

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 157 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Alexander	Fischer	Murray
Ayotte	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hatch	Reid
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Boxer	Heitkamp	Roberts
Brown	Heller	Rounds
Burr	Hirono	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schatz
Cardin	Isakson	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Cassidy	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Corker	Manchin	Thune
Cornyn	Markey	Tillis
Crapo	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	McCaskill	Udall
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	
Feinstein	Murphy	

NAYS—5

Lee	Sanders	Wyden
Merkley	Warren	

NOT VOTING—1

Cotton

The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany S. 2943, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, Thom Tillis, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, Cory Gardner, Orrin G. Hatch, Mark Kirk, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Mike Rounds, Lisa Murkowski, Dan Sullivan, John McCain.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the conference

report accompanying S. 2943, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 92, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 158 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Feinstein	Murray
Ayotte	Fischer	Nelson
Baldwin	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Franken	Peters
Bennet	Gardner	Portman
Blumenthal	Graham	Reed
Blunt	Grassley	Reid
Booker	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Heinrich	Roberts
Boxer	Heitkamp	Rounds
Brown	Heller	Rubio
Burr	Hirono	Sasse
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Scott
Carper	Johnson	Sessions
Casey	Kaine	Shaheen
Cassidy	King	Shelby
Coats	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Manchin	Tillis
Cornyn	McCain	Toomey
Crapo	McCaskill	Udall
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	

NAYS—7

Gillibrand	Merkley	Wyden
Lee	Paul	
Markey	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

Cotton

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 92, the nays are 7.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the conference report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany S. 2943, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators who wish to speak in honor of the Presiding Officer be recognized in the following order for up to 4 minutes each: me, the majority leader Senator MCCONNELL, the minority leader Senator REID, Senator SCHUMER, Senator HATCH, Senator LEAHY, Senator MCCAIN, Senator DURBIN, Senator ISAKSON, Senator MURRAY, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator COLLINS, Senator MIKULSKI, and Senator CARPER.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Delaware amend his request so that Senator MCCONNELL and I will use our leader time. That will not count against his hour.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Delaware.

TRIBUTES TO VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President—and it does bring me some joy to call you Mr. President. I am honored to be here today with so many of our colleagues, and I am grateful to Majority Leader MCCONNELL and Leader REID for their enthusiasm in pulling together this bipartisan tribute. I am honored to be joined by my senior Senator from Delaware, TOM CARPER, who will make closing remarks this afternoon.

Before I begin, I would like to remind my colleagues that there will be a reception for the Vice President in the Mansfield Room, after we conclude here, beginning sometime after 4. We have many Senators who wish to speak so we will move quickly through the order. I encourage my colleagues to submit their remarks for the RECORD, those who are not able to speak in the next hour. Their remarks will be combined with all the other remarks given on the floor, and the resulting speeches printed, bound, and presented to the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, in a place known these days for some disagreements, my colleagues—our colleagues, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—are all here today because we agree on one powerful and simple thing: our deep gratitude for the difference you have made in your decades in public service.

The greatest honor of my life is to serve in the seat that you held for 36 years—and not just literally this seat in the Senate but also a seat on the 7:15 Amtrak train down from Wilmington

every morning. You logged over 2 million miles on Amtrak and millions more traveling around the world fighting for our country, and as long as I have the privilege of representing our State in the Senate, I will be humbled by the challenge of living up to your legacy of fighting for and making a real difference for the people of our shared home.

Like so many Americans, I have long been inspired by your loyalty to your family, and I am so glad to see so many familiar faces in the Gallery today. This job requires a strong partner and teammate, and to Dr. Biden, Jill, your unwavering support for your family, for Delaware, and your country is something for which we are all deeply grateful.

As a son of Delaware, and of Catherine Eugenia and Joe Senior, you have never forgotten from where you came or for whom you are fighting. Even as Vice President, our fellow Delawareans have the blessing of a surprise visit week in and week out, to see you at the Columbus Day breakfast or Return Day or St. Anthony's Procession.

Whether meeting personally with world leaders you have known for decades, whether chairing the Judiciary or Foreign Relations Committees or just stopping by a Claymont diner, there is universal agreement about what you have brought to this work—your passion, your heart, your character, and your integrity. That is because you genuinely listen to people, you ask them questions, and then you lift them up. We know that when you give us your word as a BIDEN, you mean it, and you will keep it.

Your service as a Senator stands as a model for all of our colleagues and for me. Through challenging times, you always worked across the aisle, through eight Presidents. You were willing to reach across to anyone willing to roll up their sleeves and get to work for the American people.

So many families across Delaware and this country and I, myself, as we have struggled with loss—maybe the loss of a job or loss of hope or the impending loss of a loved one—have experienced the incredible personal comfort and power of a call from you. When it comes to providing advice and inspiration that touches our hearts and makes a real difference, no one—no one—is better than you. We know you will share our challenges, you will give us meaningful comfort and encourage us, and you will fight for us.

As we look ahead to next year and beyond, I know you and Jill have so much more great and good work to do, starting with the fight to cure cancer through the Cancer Moonshot. This next chapter will be every bit as exciting and meaningful as the life of service you have led for 44 years. What an honor to see you in that chair earlier this week as the majority leader led the Senate in a unanimous vote to rename a title of the 21st Century Cures cancer initiative after Beau. That bill,

which we passed finally just an hour ago, would not have happened without your leadership.

Now, let me close with a line you know all too well, a line you shared countless times in this Chamber, sometimes from this very desk. As the Irish poet Seamus Heaney once wrote, "History says, don't hope on this side of the grave. But then, once in a lifetime, the longed-for tidal wave of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme."

No one, sir, no one has done more to make hope and history rhyme than you. Thank you, Mr. President, for your service, your counsel, your advice, your friendship, and your leadership.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, who has been so generous with floor time and support this afternoon.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is great to see the Presiding Officer back in the Senate. It is good news for everyone he is in the chair. Good news for him because, as Senator COONS said, the rest of us have to call him "Mr. President." Good news for the rest of us because he has to let everyone else talk.

The amazing thing is, the man we honor today wasn't always a talker. He suffered from a debilitating stutter for most of his childhood. He was teased for it, but he was determined to overcome it, and so he did—with hard work, with determination, with the support of his family. It is classic JOE BIDEN. He has never stopped talking since.

He cites overcoming that stutter as one of the most important lessons in his life. It led him down a path few might have foreseen: winning election to the county council, securing an improbable victory for the U.S. Senate, becoming our Nation's 47th Vice President.

Now, the Presiding Officer would be the first to tell you that he has been blessed in many ways. He has also been tested, knocked down, pushed to the edge of what anyone could be expected to bear, but from the grip of unknowable despair came a new man—a better man: stronger and more compassionate, grateful for every moment, appreciative of what really matters.

Here in the Senate he heeded the advice of Mike Mansfield. Here is what Senator Mansfield had to say:

Your job here is to find the good things in your colleagues. And, Joe, never attack another man's motive, because you don't know his motive.

Look for the good. Don't attack motives. It is the basis of a simple philosophy and a very powerful one.

