

is presented to individuals who have especially made contributions to the security and national interests of the United States, to people who have worked for world peace, who have found cures for incredible diseases, and who have done cultural and other significant things of public or private endeavors. To join that group I am, indeed, so honored. For the President to do this has been something that I could never have anticipated.

I have been very deeply honored to serve the people of Maryland and of this Nation. To the people of Maryland, I thank you. I could never have had the opportunity to serve in the public sphere in such a way had they not honored me with their confidence and trust by voting for me. I am so thankful for the opportunity that they have given me to actually serve my State and my country.

Yes, I am the longest serving woman in the Senate. But for me, it is not how long I have served but how well I have tried to serve. To me, service is about being connected to my constituents, staying close to them, making sure they don't fall between the cracks, and looking out for their day-to-day needs—whether a Social Security check, helping a veteran or working on issues such as college affordability.

For me, service has been rooted in the values I learned in my home and in my community. I think today of my father and mother, who worked so hard so that my sisters and I would get an education. They owned a small neighborhood grocery store. Every day at 6 in the morning, my father would walk across the street from our row house home and open up the door of his grocery store and say: Good morning. Can I help you?

That is the way I was raised, and that is what I have carried with me every single day; that is: Good morning. Can I help you? But they also saw that my sisters and I had a fantastic education. I had the opportunity to go to Catholic schools, and there the sisters taught us about leadership and service. But actually they focused on the values of our faith: Love your neighbor, care for the sick, worry about the poor, always insist that neighbors should help neighbors, and it is better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness.

We were also raised to believe in the American dream. My great-grandmother came to this country from Poland. She had little money in her pocket. Women didn't even have the right to vote when she arrived. She had a big dream in her heart. If you worked hard and played by the rules, life would be better for you. She never thought, coming as she did, that her own great-granddaughter would one day be a U.S. Senator. But then that is only in America, where my story has been possible.

Only in America do we have this incredible right to speak our mind. I got into politics as a protester. They want-

ed to put a highway through the neighborhood in which I grew up and some other neighborhoods in the city. I organized the "Hell no, we won't go" committee and took on city hall.

Do you know what is so great about this country? In others, they put you in jail and beat you. In this country, they sent me to the city council, and I beat the political bosses.

This is an amazing country. Our Constitution, the freedoms guaranteed in it—the freedom of assembly, the freedom to speak, and most of all, the freedom to serve and to be all that you can be—has been a marvelous gift.

In a few days, I will be honored by the President of the United States, but the real honor has always been to be here. I never dreamed such an honor would come my way, nor did I seek it. I am so deeply honored to be touched by this, and I am honored to be among the people who will get this award. Among those who will be honored is the dearly beloved Shirley Chisholm, whom I served with in the House. She was always unbought and unbosser. Willie Mays will be honored. He always brought it home and knew where home plate was. Barbra Streisand, who always hit the high notes, and, of course, even Yogi Berra, who shared my love of language, are going to be honored. Young, distinguished Americans like Katherine Johnson, who was one of the first African Americans in space, and Lee Hamilton, who worked both in Congress and in the private sector to bring about world peace, will be honored. What a distinguished group of Americans, and I will be glad to stand with them.

I wish to thank President Obama for this tremendous honor. I thank the people of Maryland for this tremendous opportunity to serve, and I thank the United States of America for enabling someone like me to follow her dream. I hope, in getting this award, that I will continue to make my pledge to be of service.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Hall nomination.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for about 6 or 7 minutes.

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

TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST FRANCE AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to express my deepest sympathies to the people of Paris and all those affected by the terrorist attacks of Islamic extremists. As we all know, hundreds of people were killed or injured in the attacks, including at least one American citizen. No one should be faced with horrific violence when attending a soccer game or concert or simply carrying out their daily lives. On behalf of Iowans, I stand with the people of France. I offer our support in recovering from and responding to those attacks.

Unfortunately, there is fear that similar attacks could soon take place on U.S. soil. There is even a video that ISIS released earlier today threatening to attack America. Moreover, if we follow the administration's announced plans to bring in thousands of new Syrian refugees, we could very well be letting in similar extremists who want to harm Americans. That is because it appears that at least one of the ISIS terrorists in Paris had recently registered as a Syrian refugee in the country of Greece. Until last Friday, he appeared to all the world to be no different from any of the other thousands of people fleeing the chaos in Syria. This could happen here too.

The No. 1 responsibility under the Constitution of our Federal Government is to protect the homeland and to secure the country against all threats. We must do all we can to prevent a terrorist style attack from happening here, but under the administration's proposed plan, we may not be able to stop such an attack. We cannot tell who among the thousands of Syrian refugees the administration wishes to resettle here are terrorists. One particularly alarming statement to this effect came from the Director of the FBI, James Comey. He was in a hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs just on October 8 of this year. Director Comey said "there are certain gaps . . . in the data available to us" in screening Syrian refugees. This data, which includes fingerprints, background and biographic information, is crucial for an adequate screening of potential refugees entering the United