

further if they just put that money into lowering their prices so that it is more affordable for every American.

I urge my colleagues and invite them to join with Senator DAYTON and me to urge the companies to change their approach and work with us to lower prices for every American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period for morning business for half an hour. Senator BYRD is going to give us his annual Mother's Day speech, which I have heard on a number of occasions, and I look forward to this one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this coming Sunday is Mother's Day, so recognized nationally. Of course, we all know that every day is Mother's Day. We should also know that simply having children does not make mothers. "Simply having children does not make mothers." That is a quotation that I have taken from John A. Shedd, a very apt quotation in today's culture.

Napoleon Bonaparte said, "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother."

All across the Nation, brunch reservations are being made, cards are being mailed, flowers are being ordered, gifts are being bought, and phone circuits will overload. It can mean only one thing, as I indicated earlier: This coming Sunday is Mother's Day. One day out of 365. Mother's Day.

In a great spasm of tender sentiment, Americans will set out to honor and celebrate the women most important to them—not Hollywood celebrities, not rock music stars—if stars we must call them at all—not fashion models, not athletes, but those who have devoted such energy and creativity to the timeless task of raising children and building families. I, too, wish to offer my tributes.

It is fitting that Mother's Day is celebrated in May, when the Earth is vibrant with new life. Mother birds are busy on the nest keeping hatchlings warm and their gaping mouths filled. In the tangled thickets, wild young are venturing forth from warren and den. The little foxes that, in the Bible references "spoil the vine," wrestle, and the little rabbits sample the first tiny wild strawberries. Butterflies visit the glossy, yellow buttercups and the snowy blossoms of the wild blackberries. The world seems as gentle, peaceable, and serene as any mother could wish for her children. Of course, we know the world is not always quite so benign, but we can still be impressed by those mothers who face tragedy

with great courage in order to protect and shield their children. The mothers who lost husbands on September 11 and remained strong and positive examples for their children, when bitterness and despair would be so understandable, are heroes and heroines each and every day.

Mothers set indelible examples, the effects of which last for generations. My own mother, whose early death during the great flu pandemic in 1918 meant that I would be raised by relatives, should have left no trace upon my character. After all, I was only about a year old when she went to Heaven. Yet her selflessness in thinking of me on her deathbed, and expressing the wish that I would be cared for by one of my father's sisters, left me with the deep and abiding assurance of her love for me.

I had three older brothers and a sister, and it was in that great influenza epidemic that she was taken away, as millions of other mothers were taken away—perhaps 20 million people around the world lost their lives during that great influenza epidemic of 1917–1918. It is said that 12 million people in India died from the influenza, the swine flu. Perhaps 750,000 people in America died.

As I say, it was her wish, my mother's wish, that I be taken by one of my father's sisters whose name was Vlurma. I believe my father had nine sisters and perhaps two or three brothers, but it was one of his sisters, a sister who had married Titus Dalton Byrd, who took me in response to my dying mother's wish.

But for her wish, Mr. President, I would not be here today. I would never have gone to West Virginia to be reared in the coal mining communities in the southern part of the State had it not been for that mother's wish. I probably would have never sworn the oath in entering upon the office of U.S. Senator had it not been for that wish, my mother's wish, that I, the baby, should be brought up in the home of Titus Dalton Byrd and Vlurma Byrd, the only child in that home.

The Byrds had one child before I was born. That child was named Robert Madison Byrd. That child died of scarlet fever. The Byrds moved away from North Carolina and to West Virginia and moved me with them.

At first I had been named Cornelius Calvin Sale, Jr., by my father and my mother. My mother's name was Ada—Ada Mae. The two wonderful people who raised me changed my name to ROBERT CARLYLE BYRD.

So my mother's wish is a priceless gift even now, all of these years later. And the woman who raised me, my aunt, imbued me with her quiet faith and reverence for the Creator and impressed upon me her work ethic. I always call her "mom." She was the only mother I really ever knew. There are millions of other men and women around the world who can speak of their mothers as I have spoken of mine.

They may have lost their mothers early or at some point along life's way. Many of them have sweet memories of those mothers. I do not have any memory of my mother, but somehow I know that her prayers have always followed me. I believe that. And I believe that she is in Heaven today.

The woman who reared me, my biological father's sister, was one of the few really, really great people I have known in my life. I had the good fortune to meet with many world leaders during my years in the Senate and especially during my years as majority leader in the Senate. I met with the Shah of Iran just a few weeks before he left Iran, never to return. I met with the current King of Jordan's father. I first met him 47 years ago. I met, as I mentioned earlier, the Shah of Iran. I first met him 47 years ago—in 1955.

I met with the President of Syria. I shook hands with Nassar of Egypt. I visited with and talked with German Chancellor Schmidt and German Chancellor Kohl. I met with Margaret Thatcher in her offices in London. I met with the Saudi family. I met with Prime Minister Begin of Israel. I met with Vice President Deng of China. I met with Mr. Khrushchev in the Crimea in his summer home.

I met with many other world leaders—Kings and Shahs and Princes and Presidents and Senators and Governors. These were outstanding personages, the leaders of the world. I had one-on-one meetings with these people. I met with President Sadat of Egypt. But the truly great people in my life and according to my standards were not national leaders or politicians, they were just common people. One of them was the man who raised me, Titus Dalton Byrd, a coal miner. I never heard him use God's name in vain in all of his life. He was a humble man. He paid his debts. He never spoke ill of a neighbor. He was a good man, as good as men can be. The Bible says no man is good, but he was as good as men become. He was a great man, in my sight.

The woman who raised me was a great woman. Neither of them had any education to amount to anything. I doubt that either of them had ever gone to the third grade in school. I was the first person in all of my family line who ever graduated from elementary school or from high school or from college.

They never made it to the third or fourth grade in school, but they were great souls, they had great hearts, they had honest minds, and they imbued me with a respect for the Bible and a respect for religion.

I can listen to any man's religion. It can be a man of Islam. It can be a Hindu. It can be a Protestant. It can be a Jew. I can listen to any of them. I can pray with any of them. That is the way I was taught.

These two people who raised me were great people. That aunt, as I say, I never knew any name for her but