Vice President BIDEN says he views his competitors as competitors, not enemies, and he has been able to cultivate many unlikely friendships across the aisle—with Jesse Helms, with Strom Thurmond, with me.

Over the years, we have worked together on issues of mutual interest,

like Burma—and regarding the vote we just took a few moments ago—21st Century Cures, and the Cancer Moonshot.

We have also negotiated in good faith when the country needed bipartisan leadership. We got results that would not have been possible without a negotiating partner like JOE BIDEN. Obviously, I don't always agree with him, but I do trust him implicitly. He doesn't break his word. He doesn't waste time telling me why I am wrong. He gets down to brass tacks, and he keeps in sight the stakes. There is a reason "Get JOE on the phone" is shorthand for "time to get serious" in my office.

The Vice President is a likeable guy too. He has a well-developed sense of humor. He doesn't take himself too seriously either. When The Onion ran a mock photo of him washing a Trans-Am in the White House driveway, shirtless, Americans embraced it, and so did he. "I think it's hilarious," he said, but "by the way, I have a Corvette—'67 Corvette—not a Trans-Am." So you see what I mean.

JOE BIDEN may exist in the popular imagination aboard an Amtrak, but this son of a used car salesman will always be a muscle guy at heart.

And what a road he has traveled, from New Castle to the Naval Observatory, from Scranton to the Senate. His journey in this body began by the side of those who loved him; hand on the Bible, heart in a knot, swearing the same oath he now administers to others. It is a journey that ends now by the side of those who care about him still—those like his wife Jill, who understands the full life he has lived.

Here is a man who has known great joy, who has been read his last rites, and who has never lost himself along the way.

"Champ," his father used to say, "the measure of a man is not how often he is knocked down, but how quickly he gets up." That is JOE BIDEN right there—unbowed, unbroken, and unable to stop talking.

It is my privilege to convey the Senate's warm wishes to the Vice President on this Delaware Day as the next steps of his long journey come into view. There are many here who feel this way in both parties.

I am reminded of something the Presiding Officer said when he addressed the University of Louisville several years ago. It was one of the McConnell Center's most popular lectures ever. And as I sat beside him, he offered his theory as to why that might be: I think you're all here today—remember, these are young people, students. He said: I think you are all here today because "you want to see whether or not a Republican and Democrat really like each other," he said. "Well," he continued, flashing a smile, "I'm here to tell you we do." It was true then, and it is true today.

I hope the Presiding Officer won't mind if I conclude with some words directed to the Chair.

Mr. President, you have been a real friend, you have been a trusted partner, and it has been an honor to serve with you. We are all going to miss you. Godspeed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The minor-league leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, to everyone listening, JOE BIDEN's life has been the material of which movies are made.

JOE was born in Scranton, PA, to Joe and Jean Biden, the first of four children. As a young man, as we have heard about today—once in a while, though not very often, Senator BIDEN talks about his stammering. He didn't get any professional help, no therapy. He did it on his own, long hours of reading, mostly poetry. He would stand in front of a mirror and recite poetry time after time after time, watching himself to make sure he didn't contort his face when he stammered or stuttered. This wasn't easy for a young man. People made fun of him, but he knew he could do it on his own. He felt that, and he did it. He worked hard. He developed a rhythm and a cadence of speaking that helped him overcome his stammer to become one of the United States Senate's all-time great orators, without any qualification.

JOE was an outstanding high school running back and wide receiver. His coach said he had never seen anyone with such hands. His coach saw in JOE what we all see, a hard worker who refuses to fail. His coach said:

Joe was a skinny kid. But he was one of the best pass receivers I had in 16 years as a coach.

In college, JOE continued to display his athletic prowess, playing football for the University of Delaware.

This is quite a story. During spring break, his junior year—JOE and I were traveling from Indianapolis to Reno, NV, and he talked to me about this, just the two of us. I will never forget that conversation. He and one of his college buddies had gotten a tax return, and they were going to take a little vacation away from the cold of Delaware. They went to Florida. Frankly, they didn't like it. They had a few dollars left over from their tax returns, and I believe they went to the Bahamas. They got an inexpensive hotel. I was going to say "cheap," but I will say "inexpensive" hotel.

Right next to them was an exclusive hotel, and they noticed when the people came out of the fancy hotel off that private beach, many times they would lay their towels on the fence. JOE and his pal said: Well, those towels aren't even wet. They went down to that private beach, and it was there that he met a young woman by the name of Neilia, Neilia Hunter. I am sure that, just like Jill, she must have been a knockout to look at. She went to the University of Syracuse. She was on the dean's list. She had been homecoming queen.

That was the beginning of the relationship that they had. JOE had been smitten. After graduating from the

University of Delaware, he enrolled in law school in Syracuse to be closer to her.

The story of his and Neilia's relationship is stunning. I repeat, it was something that movies are made of. Without being too personal, I will say it the way it is because it is a wonderful story, and I can identify with it so well because of Landra and me. There came a time when her father came to her and said: You know, he is not that much. He comes from a family that is not like ours. And she said: Dad, stop. If you make me choose between you and JOE, I am going to choose JOE.

So that was that relationship. I repeat, Landra and I understand that story quite well. They were married a short time later. They had three children, Beau, Hunter, and Naomi.

After starting his law practice and serving as city councilman in New Castle, DE, JOE stunned and embarrassed a few of his friends and relatives by saying he was going to run for the Senate.

You will run for the Senate against a two-term incumbent, Caleb Boggs?

I think I can do it.

I am sure he said to himself: A lot of people said I couldn't overcome certain things, and I did, and I am going to do my best to overcome this race I am in. I am starting way behind.

JOE and his family went at this as hard as they could. They canvassed the entire State. They pulled off an incredible upset. JOE Biden was elected to the U.S. Senate. In every respect, JOE's life has been unique. It has been special. His election to the Senate was no different.

The great Constitution that leads this Nation stipulates that the person must be 30 years old to be elected to the Senate. JOE was 29 on election day. He turned 30 2 weeks after the election. Just a few weeks later, tragedy struck and struck really hard. Neilia and their three children were in a terrible car accident just days before Christmas. He had not been sworn in as a Senator yet.

His wife was killed, their baby girl was killed, and Beau and Hunter were grievously injured—hospitalized, of course. To say JOE was grief-stricken is an understatement. How can you describe how he felt? I am sure, as I have heard, he didn't know what to do. He had two boys to raise. He wasn't a man of great means. He strongly considered: I shouldn't be sworn in to the Senate; I can't do this.

He had friends, people who didn't know him who were Senators, who treated him as fathers. Without the help of Valerie, his sister, JOE BIDEN's life may have been completely different because with the support he got from her, the encouragement he got from Democratic and Republican Senators, and the fact that she moved in, took care of Beau and Hunter to replace their mom—she was there for 4 years helping with those boys.

JOE is a remarkable man. When I was in the House of Representatives, he agreed to come to the house in Nevada

for me. It was a big deal to get this senior Senator to come to Nevada. He came. Every place he traveled, he had one of his boys with him.

