

It was, as I said, a remarkable experience to listen to JOHN MCCAIN. He is a man of integrity. To show his humility, if you look at his biography on his Web site, it is four very short paragraphs. He doesn't talk about most of the things he has accomplished in life. You have to read on, not on his Web site, because he is a man of some humility.

MCCAIN and FEINGOLD are a lot alike. They both have tenacity, perseverance. They both cause the Senate and myself, someone who is trying to move legislation along, a bit of heartburn on occasion. I have sometimes asked myself about these two guys—oh, why are they doing this? They are doing what they do, even though there is some short-term pain for me and others who are trying to move legislation on the floor, because they feel strongly about different issues.

There are times when I am anxious and concerned about the issue they raise, but I never ever question why they do it. I know why they do it. I work as much as I can to understand that these two watchdogs work together on a number of issues, and they also work separately. They have different interests in life.

I couldn't let any more time go by without talking about how important it is for the body politic to have passed McCain-Feingold and how important it is to the country that the Supreme Court of the United States upheld that law nearly as we had written it. It has changed our lives, but I think for the better. Even though some people are upset it passed, I am very glad, and it would never have happened but for the perseverance of these two men. It will renew the vitality of our political system and restore our faith in Government. It could not have happened but for these two fine Senators about whom the States of Wisconsin and Arizona should feel proud.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). WITHOUT OBJECTION, IT IS SO ORDERED.

AMENDMENT NO. 2260

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to discuss amendment No. 2260, which has been filed. At a later point in my presentation, I will ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside. But I first want to talk about the amendment and about the plight of US Airways, a very important constituent for a Pennsylvania Senator, and a very important airline for the United States on domestic and foreign travel.

There is a long history of the problems which US Airways has faced, arising really out of the problems of 9/11,

when the airline industry generally has been subjected to great problems because of the reduction of airline passengers.

US Airways has been in the throes of reorganization, in bankruptcy proceedings. They have had difficulties obtaining a loan going back to December of 2002, when there was a critical point.

At the request of US Airlines, requests were made by me to Labor Secretary Chao, then-Treasury Secretary O'Neill, and Commerce Secretary Evans to strongly encourage the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to accept US Airways' pilot pension plan proposal. Ultimately, the PBGC declined to do so.

Then on January 9, 2003, Senator SANTORUM and I introduced S. 119 on behalf of the Air Line Pilots Association with the aim to protect their pension by allowing US Airways to terminate and then restore their pension plans. The resolution of the pension liability situation is to the completion of US Airway's plan of reorganization by the Air Transportation Safety Board.

Then on January 14, I chaired a hearing of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee on the pension plans regarding US Airways because it dealt with the labor issue. What we have sought to do here is to have a longer period of time than the 5 years which US Airways had to fund the program. We have asked for flexibility of up to 30 years—not necessarily 30 years but up to 30 years.

Had the 2-year relief or deficit reduction been in effect when US Airways faced the issues relating to its pension plan, there was the distinct possibility, perhaps likelihood, that US Airways would not have been in the throes which it is in today. US Airways has since added to the pilots' defined contribution plan, and the pilots would be very pleased to see the funding there offset the obligation which US Airways would have if amendment No. 2260 were to be adopted. That is a brief statement as to the status of the matter.

There was a unanimous consent agreement entered into on December 9 of last year which limits the first-degree amendments which are available. It was only last week that the US Airways pilots came to my office, to me, to ask that we introduce this amendment. Procedurally, the only way at this stage that it can be done is as a second-degree amendment.

I have inquired of the Parliamentarian as to whether 2260 would be germane as a second-degree amendment, and I have been advised that that is under consideration now and no final decision has been made. I thought it useful this afternoon to take the floor and go through the explanation, which I have.

I thank the assistant majority leader for the Democrats, the Senator from Nevada, for coming to the floor so that he would be present to hear what I have had to say.

I now ask unanimous consent that the pending second-degree amendment be set aside so that this second-degree amendment may be considered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, the Parliamentarians have not had an opportunity to study this in detail. Therefore, they are not at this time ready to rule on whether or not this amendment is in order. A number of people have called our cloakroom, recognizing that as soon as the Parliamentarian makes a decision, that will answer the question itself. Based upon that, on behalf of a number of other Senators, I object to setting this amendment aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I understand the situation as stated by the Senator from Nevada. I understand there are other Senators who represent States which have other airlines, and it is a tough competitive line out there. So having made the explanation, I shall await the judgment of the Parliamentarian. When the current second-degree amendment is disposed of, I will then be in a position to offer this second-degree amendment.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DR. HIRAM C. POLK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a world-renowned surgeon, inspiring educator, and fellow Louisvillian, Dr. Hiram C. Polk.

While most of us are sleeping in the early morning hours, Dr. Polk is already hard at work, making rounds and advising residents. Since 1971, he has served as the chairman of the Department of Surgery at the University of Louisville.

Hiram attended Millsaps College in his home State of Mississippi. As a favor to his chemistry professor, Hiram applied to Harvard Medical School. Since he wouldn't go to Massachusetts for a candidate-screening interview, Hiram received a visit from the late Arthur Guyton, M.D., Ph.D. Dr.