

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN J. SCATES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every day, the American farmer works hard to keep the faith and survive unknowns—from changes in the marketplace or the unpredictability of the weather, to changes in public policy. We saw that in the 1980s with disruptions in our export markets, depressed prices, creeping debt, and high production costs. We see that same today. Just like then, Illinois farm families have a trusted person fighting to keep their operations strong and to help pave the way for a stronger future for farming—his name is Steve Scates.

I am here today to honor my friend Steve, who was recently named one of this year's Southern Illinois University Distinguished Alumni. He has more than earned this prestigious recognition.

A native of Shawneetown in southern Illinois, Steve has worked his entire life in agriculture, from production agriculture with his grandfather, who founded Pat Scates and Sons Farm, to developing public policy that supports our farmers. Ever since he earned his bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University in 1959 in animal sciences, Steve has been actively involved in a wide range of professional agricultural organizations, including in several leadership posts, like chair of the Illinois Soybean Association board of directors.

President Bill Clinton recognized Steve's experience and hard work supporting the Illinois farming community by appointing him the State Executive Director for the Illinois offices of the USDA Farm Service Agency, where he served for 8 years and played a critical role in the implementation of the 1996 farm bill programs.

He went on to serve as chairperson of the Illinois Council for Food and Agricultural Research. During his time there, he received more awards than can be counted, including the Farm Bureau Eagle Award, the USDA Secretary's Award, and the SIU College of Agricultural Sciences 2008 Outstanding Alumni Award.

With all the awards and recognition, Steve's career has really been about helping people. While he is part of one of the largest farming operations in Illinois, he has always worked to look out for the interests of the smallest of farming operations to ensure they received a fair shake.

Although today they say that Steve has retired from farming, I know that he is still actively involved and serves as a senior partner at Pat Scates and Sons Farms and on the board of directors for Scates Gardens, Inc. Steve is never far from his partner and wife, Kappy, and his heart is always with his fabulous family.

Illinois agriculture is lucky to have a champion like Steve and his family still going strong in the farming community. America and Illinois need leaders like Steve now more than ever.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 141, the confirmation of Susan Combs to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

I was necessarily absent but had I been present, would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 142, the motion to invoke cloture on Ryan T. Holte, to be a judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

I was necessarily absent but, had I been present, would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 143, the motion to invoke cloture on Rossie David Alston, Jr., to be U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

I was necessarily absent but, had I been present, would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 144, the motion to invoke cloture on Richard A. Hertling, to be a judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 137 on the confirmation of David Schenker to be an Assistant Secretary of State. On vote No. 137, had I been present, I would have voted yea on confirmation.

I was also necessarily absent for vote No. 138 on the confirmation of Heath Tarbert to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and for vote No. 139 on the confirmation of Heath Tarbert to be Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. On vote No. 138 and vote No. 139, had I been present, I would have voted yea on confirmation to be Chairman and Commissioner.

I was also necessarily absent for vote No. 140 on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Susan Combs to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior. On vote No. 140, had I been present, I would have voted nay on the motion to invoke cloture.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, later today, I will be leaving with many other Senators on an official trip to Normandy, France, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the D-day invasion, also known as Operation Overlord. I

consider it a high honor to be part of a congressional delegation commemorating one of the most important days in the history of human civilization. It is especially important to make this trip at a time when relations with our traditional trans-Atlantic allies are under undue and unnecessary stress.

On June 6, 1944, the largest single amphibious assault in history crossed the English Channel and stormed the beaches of Normandy, code-named "Utah," "Omaha," "Gold," "Juno," and "Sword," names that will be forever associated with acts of uncommon valor and self-sacrifice in defense of human freedom and dignity. The Allied armada involved over 156,000 U.S., British, and Canadian troops traveling aboard almost 7,000 naval ships and landing vessels.

Even before the amphibious assault, in the darkened skies of that early morning, 13,100 American paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions made parachute drops near Carentan from over 2,000 Allied aircraft, followed by 3,937 troops flown in by day on 867 gliders as the opening maneuver of Operation Neptune, the assault operation for Overlord.

Three of the six Allied divisions involved in D-day were American, including the 29th Infantry Division. The 29th Infantry Division was activated on February 3, 1941, and based at Fort Meade, MD. It consisted of soldiers from Maryland and Virginia. In September 1942, the 29th deployed to England, where it made final preparations for the D-day invasion.

Operation Overlord called for Allied troops to storm ashore five landing areas along the 50-mile stretch of Normandy's shore. U.S. forces were responsible for taking Utah and Omaha. Securing Omaha was critical to the Allies' success and would be the site of the heaviest German resistance. The 29th and the 1st Infantry Division were responsible for taking Omaha. Nearly 10,000 men of the 29th formed the first assault wave on Omaha. At approximately 6:30 in the morning on June 6th, Allied forces encountered stormy seas, a low tide, reinforced obstacles, and a force of 50,000 German troops awaiting them on Normandy's 50-mile shoreline.

George "Billy" Forbes, Jr., of Bryantown, MD, was a radio operator in the 29th Infantry Division. Mr. Forbes described his feelings before the D-day invasion as "very anxious and very scared." He said that even though he did not know what to expect, he had a job to do, and he was going to do it to the best of his ability.

Lester Lease of Cumberland, MD, was only 16 years old when he lied about his age to join the Army. He was a sergeant in the 29th when he landed at Omaha Beach. Mr. Lease stressed the difficulty of the amphibious assault. The "Higgins boats" could not get close enough to shore for the soldiers to get off on the land, so they had to swim through deep water before they could wade or crawl ashore. Many of