With the support of his sister and other members of his family, JOE embarked on a long, storied, 36-year career that was productive and unsurpassed in the history of the Senate.

That was not the end of JOE's difficulties. JOE is, as you can see now, a very well-conditioned man. He always has been. As a Senator, he suffered a massive bleed on the brain, and he was hospitalized for a long time. He didn't come to the Senate for a long time. When I got hurt, one of the first people to call me was JOE. He said: Look, the fact you are going to be missing a little time in the Senate doesn't mean you can't be a good Senator. That was the example that JOE BIDEN set.

He recovered, and he became chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Foreign Relations chair, author of many pieces of legislation—Violence Against Women—too numerous to mention.

In a love story unsurpassed, he also met a woman who has been by his side for 40 years, Jill Biden. It is an incredible love story. JOE says it was love at first sight. It was the same for his boys. JOE remembers the day that Beau and Hunter came to him with the recommendation: "Daddy, we were talking and we think we should marry Jill," not he should marry Jill. "We should marry Jill," a direct quote.

JOE and Jill were married, and before long, Beau and Hunter had a new sister, Ashley, and a new mom. There is not a family that I know of who is any closer, more tight-knit than the Bidens. JOE BIDEN loves his family above all else. He is a good Senator, a terrific Vice President, but he is a family man.

For the last 8 years as Vice President, he has traveled the world, meeting with dignitaries in trouble spots on behalf of this country, oftentimes at the direction of President Obama. He has done it with dignity—more than a million miles.

As we have heard from the junior Senator from Delaware, that pales in comparison to the miles he has traveled on Amtrak. He has traveled more than 2 million miles on Amtrak. He took the train home every night to Delaware. If we worked late, he would go to a hotel here. If it had been necessary, he would have gone more than 2 million miles to take care of his boys and to be with Jill.

Vice President BIDEN's time serving at President Obama's side has been historic. He has been the President's rock, his confidant, and his friend. I have been told that not by JOE BIDEN but by the President. JOE has had a stellar career as Vice President of our great country. He has used his skills and his experience to help shape American diplomacy.

Vice President BIDEN is helping lead the quest for a cure for cancer. His

Moonshot initiative is the most ambitious plan ever to accelerate cancer research. I say, through the Chair, to my friend LAMAR ALEXANDER, that this would not have happened but for the good man from Tennessee.

We know that JOE and Jill know firsthand the pain and heartache caused by cancer and the toll it takes on families. Tragically, just last year, Beau was diagnosed with terminal cancer, which took his life. He was somebody I knew well. He was an Iraq veteran. He didn't have to go to Iraq, but he did. He was attorney general of the State of Delaware.

Beau was a light to everyone who knew him but especially to his family. Beau's passing broke JOE's, Hunter's, and Jill's hearts and, of course, their sister's. As with all the other heart-breaking challenges and setbacks, JOE BIDEN continues his life's work. He is still the same kid that his coach praised. His No. 1 asset is that he works hard; he does the best he can.

JOE BIDEN continues to serve his country, and he will continue after January 20. He continues to do what is right. And above all, he continues to love and take care of his family.

I have been gratified to call Senator BIDEN a man of the Senate, Senator BIDEN, Vice President BIDEN, JOE. He is an awe-inspiring man, so Steven Spielberg, Hollywood, you should be listening. JOE BIDEN's life is that which movies are made of.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is such a pleasure and honor to rise to recognize a great son of Scranton—sitting next to me, another son of Scranton—a grandson of Ireland—sitting in this Chamber are many grandchildren of Ireland—and a Syracuse University graduate. How many others in the room can say that? More importantly than any of those, he is one of the most dedicated public servants, one of the most successful public servants I have ever had the pleasure to serve with during my time in Washington.

Everyone knows JOE is proud of his ancestry. His ancestors came from Ireland, as many millions have. He is deeply proud of being an Irish-American. Like so many others from the Emerald Isle, our Vice President inherited the gift of gab, and thank God for that because he has used his booming voice to speak out on so many issues.

We have only a little time today. I know my colleagues are eager to speak, so I will just focus on one of the issues that Senator BIDEN led the charge on and changed America. I worked with him on the Assault Weapons Ban and the Brady law when he was a Senator and I was Congressman and we were each head of the crime committees. But maybe the thing he was proudest of was the Violence Against Women Act. It sounds like a different world, but a few years ago, a few decades ago, rape and domestic violence and abuse

were considered in many ways lesser crimes—crimes in which the victim was as much at fault as the perpetrator. It was disgraceful. If you were beaten, abused, sexually assaulted, you faced a hostile, skeptical criminal justice system. That got at JOE BIDEN and his sense of justice, so he exploded the myths behind domestic violence.

I remember hearing the speeches against sexual abuse and put together the strongest ever violence against women law on the books. Not only did the law make women safer; it made men better. It moved our society forward.

Our work on these issues is not nearly over, but I am certain there are literally millions of women who have avoided pain and suffering—both physical and mental—because of the courage, the steadfastness, and the legislative brilliance of the then-senior Senator from the great State of Delaware.

I could go on and on and almost write a book on accomplishments like that where JOE almost singlehandedly changed the world. He was also a great friend and leader to so many of us.

I will conclude with one little story. I was elected to the Senate after 18 years in the House, and an issue I wanted to get going on was college affordability. I had run for the Senate on the promise of making college tuition tax deductible. So I get to the Senate, introduce my bill, make my speech, and get ready to lead the way on what I thought was my issue. We have all experienced this. A call comes into my office from JOE's chief of staff. Of course I spoke to him. "Mr. Biden has been working on this issue for 10 years. Go work on something else." That was the nice version. Naturally, me and my brandnew office were in a panic. I was chastened. I didn't know what to do. I am sitting on the floor and feeling really forlorn. Why did I even come here? I was a senior Member of the House. I feel an arm on my shoulder, and I look up. There is the revered and exalted Senator JOE BIDEN. He says to me: I understand you have your college tuition tax deduction bill. Go ahead, take the issue. I know what it is like for new Senators to carve their own path.

How many times can any freshman say any senior Senator has said that to them? They can't because he is unique. Not only is he a towering figure and superb man, but he has a good heart and looks out for the Members of this body. He always has, does to this day, and always will because I know in JOE's heart, with all of his accomplishments, he is still a Senator—our Senator.

Mr. President, I say to Mr. Vice President, thank you. Thank you for your heart and passion, thank you for bringing every ounce of yourself to public service, and thank you for that lesson of humility and leadership you taught me when I first came to this Chamber.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is an honor for me to rise and talk about our friendship and what you have done for this country.

I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant, distinguished leader, and dear friend, Vice President JOE BIDEN.

For more than three decades, I had the distinct privilege of serving alongside JOE in the U.S. Senate. As anyone who worked closely with JOE can tell you, he was no ordinary Senator. He had boundless energy and undeniable charm. He paired an unmatched work ethic with a disarming smile that dared you not to smile back. JOE's innate ability to befriend anyone—and I mean anyone, including his fiercest political opponents—was critical to his success as a legislator. His genuine sincerity endeared him to all, and his gregariousness transcended partisan boundaries.

