

our society and the basic building block of our communities. Governor Leavitt is both a good man and a strong leader. I look forward to working with him on the health care issues that affect our families so directly.

I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm Governor Leavitt as the next Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. President, it is my understanding the other side has yielded back their remaining time. Knowing no other Republican wishes to speak, I yield back the remainder of our time, as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming yields back the remainder of the time on the Republican side. All time having expired, under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Michael O. Leavitt, of Utah, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

AGENDA FOR COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is actively working in all four of those areas as specified in the title of our committee as there are major initiatives that need to be accomplished in each of those areas.

I have found that each Member who is working on an issue in any of those four areas—and I am not just talking about members of the committee, I am talking Senators as a whole—believe their issue should be the first issue to come up in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. As Chairman, I believe that we should work like the National Institutes of Health; that is, those issues that stand the best chance of making progress will get a higher priority. We will be working in all of these four issue areas because they are immensely critical to the people of the United States.

As a brand new Committee Chairman, I am asking all of my colleagues that when a Member has an idea in the areas of health, education, labor, or pensions, that you share it with me. I can bring the Member up to date on all

of the people who need to work on that issue so I can get them involved. It would be most appreciated. In addition, it would allow us to work prime pieces of your bill into any committee bill that comes out.

On a number of issues out there, there are multiple groups, and in many cases, bipartisan groups, working on their own bill. The way we will have to address those, of course, is to have the committee be the referee on which sections of which bills get into the final bill. I can assure Members we will look most favorably on Members who have shared with us in advance. If it is a matter of who is going to get the credit, I don't care on that. I will help preserve credit for your idea.

It would be helpful for me as the new chairman to have some kind of an idea of what Members are working on and what the timeframe is. We will let Members know how we are working on the same issue and our timeframe for the issue.

I have four outstanding subcommittee chairmen, and they have already sat down, looked at a list of things they need to accomplish, and together we have set some priorities and have begun to put together action plans on each of those bills. I have met with Senator KENNEDY to take a look at the 20-plus bills that need to be reauthorized before September 5. We are trying to organize those so that we can get as many of those completed as possible and to see where there is agreement; and where there is agreement, perhaps we can move them along faster allowing us the opportunity to concentrate on the other bills that need more work.

I didn't say the ones which we are in opposition to—because I know on most issues around here, if there is not agreement on the two conflicting ways to move a bill forward, there is often a third way that can be derived. A lot of the time the way committees work, as we get involved in an issue, is if there is a section that people do not agree on, quite often we can have those Members interested in that section go off for a little bit and hammer it out. Typically, they come back with the third way that they can agree upon. Quite often the committee agrees on it as well.

In committee, usually, we can get agreement on 80 percent of an issue. Generally, the 80 percent is what is passed through the committee if there is bipartisan support, if it appears to have bipartisan support. Unfortunately for the American public and television, when people see us debate in the Senate it is on that other 20 percent, the 20 percent we did not agree on in committee, and for political reasons may not agree on no matter how long the debate continues. When we vote, after all the amendments are tallied, quite often we go back to the 80 percent that came out of committee with bipartisan support.

I am suggesting to my colleagues that if we can go by an 80-percent rule,

do the 80 percent we agree upon in committee, bring it to the Senate floor, and wrap it pretty quickly, then we can skip that other 20 percent. Overall, we could get a lot more done around here. In addition, it would be more collegial and it would lead us to being able to get more things done on a bipartisan basis.

So we are going to be trying that in this committee and seeing how it works. I hope it does not turn out to be the grand experiment that failed. I hope it turns out to be a model for a way we can have a Senate that is more agreeable and working towards solutions for the American people.

That is the approach we have taken on every issue that has been mentioned here today. We have already been working on action plans for those things to see if there is a way we can come up with an 80-percent package. If we can, we will move them along much faster than what people expect. But it will take a lot of work and a lot of concentration and, incidentally, quite a few hearings, too.

I have learned under Senator GRAHAM and Senator SARBANES and Senator SHELBY—those are all Banking Committee chairmen—that one of the ways to handle an issue is to try to get together everybody you can who is an expert on the particular area you are doing and draw on their knowledge—these are practitioners who have actually worked in the trenches on the idea—and gather the information from them and see if there is not, again, an 80-percent agreement.

There should not be a shortage of ideas in the United States. We are the idea country. If we can find some way to simmer those down and put them out as legislation, that helps people. That is what the HELP Committee is all about.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and seeing what sorts of things we can do to help health care in the United States so we can have more accessible, lower cost, higher quality health care. As you can tell from previous discussion, that covers a whole range of issues. The Presiding Officer at the moment, of course, is interested in the associated health plans, and so are a whole lot of other people in the Chamber.

We have talked about drug reimportation. We have a bill in that comes out of a task force, Senate file 4. It comes out of a task force last year that was led by Senator GREGG, who is my predecessor as chairman of this committee, a diligent, hard-working, knowledgeable task force leader who helped us put together about 15 bills that would do exactly what I talked about: increase access, reduce costs, help the quality. Those are included in a bill. It is not definitive, it is not the final answer, but it is a starting point for us to go on this great debate.

In education, we are going to do an education piece that makes sure people understand there are lifelong education

opportunities, that school is never out, that learning never ends. We have Head Start, which is preschool education. Of course, we have No Child Left Behind in our jurisdiction.

