

Ryan Crocker came at a seminal time to the Embassy in Baghdad, and in partnership with one of our great military leaders, General Petraeus—a true and equal partnership—those two individuals changed the course of history. Many in this body at that time had believed there was no hope for Iraq and that the situation could not be salvaged. Because of Ryan Crocker, David Petraeus, and many others, with their leadership we have just witnessed an election taking place in Iraq that was virtually without incident.

Ambassador Crocker will be the first to tell us there is a long way to go in Iraq. There are many challenges ahead, but we do have an ally, a democratic nation, and the hope of a society free of the oppression and repression that unfortunately has characterized the situation in Iraq for centuries.

So, again, I know in the future young Americans who serve this country will continue to be inspired by the performance and the dedication of Ryan Crocker. We will miss him. We will miss him enormously, but I know he will continue to serve this country in any way possible for as long as he lives. Thank you, Ryan Crocker.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENSIGN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

HONORING ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, today marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of one of this Nation's finest leaders. Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809 destined for greatness but with humble beginnings. It is remarkable and inspiring to study the life of Abraham Lincoln. Today is a fitting time to reflect on some of the lessons we can continue to learn from him, especially in light of the challenges we are facing today.

President Lincoln's rise to leadership was full of trials and setbacks, most of which would have deterred a lesser man but not Abraham Lincoln. Throughout his lifetime, he was the picture of incomparable character, willing to put his ego aside for the greater good, committed to freedom for the generations, and a true believer that he was not superior to anyone.

These traits may seem like words that are easy to put together, but to live your life by them is truly exemplary. It is especially remarkable in the face of adversity. It is said that trials don't build character, they simply reveal it. Well, President Lincoln

served in the highest office of our country at one of the most tumultuous times in our history. His character was revealed time and time again. Americans are still proud of his leadership and his vision.

During Lincoln's Presidency, our Nation faced the gravest of challenges. We were at war amongst ourselves, and the consequences of our leadership would go down in history. Either America would cease to exist, or we would survive, heal, and one day be stronger than ever. Abraham Lincoln made it possible for us to be here today as the United States of America.

Today, we face many overwhelming challenges. They are significant, but they are not as dire as the Civil War. We can work together to get out of this economic downturn.

In 1862, Lincoln declared:

The bottom is out of the tub.

It sort of feels that way today. All you have to do is talk to people to realize the numbness that is permeating our country. Those who have lost jobs or homes are facing a painful reality. Most Americans are not sure what to do. If you are thinking about buying a home or a car, you think many times about it because of the uncertainty of our economy today. We have to do something here that will boost the confidence of Americans. They have to become consumers again if we want to get this economy going. That means dealing with the underlying housing crisis that set off the bottom falling out of this "tub."

The other issue we have to remember is that the money we spend today will have to be paid for by our children and our grandchildren. So each dollar that goes into this stimulus bill needs to be spent efficiently, and it needs to be far reaching. Each dollar needs to go toward creating jobs and stimulating growth. That way, we can recover from this deepening recession and continue to grow.

Unfortunately, this so-called stimulus bill is not even close to ideal legislation. It will bury us in debt, reduce our creditworthiness as a nation, and only minimally stimulate the economy. It just doesn't speak to the opportunity Abraham Lincoln knew was possible in this country.

He once said:

There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. Twenty-five years ago, I was a hired laborer.

Americans have a unique gift in this country. That gift is opportunity—the opportunity to grow, change course, and improve one's circumstances.

One of the great freedoms we have in America is the freedom to fail. Abraham Lincoln knew a lot about that freedom. He failed many times, but he also knew about the gift of opportunity, and he took advantage of it. We have seen the resilience and ingenuity of the American people throughout history. Our job is to do what we can to let that promise grow and not get in the way.

I believe the stimulus bill we will vote on soon could have been vastly improved if it had been written from the beginning with Republicans and Democrats as part of the process. That is a lesson we should take from President Lincoln. The political process can be messy and petty. We should put our egos aside, as Lincoln did when he brought his greatest rivals into his Cabinet. We should focus on the end goal being the good of our country, not groups to whom each of us is beholden.

We should understand there are no guarantees when it comes to the future of our country. We always have to work to protect what has been defended for more than 200 years. Lincoln reminded us that "it is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all of our lives." If we ignore the consequences of our actions today, then we take for granted what is to come for the future of our great country.

President Lincoln was a visionary. On this special day, we cannot lose sight of the tremendous lessons of his lifetime. It is never too late for us to join together as Americans to create a better and a stronger future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. BARRIS. Mr. President, it is my great honor to stand here today and commemorate Abraham Lincoln on the bicentennial of his birth.

Abraham Lincoln's leadership during one of our darkest periods forever changed the face of our Nation. Because of his bold vision and undivided faith in the future of our great Nation, freedom and justice for all was realized. Without doubt, as this resolution affirms, President Lincoln "redefined what it means to be an American." Today, I wish to take a moment to recognize another part of his legacy.

In this resolution, it states that "despite less than a year of formal schooling, he developed an avid love for reading and learning." Lincoln's stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston, encouraged Lincoln to read, write, and think freely, even as she and Lincoln's father could not afford to send him to school. And herein lies the brilliance of Lincoln's rise.

From the backcountry in Illinois to the White House in Washington, DC, Abraham Lincoln rose to the highest office in the land by educating himself. In his first political address in 1832, seeking a seat in the Illinois General Assembly, he said:

I desire to see the time when education . . . shall become much more general than at present, and I should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to its advancement.