Even in the most polarizing debates, JOE never let politics stand in the way of friendship. One minute JOE could be scolding you from the Senate floor, and the next minute he could be hugging you in the hallway, cracking jokes and asking about your grandkids. I am, of course, speaking from plenty of personal experience. It is no secret that JOE and I often found ourselves on opposite sides of almost every major issue—that is not quite true. We agreed on a lot of things. In countless legislative battles, JOE proved himself to be a worthy political opponent and an able sparring partner. Whether on the Senate floor or in the Judiciary Committee hearing room, JOE and I locked horns on a number of occasions, sometimes on a daily basis. Indeed, we were at odds about as often as we were on C-SPAN.

At the end of the day, I couldn't help but admire the man. You see, JOE BIDEN was beloved by everyone in this Chamber, even those he drove crazy from time to time, and I count myself among that group. Through his ability to forge friendship even amid conflict, he embodies the ethos of a noble generation of legislators—a generation that embraced the virtues of comity and compromise above all else. I believe this body—indeed, this Nation—could learn from JOE's example of kindness, courtesy, and compassion.

For 17 years, then-Senator BIDEN served as chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, overseeing some of the most significant court appointments of our time. Chairing the Senate Judiciary Committee is no easy task. I know because I have been there. The committee boasts some of the biggest egos on this side of the Potomac—or this side of the Milky Way, for that matter. It takes a certain kind of political genius to navigate the assertive personalities and lofty ambitions of its members, but JOE was more than up to the task. As both chairman and ranking member, he was tough and tenacious but also decent and fair. Through his trademark

work ethic, he won the respect of every member of that committee.

JOE also served admirably as the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. In this capacity, he played an indispensable role in shaping American foreign policy. When President Obama tapped JOE to be his Vice President, the Senate lost a seasoned statesman, but our Nation gained a wise and capable leader with unparalleled experience in public affairs.

JOE was the administration's bridge to Congress, often serving as an intermediary between the President and legislators. On more than one occasion, his close relationship with lawmakers and his deft negotiating skills helped our Nation to overcome some of its greatest obstacles. He was the President's trusted emissary and an invaluable asset in helping Congress resolve the fiscal cliff dilemma in late 2012—something I wasn't sure we could resolve. He was also a brilliant ambassador for our country, leveraging his foreign policy expertise in meetings with leaders across the world.

I am deeply grateful for my friend JOE BIDEN. I have long admired his devotion to his family, as well as his grace amid suffering, and he did suffer, and I know it. I was here. Having experienced tremendous loss in his family life, he draws from a rich reservoir of empathy to connect with everyday Americans. Ask anyone Vice President BIDEN has served: When you speak, JOE listens. He loves, and he cares. He is perhaps the most personable public figure in American politics today.

In the nearly 8 years he has served as Vice President, JOE BIDEN has become a fixture of American public life. Today, I wish to join my colleagues in thanking Vice President JOE BIDEN for his dedication to the American people. Although his tenure as Vice President is drawing to a close, I am confident that his service to our Nation will only continue. This is said by a Republican who loves JOE BIDEN and believes he is one of the truly great people who served here in this body.

I just want JOE BIDEN to know that we all respect him, and I think most all of us love him. Those of us who have worked with him really appreciated how he would from time to time put his arm around us, put politics aside, and speak the truth.

JOE BIDEN is a wonderful man. I wish him the absolute best as we go into the future, and I will be there to help if he needs it.

God bless JOE BIDEN.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I enjoy calling you by that title. I hope you do, too—because you know that you could easily hold that title as President of this body or President of the United States—you have shown your qualifications for either one.

But let me speak about your role as President of the Senate. It makes you

a Member of this body, a body that can be, and on some occasions has been, the conscience of the Nation. You have served longer in this body than any other member here. The fact is you came here 2 years before I did, so as the other longest serving member, I look at you as my senior Senator, and I am delighted to be your junior.

I think back to some of the things we did together, Mr. President. I remember when I was running for the Senate in Vermont in 1974, and people told me I was far too young to get elected to the Senate at 34 years old. My predecessor was somebody who had been elected here when I was born and served there until I arrived. You put your arm around me and you said, it would be nice to have an older person that I could look up to. I believe you were 32, and I was 34. But that helped.

Of course, little did I know until I came here how closely we would work together. We served on the Judiciary Committee throughout that time. We worked on such duties as Supreme Court nominations, civil rights, and the criminal justice system. Then, when you were chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and bringing the rest of the world American values—which happened to be JOE BIDEN values—how I enjoyed traveling with you.

I think of the time, Mr. President, when you and I, and our wives, Jill and Marcelle traveled together. We had been good friends throughout all of that time. I will take the liberty of telling one story. When the four of us were in Paris, we had gone out to dinner. It was a cold, winter night. We were coming back. I think Marcelle mentioned that the Eiffel Tower lights up on the hour. You and Jill stood on a bench and were hugging each other, the Eiffel Tower behind you. I snapped a picture. Now, we had a close friendship. We never lied to each other, but that was one time I lied to you because you asked me, "Where is the picture?" I said, I think I lost it. I apologize. We were conspiring to print out that picture, and I know your wonderful wife gave it to you for a wedding anniversary present with words to the effect that you "light up her life."

Well, you lit up many, many lives. I think of our Irish bond of friendship, stories I can't tell. Some of those closed-door sessions with other Irish-Americans, such as Pat Moynihan, Chris Dodd, and Ted Kennedy, when we would have some holy water together. Somehow it came from Ireland. It was usually at least 12 years old. And we would tell Irish stories. And after 42 years here, I know the rules well enough, I can't repeat any of those stories here. But they were good ones because it was a friendship and we worked together. We learned how to bring in others from both parties.

And, Mr. President, I remember you and others showing all of us how to find common ground, and we did things together. And I respect you so much

for that. I must admit, I learned something else on the Judiciary Committee. I learned the Amtrak schedule because, if we had a meeting that was going on a little bit long, we were reminded what time the train was going to Delaware. I know you kept in good shape because you could run to the station in 3 minutes and get on the train, where you would go home to Beau and Hunter and, later, Jill and Ashley—because even though you were a leader in the United States Senate, and later Vice President, you were, first and foremost, a father and a husband.

You and I and Marcelle talked about that this summer, when you came to Vermont for the Cancer Moonshot. I told you what an important part of our lives you have been. You have gone through tragedy and glory, but you have remained yourself throughout all of it.

And the memories of those evenings when you let this Irish-Italian boy come in and sit as a member of the Irish—we would speak of our values, we would speak of America, we would speak of friendship. That is why I admire you, Mr. President, and I am glad to be here on the floor with you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today in addressing a few thoughts directly to the occupant of the chair, to commend his long and honorable service to the United States and to thank him for his friendship. Mr. President—I know how much you enjoy my calling you Mr. President—you and I have served together in this body for three decades. We have been friends for almost 40 years, since I was the Navy Senate liaison and used to carry your bags on overseas trips.