We are concerned about the number of high school dropouts there are today. We are also concerned about the Higher Education Act, which needs to be reauthorized, and the Perkins Act, which provides funding. All of those are things that need to be done. We have combined them in Senate file 9, with the Workforce Investment Act, which you will recall came through this body 2 years ago. Two years ago, it came through. The committee passed it out by unanimous consent, and it passed this body unanimously. But I think partly because of the Presidential election years, we were not allowed to have a conference committee. We were blocked from having a conference committee. That is an essential piece in making sure people have jobs.

I am fascinated that this generation that is in school now probably will not have the kinds of jobs our parents had where they went to work at one place, they worked there their entire life, and they retired from there. The generation in school now is going to probably have 14 different careers, and 10 of them have not even been invented yet. So there is a tremendous challenge to having learning capability and capacity and flexibility so this generation, this generation that is in school right now, will be able to get the best jobs in the world, not the best jobs in the United States, the best ones in the whole world so that any job that happens to be outsourced is one of the low-skilled jobs, one of the low-paying jobs, not the best of jobs. But that is a huge challenge for us, and it is one we will be working on with a primary objective to solve in the education portion of the committee.

In the labor portion of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, we want to make this a safer country for the workers. I put forward several recommendations for ways that can happen, ways we can provide more help to small businesses so they can know the best way to keep their employees safe rather than beaten over the head and fining them after the fact. We need to have them do the prevention, not the penalties. There is some common ground there that we can work on.

Of course, in the area of pensions, this is a very interesting year because a lot of pensions need a lot of help. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which I have already met with, has a huge challenge ahead of it to make sure people who have been putting into pension plans wind up with a pension. We do not want to have a large Government bailout. We want to have the pensions operate the way they were designed but with a backup so the worker does not get left behind. It is a huge work area. I am looking forward to the task.

With cooperation from everybody in this body, we can have some great bipartisan efforts that will make a difference to every single person in this country.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming yields the floor.

We are in morning business.

Mr. ENZI. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BOND. Further, I ask unanimous consent that I may be able to speak in morning business for as such time as I may require.

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

The Senator is recognized.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Chair.

TSUNAMI RELIEF IN INDONESIA

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today it is a real privilege for me to be able to report to my colleagues and the people of America on a magnificent relief effort underway in Indonesia, where the December 26, 2004, tsunami left over 115,000 confirmed deaths, with potentially tens of thousands more swept out to certain death in the sea, leaving no record of their disappearance, and hundreds of thousands of surviving victims left in precarious positions, with inadequate water and food, facing potentially life-threatening diseases.

On Saturday, January 15, a week ago this past Saturday, I walked through the primitive conditions in the mud, in the heat and humidity of Banda Aceh Airport to talk to the relief teams and the military personnel, Asian and American, gathered in a common cause. Some of these American troops are shown here in this picture. It was an extremely diverse group of individuals. They shared in the common beads of sweat dripping off the end of the nose from the oppressive climate. They had a compelling commitment to relieve the tremendous suffering of the people of Aceh and Northern Sumatra and a cooperative spirit that resolved questions and differences of opinion with speed and good humor.

The U.S. Navy and Marine helicopter crews, which had flown 600 missions delivering 2.3 million pounds of supplies to isolated locations cut off by the tsunami-destroyed roads and bridges, mingled with international relief agency personnel, personnel from other countries, Navy volunteers from the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN who joined with marines from the BONHOMME RICHARD, loaded U.S. Agency for International Development rice and purified water

from the carrier LINCOLN onto the helicopters.

The Indonesian military, through their Army, the TNI, provided security for relief forces against potential kidnapping and harassment by the free-Aceh movement, known as GAM, which apparently and fortunately was more interested in ensuring that people did not forget about them than in inflicting more casualties on the volunteers.

Navy fixed-wing pilots from the Lincoln, who were not that day flying off the carrier, came to work in oppressively hot tents to provide logistics control and support. USAID workers, who were among the true heroes of the effort, organized food, water, and medical supplies as directed by Indonesian government officials, to be put on helicopters or sometimes Marine hovercraft, VCACs, which could gain access to isolated regions along the shores, once the debris and human remains had been removed from the shorelines.

Even though the main work of removing bodies of victims in Banda Aceh had concluded days before, the State Department security official noted to me that each day debris from collapsed buildings was removed, a dozen or so body bags carried additional victims from beneath the rubble.

One of the first people who met me was Pierre King, the French leader of a unit from the International Organization of Migration, IOM, a critically important group of workers who had been on the scene from the beginning. He asked me to tell the American people that American troop efforts and that of volunteers had been outstanding. This was the theme heard time and time again from many different sources.

When I arrived at a concrete structure serving as the command center, Indonesia's coordinating minister in charge of relief efforts, Alwi Shihab, an old friend who had visited me in Washington, DC a week before the tsunami, expressed the profound gratitude of the people of Indonesia for the great work the Americans had done. He expressed his hope that the U.S. troops would stay in the country until Indonesian resources could take over the immediate relief effort.

Later, the Indonesian Defense Minister, Juwono Sudarsono, told Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz that the United States had been the backbone of the relief effort. Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and I later met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, often referred to, for obvious reasons, by his initials SBY. The President expressed his gratitude for the relief work of the United States military, and he said he hoped that Indonesia would be able to take over any further needed relief work within 3 months and probably sooner.

This entire effort and the saving of untold lives was made possible by the outpouring of voluntary assistance as well as the work of troops assigned to the region.

In Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, later I learned that when the United