

few years ago. Remember the horrible images of U.S. citizens being executed by ISIS. Remember all of the trauma we have seen the Syrian Government perpetrate on its own people.

Remember the successful efforts of a combination of forces that ultimately took on ISIS, that removed it from its headquarters of its caliphate and caused it to disperse if it were not eliminated at the time. A lot of that was led with Kurdish fighters who were fighting alongside U.S. special operations advisers. Even though complicated because of the Russians' being there and the Turks' having interests and Assad's trying to hang on to power, the United States has been successful in not eliminating but in lessening the influence of ISIS.

Then came the shocker—the shocker of the President's announcing unilaterally that, all of a sudden, he was going to pull the special operations troops, as advisers, out of Syria. This would likely cause immediate instability. It would certainly allow for ISIS to reconstruct itself, and it would cause chaos with the Kurdish troops who fought alongside the Americans, with the Turkish Government's going after a number of them.

This is an ill-advised and probably a non-advised decision by the President, and it should be reversed. This Senator calls on all of the national defense, national security, and national intelligence professionals who are within the administration to get the President to reverse this unilateral decision that he has made. Otherwise, U.S. interests are going to be ill-served.

AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, my concluding remarks are about an early Christmas present that I received this past Monday at a staff going-away party that occurred in Florida, where all of our Florida staff came together to wish each other well. Little did I know that a special guest was going to appear. He was none other than one of the chefs of the catering company that was catering this holiday going-away party. Let me tell you the story of this 34-year-old chef and what happened 34 years ago.

At the time of the middle 1980s—1985 to be exact—this Senator was a young Congressman. A husband and wife, who were constituents of mine in East Central Florida, came to me in great distress because their infant boy had been born with a defective liver.

The advance of medicine at that particular time was that there was no known cure except to do a liver transplant. Thirty-four years ago, organ transplants were still in their infancy, and 34 years ago, there was no organ registry being maintained in order to try to find a family who had lost a loved one so that a loved one's organs could be harvested and then be available for those who were on a registry waiting for them. None of that existed 34 years ago.

Only since then have we seen this miraculous organization set up whereby people who need organ transplants can get on the list. Then, whenever an organ becomes available, no matter where it is in the country, that match—that organ—is immediately packed in ice and is flown to the receiving hospital where the organ transplant is going to occur. None of this existed. It was a catch-as-catch-can to find an organ to transplant. This was especially true with a liver transplant because a liver transplant, at the time, had to have the identical blood type, and it had to be the identical size of the recipient's liver.

Here was a few-months'-old child who was desperately clinging to life and needed a liver transplant to survive. At the time, we were in session. There was a particularly major bill that was up, and its passage in the House of Representatives was in the balance—within just a handful of votes. The bill was proposed by President Reagan. I had already decided that I was going to vote for the bill, which was in favor of the President's position, when I saw an opportunity to maybe save this child's life. So I held out and declared my position as “undecided” in my knowing that the votes were coming down to just one or two at passage.

Actually, we must have been out for the weekend before this vote was to have occurred, because I received a phone call from President Reagan while I was at my home in Florida. The President greeted me and told me what he was asking me to do.

I said to him: Mr. President, I have already decided that I am going to vote for the bill, and I know that it is welcome news to you. I wish you would do something for me—possibly save a child's life.

I then told him the story of the need of a liver of a certain blood type and of a certain size for a transplant in a minor child. The President said he would do that.

Shortly thereafter, the Secretary of Health and Human Services called, who was a former colleague from the House—Secretary Margaret Heckler of Massachusetts. She said: At the President's request, I am going to have a press conference to put out this information that this child is in need of this specific type of transplant.

Margaret Heckler did that. A donor was found because of that press release in 1985 in California. They raced that harvested organ, by jet, to the hospital in Pittsburgh. Ryan Osterblom, with his parents, was then flown to the hospital. The successful transplant occurred 34 years ago.

Early last Monday, you can imagine the Christmas present I received when there at our going-away party for our staff, the chef of the catering company was none other than 34-year-old Ryan Osterblom. That was the best Christmas present I could have.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO BILL NELSON

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I thank Senator NELSON for that touching story.

That would be a Christmas present for not only you but for anybody who has heard the circumstances.

I, too, remember having the privilege of being in public service with President Reagan. He had a human quality that was second to none.

I thank you, Bill, for your service—we used to be on Armed Services together, fighting the battles—but more especially for being a friend. You always had a smile on your face. I probably didn't when we got on the elevators together.

You would say: Pat, what is wrong?

I wouldn't want to go into anything, but I would think, why am I so glum if BILL NELSON is stuck on “happy” all the time?

It was the Florida sunshine, I guess.

I thank you for the privilege of being in public service with you, sir. Best wishes for your future, which I know will be very good and very bright, and thank you for that story, which is a great Christmas story. Repeat it often, sir. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO ORRIN HATCH

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I want to join my colleagues who, over the past few weeks, have come to the floor to thank Senator ORRIN HATCH—the great Senator ORRIN HATCH—for his service to this institution. Senator SULLIVAN just informed me that the body here—the Senate—has, by unanimous consent, passed a bill to name a courthouse in Utah after ORRIN HATCH. He was sitting as the President pro tempore, and the surprised look on his face was a treasure for everybody who saw it.

ORRIN HATCH has consistently maintained a demeanor that represented the Senate well—and that is an understatement—over the course of his illustrious and record-setting 42-year career. As a matter of fact, I think the definition of “gentleman” in the new edition of Webster's dictionary simply lists two words: “ORRIN HATCH.”

Whether he agreed or disagreed with any policy positions or with any individual Senator, he always, always treated you with the greatest of respect. Perhaps that is part of the reason that Senator HATCH will go down as one of the most effective legislators in the history of the Senate. All you have to do is go in his office and see all of the awards, the recordings that illustrate his fantastic music career as a songwriter, and all of the bills. I think it is safe to say that no other living Senator has had more bills that he has sponsored and that have been enacted into law than ORRIN HATCH. We come here to make a difference. We do that through legislation, and that is an indication of the great legacy that this man has left this body.