I joked recently that I resented it ever since. But that was part of my job description—escorting and handling logistics for Senate codels, including making certain everyone's luggage arrived at our destinations. Back then, some Senators, unlike the 100 egalitarians who occupy the Senate today, could be a little haughty and high-handed. A few held an exalted opinion of themselves that exceeded the esteem with which their colleagues and constituents held them in. If they paid any attention to staff, it was only because we had annoyed them somehow.

But not my friend JOE BIDEN—he was fair and courteous to everyone, even people who did not always deserve it. He is always an example of how a powerful person with character and class treats anyone in a subordinate position. He treats them with humility, as God's children, with dignity equal to his own.

In the book "The Nightingale's Song," the late journalist Bob Timberg wrote about one military liaison officer, escorting a codel to Athens, who joined some of the Members in a tavern for a little after-hours merriment and

was later observed dancing on a table-top with Senator BIDEN's lovely wife, Jill.

I don't recall witnessing such an event myself, and I can't testify to it having actually happened. Neither can I imagine the temerity of that rascal, whoever he was. He was lucky the Senator whose spouse he made endure awkward moves he euphemistically called "dancing" was JOE BIDEN. Few other Senators would have seen the humor in it.

Many years have passed since we shared those adventures, and many events have transpired, personal and public, that enriched our lives with the rewards and disappointments, blessings and challenges. We were still young when we came to the Senate. We are old men now. Although you can't tell from looking at us, the Vice President is actually a little younger than me, though we both passed the Biblical threescore and ten.

This place, the Senate, has been central to both of our lives. Here we work together on our country's challenges. Here we fought and argued over the country's direction. Here we compromised and joined forces to serve the public interest. Here we watched history made and made our small contributions to it. Neither of us is the shy and retiring type. We both have been known to hold a strong opinion or two. When circumstances warrant, we would rather make our points emphatically than elliptically. I know that JOE appreciates the adage that I have tried to follow in my public life: a fight not joined is a fight not enjoyed.

When we have had differences of opinions over the years, we have managed to make our positions crystal clear to each other, perhaps in the persistent triumph of hope over experience. We both still cling to the expectation that we can persuade the other that he is mistaken. I think deep down we probably know better.

In addition to being regularly mistaken, here is what I have also known about my friend and occasionally sparring partner. He is a good and decent man, God-fearing and kind, a devoted father and husband, a genuine patriot who puts our country before himself. I know, too, that it has been a great privilege to call him my friend.

Mr. President, if I haven't made clear to you over these many years how much I appreciated your friendship and have admired you, I beg your forgiveness. We both have been privileged to know Members of this body who were legends in their own time and are remembered as important historical figures. But I haven't known one who was a better man than you. You are an exemplary public servant, a credit to your family, to the Senate, and to the country.

On behalf of the country and the Senate, thank you for your lifetime service to America. Thank you for your example of how to represent your constituents with honor and humility and how

to remain the same good guy that you were when you first got here. Thank you, most of all, for your friendship. My life and the lives of many have been enriched by it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there is a story about an Irishman walking down the street. He passes two guys who are fighting. He asks them: Is this a private fight or can anybody get into it?

Well, you know a little bit about that; don't you, Mr. Vice President? For 40 years or more, you have always been ready to fight for those who needed a champion and never walked away from a good fight for a good cause. Your public career has been marked by so many amazing victories but also by unbearable losses and sorrows. You have had joys and passions, determinations and immense accomplishments.

The list of your legislative achievements has been recounted on the floor today. One of them I am sure you are most proud of is the Violence Against Women Act. You made a big difference in the lives of so many people whom you will never meet, in protecting them and giving them hope in a hopeless circumstance.

Between 1993, when your bill was passed, and 2010, the rate of violence against intimate partners—almost all women—declined by 67 percent in the United States. We often wonder here, when bills we take to law are passed and signed by the President, whether they can make a difference. We know that your unsparing effort when it came to violence against women made a significant difference.

I had that in mind 9 years ago when I was riding around Florida in a recreational vehicle. It was with my fellow Senator from Illinois by the name of Barack Obama. He was running for President, and we were in the back of this RV as he was cruising through Florida. We were talking about potential running mates, someone who could be his Vice President.

We went through a short list. We came to your name, and I said to the soon-to-be President, then Senator and my colleague: You couldn't pick a better choice than JOE BIDEN. I know him as a person. I know him as a fellow Senator. I know his heart. You would be blessed to have him on your team.

He made that choice, even though at the beginning, I am sure both of you wondered: Is this going to work? It did. It did for your purpose and for his and for America's. I am reminded of that famous poet Seamus Heaney. He wrote:

History says, Don't hope
On this side of the grave,
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.

Obama-Biden—hope and history certainly did rhyme. The things that you have been able to achieve with this

President have made a difference in America to millions of lives. Whether we are talking about coming out of a recession where we were losing 800,000 jobs a month, making sure that Wall Street didn't make the same mistakes again at the expense of businesses and families across America, or making sure that some father did not face the heartbreak of a sick child with no health insurance. You made a difference in their lives.

Just this week, there is the Cancer Moonshot. Who knows, Mr. Vice President, what will happen as a result of that investment in your son's name. But I sense that something good is going to happen for a lot of people around this country. I am glad that the BIDEN name is closely associated with it.

Mr. President, there is an old story—a joke—about the Pope. The story goes that the day came when he said to his driver: You know, I haven't had a chance to drive the car in a long time. Why don't you sit in the back and I'll drive.

The story goes that the Pope started driving the car and started speeding and got pulled over. This policeman looked inside the car, then looked out again, and looked back and said: Excuse me. He got on his cell phone and he called the police station. He said: I have an extraordinary circumstance here. I have just pulled over a car with someone very important in it.

They said: Well, who is it?

He said: I don't know who he is, but he has the Pope for a driver.

The reason I remember that story is that one time I was on Air Force Two with Vice President JOE BIDEN. We flew you home to Delaware. I was going to catch an Amtrak train at Wilmington, and I asked you to drop me off.

You said: No, I'm going to take you up to the train.

So we get up to the train, and the train is pulling in the station. You look at what I have for a ticket and you said: That ticket is not good. You need a real ticket. I will get it for you.

You grabbed it and took off running, with the Secret Service trailing behind you as the train pulled into the station. I am thinking: Am I going to make this train? Is he going to make it back? You came running up the steps with the Secret Service trailing behind you while the train was stopped. All of these passengers were looking as the Vice President of the United States ran up to me, handed me a ticket, and said: Go ahead and get on the train.

Now, the people on the train had no idea who I was, but they knew if the Vice President was carrying my ticket, I must be somebody important.

Let me say one personal word. You and your wife Jill really embody what I consider to be the best of public life—not only your commitment to people who are less fortunate around the world but your genuine sense of caring and your good heart, both of you. I recall when my colleague Marty Russo of

Illinois had a son who was sick with cancer. There was one person who called every day to make sure that he was doing well.

