

for the Ds and three from the Rs and three from the Independents. Then, when they take votes, there has to be a vote from each of those three sectors. That is sort of the design that forces cooperation and sets up a condition of fairness, and that is what the For the People Act does that we introduced yesterday.

Now, I will tell you that State by State, and in my State, people ask: Why should I fix gerrymandering when that State over there still favors the other party? It is like waving the white flag on my turf while they are ripping us off over there. That is why it should be done at the Federal level. That is why we should pass the For the People Act.

This act takes on the issue of voting fairness. If you really believe in the vision of a democratic republic, you believe in voter empowerment, not voter suppression. Yet what have we seen this last November 6? We have seen strategies to keep college students from voting, strategies to keep communities of color from voting, strategies to keep the poor from voting, strategies to prevent Native Americans from voting. Those strategies are born from people who don't believe in the vision of our Constitution. They don't believe it is the foundation for what we have. They see this as just a game to produce a result, which is a government for that small group of people inside that circle of power and privilege. I am a little more patriotic than that. I believe in the vision of our Constitution, so let's take on these efforts to obstruct voting.

We did have a bill that had vast bipartisan support. It was called the Voting Rights Act, and we reauthorized it with vast bipartisan support because not so long ago, both sides of the aisle believed in the vision of our Constitution but not now. Unfortunately, now we are hearing that our colleagues across the aisle like voter intimidation. We see the Republican States engaging in it on a massive scale. It is increasing their power. They want to hold onto it—to clutch it to their chests and not let go. Yet, if you believe in the Constitution, if you believe in our country, you would let go. You would say: Let's appeal to all of the voters with our vision and not try to stop them from voting.

That is why we need to take down the barriers for voting. That is why we need automatic voter registration and internet registration and same-day registration—so people can sign up to vote. It means we need better access to voting so there isn't manipulation at the precinct places and so there is early voting nationwide and the right to choose to vote by mail.

Now, of course, I am a little biased on this because my home State of Oregon led the Nation in automatic voter registration, and we led the Nation in voting by mail. For those who are worrying about people voting who shouldn't be voting, nothing is more

secure than to vote by mail, and those who are worried about electronic machines being hacked and not having a paper ballot, there is nothing more secure than voting by mail.

When polls do occur and people go to those polls, shouldn't we make sure they are adequately staffed? The whole strategy of moving polling places at the last minute in order to confuse people and the whole strategy of understaffing polling places in the neighborhoods that you don't want to have vote is really evil—evil in that it takes away the vision of our Constitution. Voter empowerment is the vision; voter suppression is not. So that takes us to those polls and to our making sure we have a polling protection act. That is why we need the For the People Act—to take that on.

Then we come to dark and dirty money—money flowing in from corporations and all kinds of overseas, foreign participants. Nothing is being done here about that. Of course, the vision laid out by Thomas Jefferson called it equal voice. It meant distributed power among the electorate, not concentrated power, only with equal voice. He said it was the mother principle. Only with that do you get bills that reflect the will of the people. We are getting bills that reflect a small circle of power and privilege, not the people, because of this dark money concentrating power.

When the Koch brothers' cartel puts hundreds of millions of dollars into our campaign, the ordinary voter asks: Where is my equal voice? I don't have hundreds of millions of dollars. I will be lucky if I can give \$10 to this candidate and \$15 to that candidate. So the American people know the system is rigged—rigged in a profound way by this dark money.

Where does this come from?

It comes from that same Supreme Court that gutted the Voting Rights Act, from that same Supreme Court that failed to take on gerrymandering. It is the Court that has flipped our Constitution on its head and has replaced we the people with the vision of government by and for that small group of people in a circle of power—people like the Koch brothers, who, in 2014, spent hundreds of millions of dollars to change the makeup of this Chamber. Nobody in my blue-collar neighborhood has hundreds of millions of dollars. They know the system has been rigged. That is why we need the For the People Act—to restore the vision of our Constitution.

