

would attract several award-winning journalists, including my friend Mary D. Ferguson, who held a high standard on its pages.

Adapting to changing markets, the New Era expanded its operations. To serve the nearby U.S. Army installation, the paper's media group began publishing the Fort Campbell Courier. Other respected local papers, including the Princeton Times Leader, the Providence Journal Enterprise, and Dawson Springs Progress, joined the New Era's organization to further stretch the reach of its community journalism. In whatever form subscribers want to receive their news—in print, online, or even listening to a podcast—the New Era is committed to reporting on the stories that must be told.

Just last year, the paper joined another well-respected Kentucky news institution, the Paxton Media Group. With this partnership, the Kentucky New Era has the ability to continue thriving into the future. Through the years, I have enjoyed reading the paper and speaking with its top-tier professionals, and I look forward to many more accomplishments to come.

It is a privilege to congratulate the Kentucky New Era on its celebration of 150 years of journalistic success, and I hope my Senate colleagues will join me in saluting this community institution on its anniversary. I would like to extend my best wishes to the reporters, editors, and staff who have made the New Era a vital resource in west Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN CULLERTON

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this January, it will be 12 years since Illinois banned smoking in businesses. In 2008, the Smoke-Free Illinois Act went into effect and changed the lives of people throughout the State. There has been a 20-percent decrease in hospitalizations for conditions aggravated by secondhand smoke, like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and heart attacks. High school smoking rates have fallen more than 53 percent since then. This is real change. My friend, Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, led that fight to save lives. His storied career is one of working for good government and the safety of people. In January, he will be retiring, and I want to take this time to honor him.

John grew up in the village of Winfield in DuPage County. His family has deep roots in Illinois as one of the original settlers in Chicago in 1835. If you are wandering Chicago, you might come across Cullerton Street, which used to be 20th Street. It was named after John's great-grandfather's brother, Edward "Foxy" Cullerton. Edward, originally elected to Chicago city council in 1871, served one of the longest tenures as a Chicago alderman in the city's history. The Cullertons have been a staple of Illinois politics ever since.

Though it may seem like the Cullerton family is just filled with politicians, John's father and paternal grandfather were electricians. In fact, most of his immediate family was not political. John's role model was his maternal grandfather, Tom Tyrell, a real-estate lawyer in Chicago. At 12 years old, John wanted to be a lawyer because of him. His grandfather would give legal lessons at the dinner table. He would cut cherry pie and explain how corporations have shares.

John went to Loyola University Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree in political science. He stayed at Loyola to study law. John also served in the Illinois National Guard from 1970 to 1976. In law school, John experienced firsthand how litigation can bring change. As president of the Loyola University Chicago Student Bar Association, he saw his fellow students draft a complaint against the school for not providing adequate facilities for the law school. The students hired a lawyer and actually negotiated a deal without filing a lawsuit. A few years after John and his classmates graduated, a brand-new law school was built at the corner of Pearson and State in Chicago, which still stands today.

John's first job was working as a Chicago assistant public defender. For 5 years, he was on the frontlines of law defending people. In 1976, John earned his first political experience by being elected to be a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. Though John's immediate family was not very political, his cousin Parky Cullerton was Cook County tax assessor at the time. Parky's influence convinced him that he could run for the Illinois House of Representatives, and he won in 1978.

In 1988, John joined Fagel Haber, which later became Thompson Coburn Fagel Haber, where he still is a partner today. In 1990, John was appointed to fill then-State Senator Dawn Clark Netsch's seat. John won the seat on his own right in 1992, representing the Chicago Cubs' neighborhood of Wrigleyville, but he remained a loyal White Sox fan.

John thrived in the Senate. Between 2003 and 2006, he sponsored more bills and had more bills signed by the Governor than any other legislator. John dedicated himself to things like traffic safety, gun control, reforming the criminal justice system, and tobacco regulation. John would work with anyone for a greater good. He always made it a point of going out to dinner not just with Democratic State senators but with Republican ones too.

In 2008, the senate Democratic caucus chose John to be senate president. Immediately, John prioritized an infrastructure bill that had not passed in 10 years at the time. John has steered the senate through many tough times. He can proudly say that, during his time, Illinois passed two capital funding bills, marriage equality, an abolishment of the death penalty, school funding reform, and immigration reform.

John has encouraged bipartisanship and cooperation through all of it.

For 41 years, John has served with a sense of justice, friendship, and even comedy. He regularly performed at an annual event at the legendary Second City Chicago Theater. His impersonation of then-Mayor Richard J. Daley earned him the crown of Mr. Wonderful from the Conference of Women Legislators in 1979.

John retiring from the senate will allow him to spend more time with his wife Pam and his kids Maggie, Garritt, Carroll, John III, and Josephine, and his three grandchildren. I am privileged to call him a friend and look forward to all the new things he will take on in the future.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

● Ms. HARRIS. Madam President, I was absent but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 383 the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 479, Richard Ernest Myers II, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Madam President, I was absent but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 384, the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 489, Sherri A. Lydon, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Madam President, I was absent but had I been present I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 386, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 533, Patrick J. Bumatay, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

THE OVER-THE-COUNTER MONOGRAPH SAFETY, INNOVATION, AND REFORM ACT

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, today, the Senate passed S. 2740, the Over-the-Counter Monograph Safety, Innovation, and Reform Act of 2019, which will completely overhaul and improve how the Food and Drug Administration—FDA—regulates over-the-counter—OTC—or nonprescription, drugs. These medicines are used by Americans every day, but our regulatory system has been stuck in the 1970s and has not kept pace with innovation or the need to ensure appropriate consumer protections. Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON and I have been working on this legislation since 2016.

This legislation creates a modern regulatory system for OTC drugs, providing the FDA with new resources to be able to review changes to existing OTC drugs and allow the marketing of new OTC drugs. FDA will have the authority to take swift action to protect the American public if a serious problem arises and to make changes to how OTC drugs are allowed to be sold if the science indicates that the steps are necessary to ensure that these products are used safely.