confirm during the first 2 years of the Trump administration, culminating in not one, but two outstanding additions to the U.S. Supreme Court: Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

But the biggest challenge we faced this last year was the nomination of now-Justice Kavanaugh—hands down. Never in my experience has there been a bill or a nomination for which every single vote mattered more, and never have I seen the dynamics change so rapidly. The trajectory of the nomination fluctuated day by day, hour by hour, and sometimes it seemed minute by minute. As new press reports or rumors circulated, the whip operation worked overtime to make sure our colleagues had the most up-to-date information and knew what was and what

was not accurate. To refute one rumor or accusation, my whip staff even had to find copies of 30-year-old high school yearbooks and go to the Library of Congress to research drinking games. I know it sounds silly, but sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. The research our whip staff put together made the difference for some of our colleagues in the homestretch.

Eventually, as we now know, after a lot of hard work and long hours by an awful lot of people, Judge Kavanaugh was confirmed. But near-death experiences can make life all that much more sweet. So the difficulties we faced together on the Kavanaugh nomination made his eventual confirmation all the more satisfying.

Other highlights—the things I will remember the most and am most proud of—include the landmark bill we passed to combat human trafficking. The Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act—after 4 weeks on the Senate floor, thanks to Leader MCCONNELL and his perseverance, that bill ultimately passed 99 to 0, and we should be very proud of that.

Following the horrific shooting at Sutherland Springs, TX, I introduced legislation to strengthen the gaps in the background check system for purchasing firearms. Those gaps had allowed a crazed shooter to cruelly take innocent lives one Sunday morning at a small Baptist Church outside of San Antonio.

After we came together in a bipartisan way to pass this bill, I returned to Sutherland Springs. Being with those families, the community, and Pastor Frank Pomeroy—he and his wife lost their daughter—and letting them know we not only shared in their grieving but we had acted together to save lives by preventing future tragedies was one of the most gratifying moments I have experienced in the Senate. We couldn't wipe away their tears, but we could show the families that their loss had not been in vain.

We have done a lot of other things that—while they didn't make the front-page news—will greatly impact the lives of Texans and all Americans. We helped America become the energy powerhouse we knew it could be—creating jobs along the way—by facilitating liquefied natural gas exports, and we ended the export ban on crude oil all together. These will have geopolitical consequences that will benefit the entire planet.

We passed big bills, like the farm bill, and smaller but impactful bills, like occupational licensing reform, and legislation that improved trade between Mexico and Canada.

Then came Hurricane Harvey, the most extreme rain event in our Nation's history. It hit the Texas gulf coast, and then after recovery was undertaken, we had the monumental task of putting together significant disaster relief for Texas as part of a larger disaster relief package that benefited many parts of the Nation.

Our job still isn't over, but by linking arms together, the Texas delegation, which we call "Team Texas," worked with Governor Abbott and other State and local leaders to get them what was needed from the Federal Government so that people could begin to put their lives back together.

As whip, one of the best parts of my job was getting to know my colleagues better. I learned to listen to them more carefully. I learned that each of them has personal goals, political needs, regional interests, and philosophical principles that influence their decision making.

We share a lot in common, but each of us is unique in mostly fascinating but sometimes infuriating ways. Even when you can't convince someone your position is the right one, you always can learn from that interaction, and that is valuable information that can be used on the next tough vote.

I also learned a lot about the Senate as an institution. What makes this institution so interesting are the men and women who work here. We have doctors, business men and women, and farmers. Heaven knows, we have more than enough lawyers. We have spouses, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. We come from different political parties and different parts of the country, but we share a common goal: to do right for the people we are privileged to represent and to make our country a little bit better than when we came.

We have very public arguments, but we also get a lot accomplished in quieter moments—over lunch, in the Senate well, in the cloakroom, or sometimes in the Senate gym. During those moments, what shines through is my overwhelming impression of the intelligence, the seriousness of purpose, and the goodwill of the people who work here. That instills in me confidence that despite the swirling controversies that seem to engulf us, the Senate, as an institution, is strong. It is durable and will continue long after we are gone.

The late great Bob Bullock, who served for many years as our State's Lieutenant Governor, participating in Texas politics for most or about half of the 20th century, used to say that there are two types of politicians: those who want to be someone and those who want to do something. I will say that in my experience, most people I interact with here are of the latter persuasion. They want to do something good for the American people.

I want to express my best wishes to my friend, Senator THUNE, the senior Senator from South Dakota, who is taking over the whip job in January. I have every confidence in his ability to do the job, but I also confessed to him it is not all sunshine and lollipops. There will be long days and tough votes. We have all heard the expression that being the whip is like trying to keep the bullfrogs in the wheelbarrow; as soon as you get one in, another one jumps out.

But I look forward to continuing to help Senator THUNE, the next whip, and the conference and the Senate in any way I can. He has my telephone number.

Of course, when you are whip—like any job—you rely on your team members. I couldn't have gotten through these 6 years without a lot of help. First and foremost, I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to my mentor and friend, Leader MCCONNELL. There is no one in the country who has done more to advance the conservative cause in recent times than Senator MCCONNELL—no one. Robert Caro called LBJ the Master of the Senate. I would like to nominate another one: MITCH MCCONNELL.

