

I have the privilege of serving as the senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee with the Presiding Officer, and this committee has the responsibility for vetting individuals who have been nominated to serve at the Office of Management and Budget.

During the confirmation process, I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Kan and getting to know him a little better and understanding better his goals for this important position. Mr. Kan clearly showed that he is intimately familiar with the issues that he would be tasked with managing at OMB, and he showed that he is willing to learn and work with others to ensure that he is doing everything he can to work productively on behalf of the American people.

In fact, Mr. Kan committed to work collaboratively with Congress to help us fulfill our oversight role. This is a shared responsibility: oversight. We all need to be interested in oversight. You don't have to serve on a committee that is focused on oversight—the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. You don't have to serve on a permanent Senate subcommittee as Senator ROB PORTMAN and I do—the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations—in order to be interested in oversight. You don't have to be elected to the U.S. Senate or to the House to be interested in oversight. This is something that we all should be interested in and all of us ought to be focused on, and we need to do it in a way that is collaborative so that we sort of marry our fortunes together and end up with the synergistic effect where the sum is greater than the parts thereof.

I was pleased with the words and the commitment he made to work collaboratively with all of us: Democrats and Republicans and our staffs. He also committed to working with the Government Accountability Office, GAO, to help them fulfill their critical oversight responsibilities.

I might add, GAO, which is our watchdog, does great work, as the Presiding Officer knows. They have been faced with an enormous undertaking, enormous challenges, with respect to the COVID-19 legislation we have passed and the need for resources to be able to do a good job in being the watchdog that we need.

I would just call on all of my colleagues to keep that in mind when we fashion the next COVID legislation and figure out how much money we need to provide for GAO to do the enormous job that is in front of them.

It is not often we get a nominee in this administration who is open to working with both sides here in the Congress and is understanding of the needs for the executive branch to be responsive to congressional oversight from this administration. In fact, Mr. Kan committed to responding to all oversight requests from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, including requests from

Democratic Senators. He also committed to ensure that OMB responds to all requests from GAO.

I know these commitments ought to be standard operating procedure in our democracy, which is built on a system of checks and balances, but they certainly have not always been the case in this administration, especially for folks nominated to positions like the one he has been nominated for.

Mr. Kan's willingness to work with Congress and his clear qualifications to serve in this role are a welcome change in a Trump administration nominee that deserves to be recognized. For those reasons, I intend to support Derek Kan, who has been nominated for this important position at OMB. I urge my colleagues—Democrat, Republican, and an Independent or two—to do the same.

I have the privilege of serving as the senior Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee. In our oversight role there over the Environmental Protection Agency, we ask a lot of questions. We ask a lot of questions of that agency, the leaders of that agency.

We don't always get the responses that we need. In some cases we get the back of a hand—no response for days, weeks, months. In previous administrations, Democratic administrations where Republican Senators were maybe in the minority, they haven't always gotten the kind of response that they deserved either, but I think they have gotten better than we are getting in many cases right now when we try to get information out of EPA.

I think the sort of spirit that I sense and have observed in Derek Kan, we could use that spirit from some other folks who are serving in this administration and maybe keep him in mind when someday we have a Democratic President and a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate.

So this is a vote I think we are going to take in a very short while, and I hope, when people come here to vote, they will keep in mind some of the words I have said and some of the words I quoted from other Democratic Senators and find a way to vote yes in this case.

We will hold him up to high standards. I think if he gets confirmed—and I think he will—that it is important that he continues to demonstrate the sort of values that I have found favorable in him today.

I just want to acknowledge that it is not every day a Democrat gets to hold the gavel at a committee hearing, and yesterday Senator GRASSLEY had some other business; he had to come over and vote on the floor and take care of some other business. There was no other Republican to take the gavel and conduct the hearing, and he called on a Senator from Delaware to assume the gavel—take the gavel and pound us all the way to the finish line in yesterday's hearing.

My wife said to me last night: What was the highlight of the day? And I

said that there were many highlights of the day yesterday, but that was probably No. 1.

With that, I yield the floor to my friend from Iowa, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I do thank the Senator from Delaware for bailing me out, as we sometimes say in Iowa.

I have two reasons for speaking this morning. No. 1, very shortly, this week is the 30th year of the Americans with Disabilities Act as the law of the land. There are plenty of reasons to recognize that law for the landmark that it is and how it has helped people advance in our society and get more equality, but also, I do it because a former colleague of mine from Iowa, Senator Tom Harkin, working along with Senator Bob Dole, worked really hard to get this landmark civil rights legislation signed into law. Since that day, America has continued to improve opportunities, inclusion, and access for individuals who live with disabilities.

As my colleagues and I work to defeat the virus, heal the racial divide, lower prescription drug prices, and restore the U.S. economy, let's take a lesson from the passage of the ADA, very much a cooperative relationship between Republicans and Democrats. Let's work together in good faith and work out our differences for the good of the American people—whether it was the Americans with Disabilities Act or, now, efforts to beat the virus and get the economy going.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. President, now I speak about an issue that each day, each year, every year for I don't know how many years I have spoken on this subject, but you will soon find out why this is an important day to me, as an advocate for whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers.

Earlier this month, the Senate unanimously declared today National Whistleblower Appreciation Day. Every year, we honor whistleblowers on July 30, and I want to tell you the history of that.

It was on July 30, 1778—I hope you heard that right: July 30, 1778—at the height of the American Revolutionary war that the Continental Congress passed the first whistleblower law.

It did so in support of American soldiers who had decided to blow the whistle on their supervisor. That supervisor was an American naval commander. It seems this commander had not been following the rules of war and had been brutally torturing British soldiers. Knowing his actions were against the Navy's code of ethics, the soldiers decided to blow the whistle to Congress. When they did blow that whistle, they got the full whistleblower treatment, the kind that I hear too often, even today. They were sued for libel and were thrown into jail.