As President Lincoln showed us, education is the foundation of our future success. In this period of economic stress and uncertainty, we draw on Lincoln's legacy and move forward because of his strength.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. On February 12, 1809, our 16th President was born to Thomas and Nancy Lincoln in Kentucky. President Lincoln spent the majority of his adult life in Illinois where he became a successful lawyer and politician. But in between these periods, he lived with his family in the backwoods of Indiana, 20 miles east of Evansville. In these famous salt lick hunting grounds near the Ohio River, the young Abe Lincoln learned about farming, suffered the death of his mother, and grew into a man. Although his potential as a leader would not be fully revealed until later in life, his experiences in Indiana formed the basis of his self-taught genius and helped shape his belief system.

Abe Lincoln's family moved to Indiana in December 1816 when Abe was 7, arriving shortly after Indiana entered the Union as the 19th State. In Kentucky, the Lincolns had struggled with legal controversies related to the title to their land. They were attracted to Indiana, in part, because buying land from the Federal Government under the clear terms of the Northwest Ordinance would eliminate these troubles. Thomas Lincoln acquired 160 acres of land near Little Pigeon Creek in what is now Spencer County and set up a farm.

The family initially lived in a three-sided cabin, known as a half-faced camp. Abraham, who was always tall for his age, helped his father with farming chores. By age 9, he began to learn the detailed skill of wielding an ax, which later would be the basis for his backwoods "rail splitter" campaign persona.

Soon after arriving in Indiana, tragedy struck the family when Nancy Lincoln died of "milk sickness" on October 5, 1818. Thomas Lincoln married Sarah Bush Johnston on December 2, 1819. Sarah Johnston and her three children from her previous marriage joined Abe and his older sister Sarah.

Being situated in a sparsely populated region of southern Indiana made access to school difficult. The closest school was a great distance over rough terrain from the Lincoln farm, and Abe's attendance was sporadic, at best. In 1859 Lincoln wrote a letter to his friend Jesse Fell describing his early life and education in Indiana:

We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called; but no qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond readin, writin, and cipherin' to the Rule of Three. If a straggler supposed to understand latin, happened to so-journ in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizzard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three; but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I

have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.[sic]

Thomas Lincoln, who had received no formal education himself, saw little value in Abe's schooling. But Abe's stepmother Sarah encouraged him to read on his own. Abe immersed himself in the family Bible and borrowed books from neighbors. He read Parson Weems' "Life of Washington" at an early age, as well as such classics as Benjamin Franklin's "Autobiography" and Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe."

The first exposure that President Lincoln had to political argument came at a country store owned by James Gentry, a local land owner and friend of the Lincoln family. Abe worked in Gentry's store, soaking up conversation on politics and frontier life. As Lincoln grew, his horizons expanded beyond Spencer County. In 1828, he worked on a flatboat carrying goods for Gentry all the way to New Orleans. On this trip he encountered slavery for the first time.

The Lincolns moved to Illinois in 1830 where Abe went on to become a lawyer and State politician, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and finally President of the United States.

The strong feelings of pride that Hoosiers feel for President Lincoln are amplified by remembrances of the President around the State. For example, the Indiana State Museum located in Indianapolis houses the largest private collection of President Lincoln memorabilia in the world. Included in this collection are signed copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th amendment, family photos, and more than 20,000 other items. Additionally, the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial continues to fascinate visitors and preserve Lincoln's Hoosier legacy.

Hoosiers are proud to celebrate President Lincoln's life and the 14 formative years he spent in Indiana. The ties of the Lincoln family in Spencer County will never be forgotten, and new generations of Hoosiers will learn how Lincoln lifted himself up from humble circumstances to become a great President and a true American hero.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, today our Nation celebrates the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, a man who became one of the finest leaders America has ever known. Given his service to our Nation, it is fitting that we pause to acknowledge President Lincoln's lasting contributions to our society.

President Lincoln was a writer, an attorney, and a statesman, but above all else he was a strong advocate for the common man. This was due in large part to the fact that he was a common man. He was born into a family with modest means, became self-educated, and entered into a life of public service at the age of 23.

During his Presidency, Lincoln once remarked, "God must love the common man, he made so many of them." He gave a voice to the disenfranchised, the

destitute, and the dispirited, and even in the face of adversity, he stood strong in support of the notion that "all men are created equal."

He also led with conviction during a turbulent time in our Nation's history. As President, Lincoln guided our divided Nation with moral clarity and persevered when the fabric of our democracy was tested. He helped to heal our Nation after the Civil War and put America on a path to overcome the dark days of slavery.

Today, President Lincoln's virtue extends far beyond our borders. He has inspired generations of individuals seeking to advance the cause of freedom and liberty even when their voices have been silenced. These individuals find inspiration in places like Havana, where a statue of Lincoln still stands proudly along the Avenida de los Presidentes. I join them in hoping for the day when Lincoln's dreams can be realized and the people of Cuba can taste the same fruits of liberty we as Americans cherish.

On this day, we are reminded not only of Lincoln's contributions to our society, but also his vision, which continues to guide our Nation. May his life continue to inspire us and his words always serve as a source of hope. As he once wrote, "The cause of liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one, or even one hundred defeats." May God bless Abraham Lincoln, and may He continue to bless the United States of America.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 1 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:24 a.m., recessed and reassembled at 1 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. UDALL of Colorado).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

STIMULUS PACKAGE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will share a few remarks about the stimulus package that we understand is making its way here after going through conference. I believe there may be some opportunity to change what is in it. I hope so because one of the most disappointing aspects of the process we have been going through is that I was denied a vote on an amendment that would simply say that every business that gets contracts out of this job stimulus package will have to use the very simple-to-operate E-verify system that over one hundred thousand American corporations are using voluntarily.

With that system, you simply punch in the Social Security number of a job applicant in order to verify work eligibility. Employers run the social security number through the system and they receive information as to whether this individual has a legitimate Social