Under MITCH's leadership in the last 2 years alone, we have bolstered our Nation's economy, fixed our Tax Code, and achieved real regulatory reform. We have transformed our Judiciary, improved veterans' healthcare, and addressed critical public health needs like the opioid crisis. And that doesn't even begin to scratch the surface.

We have certainly had our fair share of nail-biters—I seem to remember a certain debt ceiling vote, for example—and those accomplishments I mentioned were not easy, given the slim margins. But with Senator MCCONNELL's leadership and more than a few prayers along the way, we did it together. I am proud of our record, and I am grateful for his trust and confidence.

Of course, we couldn't have been successful without a strong and reliable team of deputy whips led by Senator MIKE CRAPO. I leaned on my deputy whip team regularly, and time and again, they delivered. So to Senators BLUNT, CAPITO, CRAPO, FISCHER, GARDNER, LANKFORD, PORTMAN, SCOTT, TILLIS, and YOUNG, thank you.

I also want to thank my whip staff, both current and former. This includes John Chapuis, Sam Beaver, Noah McCullough, Jody Hernandez, Emily Kirlin, Jonny Slemrod, and my first chief of staff, Russ Thomasson.

What has been so amazing to me is how seamlessly my whip staff also worked with my Texas official staff as well. We all worked, literally, as one team. I thank all of my Texas staff for their contributions to our successes.

We all rely on our staffs around here a great deal, and that is doubly true of my entire staff over the last 6 years. I have come to think of the whip operation as really an intelligence operation. These outstanding men and women have been my eyes and ears. They are all incredibly smart. They are devoted and hard-working.

I say to all of them: Thank you for everything you have done to serve the conference and the Senate as a whole.

As whip, you are provided with a security detail comprised of Capitol Police officers. These men and women are extraordinary professionals who have become like family. Their work often takes them away from their own fami-

lies and friends as they travel around the country and sometimes miss holidays and special occasions. They, like all of the Capitol Police, keep the people who work here and visit here safe. We all appreciate what they do for us each and every day.

Finally, I want to say a few words about my chief of staff, Monica Popp, who is the chief of staff of my whip office.

Monica is often the first person and the last person on my staff I talk to each day. If Beth Jafari, who is my chief of staff in my Texas office, is the glue that keeps our operation together and operating at maximum efficiency, Monica is the spark plug of the operation.

As impressive as her knowledge of the Senate is and of how the U.S. Government functions, that is not what sets her apart. She often, in her own gentle but determined way, has pressed me to make just one more call, to meet just one more time with a colleague, or to try just a little harder to nail down the winning votes. She is exactly the type of person you need to have in your corner, but it is her sunny disposition—her optimism—that is infectious. In addition to her extraordinary competence, that makes her indispensable.

Monica is known for cultivating and maintaining strong relationships not only in the Senate but in the House and in the executive branch. It is not just limited to my party; some of her closest colleagues work in the leadership offices of our Democratic colleagues. The big bipartisan achievements I mentioned earlier could not have happened without Monica and her ability to lead a team and work across the aisle. Part of the reason she is so effective is she wants to know everything. She even wants to know what Members have for breakfast because she knows how circumstances and small events can sometimes provide insight in unexpected ways.

Here is how our staff describes her:

"She is a problem solver."

"When you think you're stuck, she'll find creative ways to get a solution."

The most instructive, I think, is this: "You want to be around her just to learn."

I couldn't agree more.

To Monica, I say thank you. We couldn't have done it without you.

Even though I will no longer be serving as the majority whip, I am not going anywhere. Believe me—serving 28 million Texans here in the Senate is a big enough job for anyone. To borrow a phrase from a great American leader, our late President George Herbert Walker Bush—he said: I am a Texan and an American. What more can a man ask for?

Indeed, it is an honor and a privilege to represent the great people of Texas, and I believe my time as whip has only taught me to be a better representative of my fellow Texans. As an elected leader, I have learned that sometimes you have to do things nobody else

wants to do because they are controversial or they are risky, but I stand ready to continue to take risks and accept controversy in the pursuit of worthy causes.

I close simply by saying it has been a privilege to serve as the whip for Texas, for the Republican conference, and for the Senate.

Often, when I am introduced to audiences here and at home, the introducers will refer to me as the No. 2 person in the Senate. Occasionally, they will call me the second most powerful person in the Senate—obviously an exaggeration. Yet I have never been quite able to bring myself to correct them in public if only to save them the embarrassment. Let me just say I will now return to my previous life as the second most powerful person in my household and to my continued service to Texas and the world's greatest deliberative body.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the confirmation of the Maguire nomination.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Maguire nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise for a couple of moments in morning business to pay tribute to the Senate and what we have done this past year. We think we are easing towards going home. We think we are easing towards finishing the year, and everybody is excited about that. We have talked about a lot of things we haven't done. Let's talk about what we have done, because I think this has been the most successful time I have had in Washington for 20 years.

As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we have had the best success we have ever had for the most important people in the country we love—our military in the United States of