Well, that is the way you not only build a friendship but you build a reputation as not just a glad-handing politician but someone who really, really cares. I have been honored to count you as a friend. I am honored that the President whom I love chose you as his Vice President. I am honored that we have served in the Senate together and that I can tell my kids and grandkids. I wish you the best whatever life brings you next.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a person who has had a tremendous impact on my life and my career in the Senate and also a tremendous impact on my country, the United States of America. I still remember to this day the date and time MITCH MCCONNELL called me in 2007 and said: Hey, we have an opening for a Republican on Foreign Relations and nobody will take it. Will you take it?

I did not know if that was a benefit—a perk or whoever—but I said: Anytime you are offered a gift, don't look a gift horse in the face. So I did it.

Two days later, JOE BIDEN saw me at the committee and said: I am glad you joined our committee. I am glad to have you. I have an opening on the Africa Subcommittee. I can't get a Republican to take it. Will you do it?

I said: Mr. BIDEN, I have never been to Africa.

He said: Well, you will soon. How about taking it?

I did. I have been to Africa 12 times since. It has become a passion in my career, and I give Vice President BIDEN a lot of credit for the influence he had on that. I also remember the day when the mock swearing-in took place down on the second floor, and I had my nine grandchildren here to watch me being sworn into the Senate.

At the mock signing ceremony, JOE stood there, and we all raised our hand, and we repeated the ceremony that we had done on the floor. Then JOE greeted each one of my grandchildren one by one as they walked by. When little Jack, who was then 7 years old, stopped, JOE BIDEN said: Jack, what do you like about the Capitol?

Jack said: Well, Mr. Vice President, there is no Lego store.

JOE BIDEN said: The next time you come here, there will be one.

I want to tell the Vice President that he is coming on January 2 to see me sworn in again. I have already bought the Lego box. It is on the desk in my hideaway, and I am going to tell him that Vice President JOE made sure he had Legos when he came back to the Capitol. You know the real character of a man and the real credit to a man is what influence he has on children. I can tell you from that story, it is just one of many that JOE BIDEN has had.

On me, personally, I will never forget the day JOE BIDEN called me as Vice

President of the United States and said: JOHNNY, I have got the mayor of Baltimore and the mayor of Philadelphia going with me to Panama City next week to look at the deepening of the Panama Canal. I know Savannah's port is important to you. I know you have been fighting with us to get the authorization you need to deepen the Port of Savannah. How about flying with me down there and let's take a look at it and let's do a press conference together. And I did and he did and we did, and today the Port of Savannah is being deepened to 47 feet. Panamax ships will be sailing through it in 4 more years. I am convinced it would not have happened at the level of the administration had it not been for JOE BIDEN, the Vice President of the United States but more importantly my friend.

JOE, I don't have the words to adequately tell you how much I appreciate you as a person and as a leader, but there is a little poem I know that says more about what you really are than anything I could say.

I'd rather see a sermon
Than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing
But example's always clear;
And the best of all preachers
Are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action
Is what everybody needs.
I soon can learn to do it
If you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action,
But your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver
May be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons
By observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you
And the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding
How you act and how you live.

JOE, you have lived the life of a patriot and you act like a gentleman. You are my friend, and may God bless you and your family and thank you for your service to the country and your friendship to me.

I yield back.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President—and it is a pleasure to say that. Some may know him as “the guy in the aviators” debarking Air Force Two or the man in the 1967 Corvette in the viral Internet video, gleeful, as he had the rare opportunity to drive himself around in his favorite car.

Mr. President, it is so clear that the American public has embraced this grinning, approachable, unstoppable life force known as Vice President JOE BIDEN, but little do many Americans know of the heart of our Vice President. They have caught glimpses of it in 1972, when his wife and daughter were killed in a terrible car accident and his two sons severely injured. It is hard to imagine that kind of devasta-

tion, and JOE picked himself up and was sworn in to his first term in the U.S. Senate from his son's hospital room.

Maybe they saw it last year when JOE's son Beau, following in his father's footsteps to be an extraordinary public servant and, more importantly, a wonderful father, lost a long and hard-fought battle with cancer. I know as a mother and grandmother myself that I will never understand what JOE went through.

Mr. President, again, JOE picked himself up and continued to serve our country as a strong, dedicated Vice President in the midst of a raucous election season when Americans needed him the most. JOE BIDEN's commitment to his family, his struggles, and his service encompass what it means to be not just Vice President and a brilliant husband and father but an American.

JOE grew up in a middle-class family who worked hard for everything they had. He was just 29 years old when he ran for a seat in the United States Senate.

Mr. President, you might have been young, but you already saw what divided people in Delaware.

He also knew that people across the State also held the same hopes for themselves and their families, and he believed he could work through those disparities. In an upset victory, he won a seat in the Senate in November of 1972.

Since his swearing in, JOE has worked every day on behalf of families in Delaware and for the entire country, especially the last 8 years.

When JOE lost his son to cancer, he launched a Moonshot for this generation to end cancer as we know it today. He is now working on behalf of every family whoever lost a loved one to cancer to push forward on medical innovations and discoveries. I am so proud JOE's Moonshot is included in the final Cures bill we just voted on this afternoon and even more so that the Senate renamed the provisions to support cancer research in that bill to honor Beau in calling it the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot. We will now use those investments to fight to cure cancer so we can look forward to a world where no family has to go through what the Bidens did and the devastation that millions of other Americans have experienced after being touched by cancer.

Mr. President, back when I was serving with the Presiding Officer, JOE, my friend, in the Senate in 1994, I had the pleasure of working with him to pass the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, as we know it. It was a landmark piece of legislation that changed the way our country responded to domestic violence and sexual assault. JOE has come out as a strong advocate for ending violence against women through his campaign, “1is2Many,” spreading awareness and working to help reduce dating violence and sexual assaults among students, teens, and

young adults. And his “It’s On Us” campaign has been a wake-up call to the epidemic of campus sexual assaults across the country. Women are safer today in America than they were 20 years ago due in part to JOE’s fearless leadership on these issues that affect too many in our Nation.

Despite everything he has been through or maybe because of everything he has been through, he gets back up and he fights on and he fights on behalf of every family in our country, and that is heart. That is heart, the way he always wants to make people happy, no matter what the circumstance.

Last time he was in Seattle, he brought a little stuffed animal—a little dog—to give to my granddaughter. Now, she is very shy, but the second he smiled and handed her that little dog, she became his best friend ever, and she keeps it by her side, JOE. That is why he is going to be missed, by his colleagues and by the entire country, because of his humanity. That is the JOE BIDEN I know and I want everyone else to know that too.

It has been an honor to call JOE a fellow Senator, Mr. Vice President, but mostly a great friend.

I want to thank JOE for what he has taught me and all of our colleagues through his service and thank him for his extraordinary and inspiring leadership throughout his life in the best of times and in the worst. JOE—and his aviators—will be sorely missed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

In 1974, a freshman Senator from Delaware named JOE BIDEN was identified as one of Time magazine’s “200 Faces for the Future.” That prescient prediction anticipated the more than four decades of contributions and accomplishments that followed. JOE BIDEN served six terms in the U.S. Senate and became Vice President of the United States, but he is exactly the same person today as he was when more than 40 years ago he took that first train trip from Wilmington to Washington to be sworn in as a United States Senator. He is everybody’s friend—but nobody’s fool. And while JOE BIDEN changed Washington, Washington never changed him.