I encourage all red-blooded, patriotic Americans to stand up for their Constitution, to fight for the vision embodied in Jefferson's mother principle of equal voice, distributed power, and to remedy the dark money flowing through our campaigns. Not only is it vastly corrupting, but it drives vast cynicism because the people see what is going on.

Let's fix the gerrymandering on the front end. It is hard for the courts to do

it on the back end even if they had the will to do so. Let's fix fair voting on the front end and not argue about it afterward when we can't even count the ballots because there are electronic machines and people didn't have a fair chance to get to the polls. Let's fix the dark money and embrace equal voice.

I am concerned that time is short to save our Republic because the money has so piled up under this strategy of government by and for the powerful that over the last decades, while the wages and benefits of ordinary people have been flat or declining, the wealth of that small circle of power has gone through the roof.

In the first three decades after World War II, everyone participated. It was the spirit of the war. We were all in it together. Let's make our government work for all. In the midseventies, it ended—vast wealth for the wealthy and only struggling opportunities or struggling conditions for those ordinary Americans.

We have to save our Constitution. Let's do it. Let's pass the For the People Act. Let's have a full and robust debate on this floor so we will all be accountable to our citizens and to our pledge and our oath to the Constitution of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO LEIF FONNESBECK

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to recognize a truly exceptional member of the U.S. Senate—not one who has a vote on this floor but certainly one who has wielded great influence and who has generated great appreciation from many of us who have had the privilege and the honor to serve on the Appropriations Committee, as you have.

Today I am here to speak about an individual who has been serving the U.S. Senate on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee now for two decades, and this gentleman is a friend by the name of Leif Fonnesebeck.

Leif started with the Interior Appropriations Committee under the helm of Chairman Slade Gorton from the State of Washington and then also, of course, the chairman of the full Appropriations Committee at that time, my friend and mentor Ted Stevens.

So it is actually a little bit bitter-sweet for me to be speaking about Leif and recognizing his contributions because after two decades—21 years—Leif is retiring from public service, and I understand, certainly, his desire. Twenty years is a good run. It is a significant amount of effort and truly an admirable career.

Both Leif and I are born and raised Alaskans, and you can never take the home out of your heart. It is something that is a continual tug, and so I can certainly understand his desire to spend more time at home with the incredible Alaskans whom we call friends

and family and to be in our amazing and extraordinary spaces.

As I mentioned, Leif is an Alaskan. He grew up there in Anchorage. Leif's mom was a librarian, and his father was a principal. He and his sisters grew up exploring and experiencing everything that is Alaska—all things great.

He attended East High School. He left to get his undergraduate degree in finance from here in Washington, DC, at Georgetown University, my alma mater. He then went on to law school and went out to the University of Arizona. Then, shortly after he got his law degree, he returned home to Anchorage, thinking that he was going to practice law there.

So he wasn't there for too very long when then-Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens tapped Leif and said: Look, I would like to have you come back to Washington, DC, and work for me on the Senate Appropriations Interior Subcommittee. So it was at that time that Leif made the big move, leaving from Anchorage and coming back here to Washington, DC, to work with his mentor and my mentor, Ted Stevens.

There are a lot of stories that go on around here. I have enjoyed getting to know the great Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, who had a great tenure working with Chairman Stevens on the Appropriations Committee, but you learn a lot from leaders like that, and I know that Leif certainly learned a great deal from the leadership of Senator Stevens.

He learned the art of the appropriations process, the art of trying to work with people on oftentimes contentious issues and places, but he really, truly learned the art of looking out for the needs of Alaska and Alaskans while meeting the needs of the Interior bill. He truly, truly served with distinction throughout his tenure on the subcommittee.

In addition to being an expert—and he really was an expert at his job—he is just a rock-solid guy. He gave solid advice, was willing to be helpful, and had a nature and a generosity that were really key to all those who knew him and who really had the pleasure to work with him.

Oftentimes, you can't say that it is really a pleasure to work with you. Well, it was a pleasure—it is a pleasure—to work with Leif Fønnesbeck.

