

When it came to women and children, she was there every day in that fight—the fight for a stronger Violence Against Women Act and the fight for the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, so women can be paid commensurate with their male colleagues. She authored the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act to maintain and continue the support for mandatory screening for newborns.

She fought for workers and middle-class America and manufacturing jobs for Americans and for equal opportunity by sponsoring the Employment Nondiscrimination Act, which passed on the Senate floor 6 years ago.

She proceeded to work on banking and financial issues. She was the lead on the SAFE Act Confidentiality and Privilege Enhancement Act, which had to do with some of the nitty-gritty of mortgage licensing. She worked to ensure that groups like Habitat for Humanity could lend money on a zero-interest loan to their homeowners and be able to do so without violating the legal precepts of American law. It was issue after issue.

When I think of her journey, I think about the parallel structure between her life and mine, in that she ran for the legislature in North Carolina the same year that I ran for the legislature in Oregon. I won a seat in the Oregon House and she won a seat in the North Carolina Senate. We both spent 10 years there. We both then decided that we should attempt to take our philosophy of fighting for the people to the U.S. Senate. We threw our hats into the ring at the same moment, running campaigns against incumbent Senators, and we both won.

I recall how every time I checked on how she was doing, she was always doing 5 to 10 points better than I was, and I just kept thinking: I just have to follow Kay Hagan's example. Then, before the campaign was over, she called me up one day, and we hadn't actually met much or talked much, and she said: I just want to check in on how you are doing.

We connected and bonded over our parallel paths and the fight we were in, which was such an intense effort of campaigning with the desire and determination to make this country a better place.

Of course, as I have noted, when she got here, she threw herself into so many aspects of our national life and our legal structure. I was pleased that we were both assigned by Senator KENNEDY to the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. We were able to work on the ACA, or the Affordable Care Act, to try to greatly increase health coverage and make it more affordable and available throughout America—really important for the people of North Carolina, the citizens of my State, and citizens across this country.

Then, we were both assigned to the Banking Committee, and it was Dodd-Frank. We worked on questions such as

how do we end some of the predatory lending practices? Both of us worked on payday-loan predatory actions, where interest rates could be 500 percent. We knew the damage done to our families across the country. We didn't succeed on that particular piece of legislation—the payday loan piece—but we were stemming in this fight from the same place. I so applaud her determination to end predatory practices and lending.

Many of the things that we were fighting for did get into Dodd-Frank in terms of fairness and mortgages so that homeownership would be a dream of homeownership that would result in equity for middle-class Americans rather than a nightmare of homeownership, in which interest rates would double after 2 years, and the family would go bankrupt, and they would be foreclosed on and could lose their house.

Apart from all of that, Kay was such a beautiful voice and spirit in this Chamber—cheerful, determined, thoughtful, gracious. She just made you enjoy being here.

I also think about her, as when she served, she was the healthiest Member of this Chamber. She paid a lot of attention to the diet she ate, the food she ate, how she exercised, how she brought balance to her life. That, too, was an inspiration to us.

Here we find that our journeys on this planet are pretty precarious. We never know what is going to happen on the next day or the next week. I think it is a reminder to all of us to use our moments wisely, to treat each other with the sort of graciousness she exemplified—this sort of spirited fighting for “we the people,” the people of the United States for whom she was determined to deploy and champion on the floor of the Senate.

Her illness and her death are a real loss to all of us. It is important that we carry her in our hearts. She certainly has a place solidly secured in my heart and, I think, the hearts of everyone who served with her.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:02 p.m., recessed until 4:03 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2020—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 949

Mr. UDALL. Madam President, I am very happy to be joined on the floor with Senator MERKLEY, who has worked with me for a long time on the For the People Act, and we will both be speaking here in that order.

The American people sent us here to do the people's business, but under Republican leadership, the Senate is not responding to what the American people need and want. We are not solving the kitchen table issues the American people elected us to face every day.

For example, we are not making sure every American has access to affordable, quality healthcare. We need to lower costs and take on Big Pharma, and we are not doing that. We are not passing commonsense gun safety legislation that 90 percent of the voters support in order to stop shootings in the schools, on our streets, and in our communities. If we can't pass bills that save children's lives, our democracy is not working. We are not even taking on the most pressing issue that faces our planet—climate change. Younger generations are urging us to act, but this body is running away from taking any action.

The number of gravestones in the majority leader's legislative graveyard—where urgent bills are stalled and buried—steadily mounts. Bills keep going into the majority leader's graveyard, but Congress will not and cannot do the people's business when the bills to fix our democracy also rest in that graveyard.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the For the People Act, H.R. 1. It passed it in March. At the same time, I introduced the Senate companion to the For the People Act, which has the support of all 47 Democrats and Independents in the Senate. Yet, along with a pile of other good and necessary bills, Leader MCCONNELL has buried the For the People Act.

The For the People Act repairs our broken campaign finance system, opens up the ballot box to all Americans, and lays waste to the corruption in Washington. These are all reforms that the American people support. Why will the Senate majority leader not let us vote on them?

There is hardly a day that goes by that we don't see evidence of why it is so important that we pass the For the People Act. Foreign influence in our elections is only growing, and 2016 was just the start. Associates of the President's personal lawyer have been indicted for laundering foreign money into our elections. The President's lawyer is under investigation for the same. Political ads from foreign sources are flooding social media.

Our bill fights foreign tampering in our democracy. It prohibits domestic corporations with foreign control from spending money in U.S. elections. It cracks down on shell companies that are used in order to launder foreign money into our elections. Our bill makes sure that American elections