It is an article of faith among those of us who know and love JOE BIDEN that nothing is more important to him than family. It is, therefore, a cruel irony that this good and decent man has faced so many family tragedies during his long and fruitful career in public service.

Although he has been sorely tested by several wrenching losses, Vice President BIDEN’s irrepressible spirit has never been broken. He is as optimistic about his country today as he was in 1972, when as a county councilman he defeated a long-serving Senate incumbent and began the journey that

ultimately led him to the second highest office in the land. With his Cancer Moonshot Initiative, JOE BIDEN once again has turned personal tragedy into a public cause that undoubtedly will save lives.

To know JOE BIDEN is to admire him, his warmth, his devotion to friends and family, his commitment to all things Delaware, and his fierce loyalty to his party that somehow never alienated those of us on the other side of the aisle. Perhaps that is due to the many thoughtful gestures the Vice President demonstrates every day.

How well I remember bringing my younger brother to the White House holiday party one year and running into the Vice President just as he was leaving after a long day of work. He instantly stopped and asked if we would like for him to give us a personal tour of the West Wing of the White House. For the next 45 minutes, instead of being driven home, the Vice President of the United States took my brother and me on the best tour of the White House that anyone could ever have. I still remember the shocked look on the face of the marine at the situation room when we arrived there.

Another wonderful memory that I have was of the time JOE BIDEN and I were named Irish Americans of the Year by the American Ireland Fund. I thought it was so telling that both of us brought our family members to the celebratory dinner, and both of us talked about our Irish mothers. Now, I do remember that JOE’s speech was considerably better than mine, but mine was much, much shorter.

In a time of almost suffocating partisanship, JOE BIDEN is a breath of bipartisan fresh air. People may disagree with JOE on 1 or 2 or even 10 issues, but nobody finds him disagreeable. It is often said that if you don’t love JOE BIDEN, it is time for some serious introspection. You may have a serious problem.

No one can say with certainty what lies ahead for Vice President JOE BIDEN, but this much is certain: He will face the future with unbridled enthusiasm, extraordinary energy, and an unwavering commitment to his family, his friends, and his country.

I thank the Vice President for his outstanding service to our country, but most of all I thank him for his extraordinary friendship to me. I wish the Vice President and his wonderful family all the best.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Vice President.

Well, Mr. President, we all take pleasure in calling you that. Mr. Vice President, Senator, foreign policy guru, the Senator who was tough on crime but a soft touch when it came to compelling human need, a longtime colleague, but most of all, I know you as my friend JOE. My friend JOE. It is

not only that I know you as my friend JOE, the people of Delaware know you as “my friend Joe.” The fact is, your colleagues, both present and past, here feel the same way about you and so do the American people.

You have a unique ability to make a visceral connection to people. You actually connect to them, not only on the abstraction of big ideas, of which you were more than capable, but I think your connection was hand to hand, heart to heart. I think when you talk with people, that is why you have this visceral connection.

Sure, you can debate the great ideas, whether it is national security or economic growth, but it is that heart connection you are able to make that I think has been one of your great, great signatures.

We in Maryland know you as a neighbor, the Delmarva gang from Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. We also know you as “Amtrak Joe.” I think that is so fitting because not only have you been a champion of Amtrak and ridden the train so faithfully—which has now become the stories of fact and fiction—but also Amtrak JOE is right because, really, in the way you have lived your life, conducted yourself in public service, you have kept America on track and going in the right direction because you knew what your destinations were. I salute you for that. You have done a great job in everything you have undertaken.

I know you because while others just go for the pomp and they love the policy—if I hear one more “I’m going to dive deep in policy,” I am going to shake my head.

I am like you. I believe that we do need policies that help people, keep our Nation strong and safe, help our people be able to help themselves, and make sure there is an opportunity structure here. But we are here to be champions of the people. That is what you have been, a champion of the people, and you have been a steady friend.

When I arrived in the Senate, I was the only Democratic woman. I have often said that, though I was all by myself, I was never alone. I was surrounded by the good men in the Senate, and particularly the Democrats reached out their hands and helped me.

Of course, my very good friend Paul Sarbanes, who is here today, was my senior Senator when I came and was my colleague and my champion, but you were right up at the top of the list too. I call the men who were so incredibly helpful to me, Galahads. You help me in every way you can.

In my time in the Senate, when I reached out to you, you were always there. When I reached out to fight for women to be included in the NIH protocols, you were there to help me. When I reached out to fight against the skimpy and spartan money for breast cancer research, you were there to help me. When we organized the women of the Senate, the Democratic women, to fight then-Bush on the privatizing of

Social Security, when we said we shouldn't rely on the bull of political promises while we fear the bear market, you joined right there with us, side by side, shoulder to shoulder. Whether it was equal pay for equal work or so many issues, you were always there when we called upon you. You were always such tremendous help.

I was also there to try to help you. I remember a day in the mid-1990s when I got a call from you. Maybe you remember that, but I remember it. You said you really wanted to stop violence against women. You knew of my social work background, my advocacy for what was then called battered women. You said: Can you help me kind of go over this legislation to make sure that the money goes to people who will help those women and not to people who just want to get grants?

So we worked together. We talked about the need for shelters. We talked about the reform of police, courts, and so on. Then you came up with that fabulous, fabulous idea to have a hotline. So it didn't matter whether you lived in Delaware or in Des Moines or in San Diego, there was always help on the other side of that line.

I was so happy to work with you and to support you as you led that battle through—as only a good man could—stand for women who were being battered in their own homes and facing danger.

Lately I checked on the statistics on that hotline. JOE BIDEN, since that hotline legislation passed, over 1.5 million have called that hotline. Many of them were in lethal danger—lethal danger. Because of you, JOE BIDEN, there are thousands, if not tens of thousands, of women and children alive today because you had the foresight and the fortitude to create this legislation. That in and of itself would have been enough for a career. But, oh, you did so many other things.

Now we know you are advocating the national Cancer Moonshot, but you have been a champion on finding the cure for cancer for a long time, whether it was for women with breast cancer or others. I am so pleased that in that cloture vote we are going to include \$352 million for that. So on issue after issue, we were there.

I know you have been a great leader, but I also know that behind great men there are also very terrific women. I think we owe a salute to Jill. She is a wonderful woman, a leader in her own right, with a belief in higher education, a belief in working at the community college level so people who had big dreams in their hearts but not a lot of money in their pockets could be able to go on to college. What a champion she has been there and also what a champion for our veterans and for our wounded warriors. Wow, she is just terrific. I know she has been at your side.

There are so many stories I could tell, but I want to wrap up with one. I met your mother. She was spunky. She

was feisty. She was a delight. If there is anything spunkier, feistier, or more delightful than an Irish mother, it is a Polish mother. I wish you could have met mine. Those two would have been kindred spirits.