Since becoming chairman of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, I have had the benefit of Leif's experience and knowledge of Alaska and of the appropriations process. I will tell you, when I moved over to Interior to take that on as chair of that subcommittee, it was a little bit daunting at first. It is an expansive portfolio—everything from the EPA to management of our public lands, to the Indian Health Service, to the BIA. It is all over the board, and it is a challenging one, including how we are dealing with wildfires and fire borrowing. We have some significant, significant chal-

lenges, but Leif was just that font of knowledge, not only from his experience on the committee but just from his experience in working with so many of these issues and working with so many of the people over the years.

He has been an absolutely excellent partner in navigating the really very difficult, complicated, and complex process that is required to produce funding bills in a manner that is viewed as fair and open and just true to the process. I am just so very, very grateful to his service to me, to the State of Alaska, and, truly, to the U.S. Senate.

For 21 years now, Leif's work on the Interior Subcommittee has impacted the lives of more Alaskans than he will possibly ever realize. His efforts, particularly on behalf of Alaska's Native communities, as well as our vast natural resources, have had and will continue to have a tremendous impact on our State and our people. Because of his work, more communities have access to clean water through new drinking systems. This was something that Leif really concentrated on. He would go out to the villages. He would see firsthand what it meant to the health conditions of families when they don't have access to clean and safe drinking water and when they don't have sanitation facilities, and he worked to address that.

More Alaskans are empowered to build their economy and create healthy communities through investments for new infrastructure and support for programs to address domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicide.

Every year we have been able to help those accounts move forward because the needs were so desperate and the needs were so urgent, and Leif helped to advance those priorities.

Support for rural healthcare clinics enabled more Alaskans to have access to care. There were the efforts that he went through to help facilitate Native hospitals, whether in Barrow or in Nome, and now down in the Bethel region with the joint venture projects, making sure that we have adequate, strong staffing packages. Investments in our public lands have helped to protect Alaska's tourism industry and our outdoor recreation opportunities.

He and I would go back and forth and forth and back as to whether or not the pedestrian walkway to allow visitors in Brooks Camp to view the bears was too Taj Mahal of a bridge or whether it was a bridge that was going to be necessary to protect the tourists from the bears when the bears got disinterested in the salmon that they were munching on.

Leif got down in the weeds. He got into the issues. He knew what was going on.

His efforts for local governments to construct roads and public schools are investments that will make a lasting impact on the State of Alaska and the people who live there. Knowing that this is a lasting impact that this individual, Leif, has made, is just so huge.

So as Leif is preparing to leave this place where he has been for two decades to go back home to spend more time there—whether it is fishing or just enjoying or going back to work—I know that he leaves many, many friends here. He leaves many that have such appreciation for his work, his character, his honesty, and just his professionalism.

I want to thank him for all of his years of dedication, his commitment, his service. I wish him and his dog Leo the best as they go back to Alaska. They will be hiking around, wandering around the shadow of the Chugach Mountains. I know, wherever it is that he goes, though, he will be involved in helping the people of Alaska.

I look forward to continuing to work with Lee in the next chapter of his life. It is indeed an honor to be able to speak about him and his good work today.

I know we are set to wrap up here. It is my colleague from Alaska who usually has the last word on a Thursday evening, and he speaks about the Alaskan of the Week. Senator SULLIVAN is not here today and will not be giving those comments, but I feel I have kind of filled in with giving him an Alaskan of the Week with Leif Fønnesbeck, a gentleman who has served our State honorably over such period of time.

With that, I yield the floor.

(Ms. MURKOWSKI assumed the chair.)

(Mr. WICKER assumed the chair.)

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2019

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, April 1; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 268; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture motions with respect to H.R. 268 filed during today's session of the Senate ripen at 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 1; finally, that if cloture is not invoked with respect to the motions filed on H.R. 268, the cloture motion with respect to S. Res. 50 ripen at 2:15 p.m., Tuesday, April 2.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:33 p.m., adjourned until Monday, April 1, 2019, at 3 p.m.