

He has held more Senate party leadership offices than any other Member of either party. He has cast more roll-call votes than any Member in history—A record that he continues to break every day the Senate is in session. He has not missed a vote in 12 years, giving him a Senate career voting average of 99 percent.

Finally, ROBERT BYRD is 1 of only 3 Senators in history—that is 3 of 1,827—to have been elected to 7 full 6-year terms.

Not only has he broken all the records, he has also established an example for the rest of us and for the Nation of the best in Senatorial conduct.

ROBERT BYRD's service to the Senate has been characterized by hard work, attention to detail, boundless energy, and intense loyalty.

Mr. President, on October 21, 1988, I dedicated my final bicentennial minute to Senator BYRD and his remarkable contributions as a Senate leader.

And now, on June 10, 1996, my next to last day here in the Senate, I want to repeat the words I said 8 years ago:

The final chapter in ROBERT BYRD's history is not likely to be written for some time, yet it is safe to say that he has set a standard as a Senator, as a legislative leader, and as a statesman that will stand among the best as long as there is a Senate.

TRIBUTE TO TOM DASCHLE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, during my more than 11 years as Republican leader, it has been my privilege to serve across the aisle from three Democrat leaders.

Senator BYRD sat in the leader's chair for 4 of those years, Senator George Mitchell for 6, and Senator TOM DASCHLE for the past year and a half.

When Senator DASCHLE became leader in January 1995, I said then that I had learned that the only way the Senate can run effectively is for the two leaders to have a relationship based on absolute trust.

While Senator DASCHLE and I have disagreed on the vast majority of issues before the Senate, and while he used the Senate rules to the minority's full advantage—just as I did when I was in his position, our relationship has been one of trust and mutual respect.

In fact, Senator DASCHLE has seemed to enjoy the job of minority leader so much, that I have told him one of my wishes on departing the Senate is that he will continue to serve as minority leader for many years to come.

I have also told Senator DASCHLE that serving as a Senate leader when your party holds the White House is oftentimes more frustrating than serving as leader when the opposition party holds the White House. And it is my hope that he will experience those lower frustrations next January.

But I want to thank Senator DASCHLE. We both come from the same part of the country, South Dakota and Kansas, where the weather can do us in, or do the farmers in, which does ev-

erybody else in. We both understand the importance of agriculture, but we also understand the importance of other issues that affect our colleagues, whether it is health care or whether it is the WIC Program or food stamps or other things that I worked on a long time ago with another Senator from South Dakota named George McGovern.

So I just congratulate Senator DASCHLE for his great success as the Democrat leader. I thank him for the courtesies he and Linda have extended to me and Elizabeth over the past year and a half. And I wish him the best of luck—not everything he would wish, but the best of luck, particularly when it comes to his own personal work in the Senate and his own personal life.

He does a good job. He works hard. We do not surprise each other. We trust each other; no games. And that is what makes the Senate work.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business with statements permitted not to exceed 5 minutes in length, with Senator HOLLINGS to control 30 minutes and Senator DOMENICI or his designee to control from 1 to 3:30 p.m., the Democratic leader is designated to control from 3:30 to 4:30, and Senator COVERDELL or his designee to control from 4:30 to 5:30.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we slightly amend the unanimous consent agreement. The distinguished Senator from Massachusetts wants 6 minutes. I ask unanimous consent to yield him the 6 minutes now and that I be granted my full half-hour, until just past 1 o'clock.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator from South Carolina for his courtesy.

MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AND THE HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM BILL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the insistence of the House Republican leadership on forcing medical savings accounts into the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill has become the Trojan Horse that could destroy health insurance reform.

This untried and dangerous proposal does not belong in the consensus insurance reform bill. It has already been rejected by the Senate. A bill containing it cannot be enacted into law and signed by the President.

The Democrats and the White House have offered a fair compromise, which would provide for a controlled demonstration of the MSA concept to see if it should be expanded. But the House Republican leadership has said that it will be their way or no way. As Majority Leader ARMEY said yesterday, "I

will not give up medical savings accounts," and he dared the President to veto the bill.

Senator DOLE is the only one who can break this impasse and persuade House Republicans to abandon their intransigence and pass a bipartisan bill that the President can sign. Senator DOLE clearly understands how important this program is to the American people. When the bill was passed, Senator DOLE said:

Common sense has finally prevailed. Passage of this bill will not only improve our health care system, it could very well restore the faith of the American public that the work of Congress is not just a series of political stalemates. Even in an election year, we can work on a bipartisan basis to pass legislation that will improve the lives of so many Americans.

Senator DOLE deserves considerable credit for this bill. All of its reforms were also included, in one form or another, in the health insurance bill he introduced in the last Congress. It also includes constructive proposals that he offered for aid to small business, and to help families meet the high cost of long-term care, and to crack down on fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid.

Last week, Senator DOLE said, "I'm afraid if I leave and it's not done, it might not happen." He is right. No one else has the ability to persuade House Republicans to back off their extreme position. If Senator DOLE means what he says, he should postpone his departure from the Senate for a few days and pass this bill. He can do a great deal of good for the American people by staying for a few days and finishing this legislation.

Medical savings accounts are a highly controversial issue that does not belong on this bill except on the basis of a carefully controlled test. MSA's have the potential to severely undermine the current health insurance system that millions of Americans rely on—particularly those with serious illnesses or disabilities.

MSA's are likely to raise health insurance premiums through the roof and make insurance unaffordable for large numbers of citizens. They will discourage preventive care and raise health care costs. They are a multibillion-dollar tax giveaway to the wealthy and healthy at the expense of working families and the sick. Their cost could balloon the deficit.

The Kassebaum-Kennedy bill contains consensus reforms that virtually everyone agrees on. It guarantees that no American will be denied health insurance or be saddled with exclusions for preexisting conditions because they change their job or lose their job, or because their employer changes insurance companies. It provides help to small businesses that want to join together to negotiate lower insurance premiums of the kind that only large corporations can obtain today.

The bill is truly bipartisan. It passed the Labor and Human Resources Committee 16 to 0. without medical savings