

I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 319, S. 1945, a bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to congratulate my colleague Senator DURBIN for his able articulation of his view. This is a matter that the Senate and the Congress has considered for quite a number of years. It has not decided to take this step to direct a coequal branch of government on how to conduct their business, and I don't think we should. So I think it would be inappropriate to pass this on a UC without a full debate and discussion and a full vote on it.

So I would say that.

Also, I would note the Justices have opposed this policy. I think we have a duty to respect the coequal branch of our government. They feel as though it would impact adversely the tenor and tone of the oral arguments. The Justices would also have to feel a burden and explain why they are asking a question, perhaps citing a case by name that all the lawyers would know but having to explain to nonlawyers now what is on their minds as a part of their process of questioning. So I think that is a factor.

I would also note it raises constitutional questions. Why would we want to push to the limit and perhaps push over the limit and try to dictate to a coequal branch how to conduct the adjudicative process? Not the political process; we are the political branch. Theirs is the nonpolitical branch, where Justices are given lifetime tenure so as to insulate them from pressure and to allow them to dispassionately decide complex issues. I would also note that in terms of what is said and how an argument goes, there is no difference, I suppose, between that and what goes on in chambers when the Justices meet in private and talk about what issues are before the Court and how they should be decided.

What is important in the adjudicative branch? What is the criteria and the fundamental essence of a judicial proceeding? Ultimately, it is the judgment. The judgment speaks. The arguments don't speak. The in camera discussions don't speak. The judgment itself represents the opinion of the Court. It is the law and the defining process.

I appreciate very much the work of my esteemed colleague. I know he loves the law; we both do. He believes this would improve justice in America. I can't conclude that to be correct. I believe Justices should be given the responsibility to conduct their branch consistent with their best judgment of how do to it. Therefore, I object. I thank and respect my colleague for his different opinion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 247, S. 671; that the committee-reported amendment to S. 671 be agreed to, and the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, it is my understanding the Judiciary Committee staff has been working on a package of important Judiciary Committee bills, including the very bill Senator SESSIONS has asked unanimous consent to move to—a bill which I quite likely will support.

Would the Senator be willing to modify his request to include the passage of other bills which are part of that package and have similarly important elements to them in terms of keeping America safe? They include the following: Calendar No. 246, S. 1792, the Strengthening Investigations of Sex Offenders and Missing Children Act; Calendar No. 233, S. 1793, the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act; and discharging the Judiciary Committee from further consideration of S. 1696, the Dale Long Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act; agreeing to a substitute amendment which is at the desk, and passing the bill, as amended?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the suggestion by the Senator from Illinois, as I believe I will be able to support all those bills, but I have information that Senators on our side oppose or have objections to two of them and would like to offer amendments or modify them. So I am not able to agree on behalf of colleagues that all the bills would be passed as written.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, until the time comes—and I hope it is soon—when we can reach an agreement on all four bills, I will object to moving one bill in the package.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would note that the Presiding Officer is a cosponsor with myself of S. 1792, the Strengthening Investigations of Sex Offenders and Missing Children Act of 2011, and perhaps we will be able to make that work sooner or later. I am sure we will.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING FURMAN BISHOP

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, this past weekend, Georgia lost a great citizen. Furman Bisher died in Fayetteville, GA, on Sunday afternoon of a tragic heart attack. He was the premier sports writer in the United States of America, covered every Super Bowl, every Masters, was at every major heavyweight fight.

From the day he started on his Royal manual typewriter until the day he died, he typed on that same manual typewriter that was over 60 years old. He was a brilliant writer, a compassionate individual, a great friend, and someone I looked up to very much. He was a pacesetter. He actually got the only interview of Shoeless Joe Jackson ever done by a reporter. He did it because of his cunning ability to be in the right place at the right time, and that twinkle in his eye that always made you want to take to Furman Bisher.

So as on the floor of the Senate today I pay tribute to Furman and his life, to all of his accomplishments in terms of the writing of sports in our State and around the world. To his family and loved ones, I extend my sympathy on behalf of not just myself but all of the citizens of Georgia.

IRISH E3 VISA BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon I had the honor of attending the annual Speaker's Luncheon celebrating the long and enduring partnership between the Irish and American people. Among the guests of honor were the President and Vice President and Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny. And this past Saturday, St. Patrick's Day, I joined Prime Minister Kenny, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to march in Chicago's annual St. Patrick's Day parade. As one of the 40 million Americans of Irish descent, the chance to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with the Prime Minister of Ireland twice in 4 days is a rare joy.

At the parade on Saturday, Prime Minister Kenny hailed Chicago as "the most American of American cities." It is also the most Irish of American cities, home to the largest population of Irish-Americans in the United States. On St. Patrick's Day in Chicago, the river and the beer both run green and it seems that everyone is Irish either by heritage or simply by osmosis.

There is good reason that Americans of all backgrounds embrace St. Patrick's Day with such enthusiasm. From our earliest days as a nation, America and Ireland and America have been united by unbreakable bonds of friendship and family and by a shared commitment to liberty and freedom.

In fact, there might not be a United States of America were it not for the Irish. That is not just my opinion. That was the assessment of General George Washington and of Britain's Lord