Do you remember when the Pope came to Baltimore? The Pope was coming to Baltimore, and I told my mother I wanted to greet the Pope in Polish. My mother's response was: Oh, my God.

I grew up in a family that before World War II was bilingual. I was bilingual as a child, but during World War II we stopped speaking all foreign language, so my pronunciation is really awkward. My mother made me practice Polish words, how to say hello to the Pope and how to say goodbye to the Pope.

You and I were at the Baltimore-Washington airport. There goes the Pope in his popemobile. He is heading up, he is getting on "Shepherd Two," and you are saying goodbye: Goodbye Your Holiness.

I say: No, say it in Polish. You have a large Polish community.

I taught you how to say one simple phrase, "sto lat." In the tongue of my ethnic heritage, when you say "sto lat" to someone, you say may they live 100 years.

So, JOE, sto lat.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the presence in the Chamber of five former Senators—Senators Bayh, Harkin, Kaufman, Salazar, and Sarbanes—and to thank many Senators who have asked that their comments be placed in the RECORD.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD, given the lateness of the hour, the lengthy and moving remarks that former Senator and now Secretary of State Kerry has provided.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY
STATEMENT ON JOE BIDEN
DECEMBER 7, 2016

Mr. President: Almost four years ago this winter, after almost 29 years serving in the Senate from Massachusetts, and after five times the people of Massachusetts voted to send me to Washington—my Senate colleagues were kind enough to vote to send me away, but not far away, just up the street to the State Department.

So, as a prodigal United States Senator, I am especially grateful to Senator Coons for the privilege to share some thoughts about my colleague of a quarter century in the Senate, and my colleague of the last four years in the Obama Administration—the Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden. That Senator Coons—who sits in the Senate seat which Joe held for almost thirty seven years—organized this remarkable tribute says something about Delaware—a small state where politics is personal, where courtesy is still the currency—but it says much more about the kind of friend and mentor Joe has been to Chris, and to so many of us who have known the Vice President. It is, simply, the right thing to do—but the kind

of thing that doesn't happen enough these days in Washington, in politics, or in the institution which Joe reveres, the U.S. Senate.

I first heard the name "Joe Biden" about 38 years ago. 1972—The first year Joe and I ran for national office. We shared a set of friends and political teammates in progressive politics, friends Joe and I have shared to this day—and they shuttled between Wilmington, Delaware and Lowell, Massachusetts, trying to help both us to victory. In that improbable year, I lost and Joe won—and weeks later tragedy intervened and changed the trajectory of Joe's life not as a Senator, but as a father and a person. I won't forget reading his words back then: "Delaware can find another Senator, but my boys can't find another father." We are all grateful that Joe was persuaded not to give up on public service, but to be sworn in, and to rely—as the Bidens do in their remarkable way—on the closeness of family—of Val and Jimmy in particular—to help him be both a remarkable father and a remarkable public servant.

Twelve years as Joe was elected, I finally arrived in Washington—a junior Senator, second to last in seniority—and one of the first people to pull me aside and offer himself up not as a generational rival, but as a slightly older big brother ready to show me the ropes was the then, senior Senator from Delaware—two years older than me, Senator Joe Biden.

I loved serving with Joe—and I don't just mean we served contemporaneously; we were friends and partners in so many efforts—environment, civil rights, the empowerment of women, foreign policy—and always—always with Joe Biden, whether you agreed or disagreed with him, no matter where you were from in the country or where you stood ideologically, you knew exactly what you could expect: a person of conviction, a person of character, a person who studied the issues and never cut corners—and a Senator in the best tradition whose word was his bond.

For Joe, that's a quality that's deeply personal. The Vice President lives by a very old-fashioned code of loyalty: You always tell the truth, you never forget where you came from, and your word is your bond. And I can't tell you how many times in the Senate when I was listening to Joe negotiate or we were working on something he would say, "I give you my word as a Biden." And you knew you had a very special commitment that would not be broken. That never changed when he became Vice President.

That code also guided his approach as a legislator—not just in how he worked with his colleagues, but to how he approached the issues. I'd been a prosecutor back in the days when some people still argued that violence against women wasn't crime—but it was Joe Biden who was far, far ahead of the curve in the Senate—throughout the 1980's and 1990's—beating the drum on the Judiciary Committee to pass a Violence Against Women Act because there was no crime comparable, as he saw it, in robbing a human being of two things to which everyone is entitled, two words Joe talks about often: dignity and respect.

That is why he was so outspoken about the horrors happening in Bosnia and Kosovo—thousands of miles from our shores—and why as one of those most powerful voices on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he stood up to Slobodan Milosevic, looked him in the eye, and called him a war criminal. That's Joe Biden—on issues of moral clarity, you know exactly where he stands. It is no surprise to me then that long before he served in Iraq, his beloved son Beau volunteered to go to Kosovo and do legal work helping victims find justice, helping victims

reclaim dignity through the judicial system. For the Bidens, this was an article of faith.

Over the years, I had the privilege of traveling with Joe overseas—often with Chuck Hagel and Lindsey Graham. I saw firsthand that when Senator Biden traveled overseas, it wasn't government tourism, whether the Administration was Democratic or Republican. Joe always traveled with a constructive purpose in mind: To learn first-hand about foreign leaders and other perspectives—to forge relationships—and to advance America's cause. In long flights and long meetings headed into places like Afghanistan and Pakistan, again and again I saw someone who leads by listening, who leads by learning, and who speaks with conviction—wherever the place, whatever the language.

Joe's leadership as Vice President has been a terrific asset on domestic issues, and his fluency in the ways of the Senate a special tool called upon at many key moments by Leaders McConnell and Reid. But as Secretary of State I've been particularly grateful for the role he has played on foreign policy. Joe believes to his core that American diplomacy isn't about admiring problems—it's about solving them. When thousands of unaccompanied children showed up on our southwestern border, Joe Biden worked with Congress to provide funding to help Central America's leaders make the difficult reforms and investments required to address the region's multifaceted challenges—because he knew the security and prosperity of Central America are inextricably linked with our own. As the conflict in Ukraine has pressed on, Joe has worked hard—not only to keep the Minsk deal in place, but to encourage and help the government of Ukraine take on corruption and make necessary economic reforms that will help Ukraine flourish and thrive in the years to come. And again and again, in our breakfasts at the Naval Observatory and in phone calls from far flung places, he always encouraged me to keep pressing—to speak up and speak out, and to fight—even inside the Administration—for the policies I believed in, even when he didn't agree. That's Joe Biden.

We still joke about a trip that we took with Chuck Hagel to Afghanistan back in 2008. We went up to a forward operating base up in Kunar province. And our helicopter, on the way back, got caught in a snow squall in the mountains. And our pilot found himself effectively snow blind, and suddenly we were banking and heading down and braced for an emergency landing on this snow-covered road high in the mountains near Bagram Airbase. And Joe Biden turned to Hagel and me and he offered an alternative. He said, "Maybe we could keep the helicopter aloft if the three of us just started to give a speech." But laughter aside, on that frozen mountaintop, as we waited to be rescued, you learn the measure of a person. And throughout that time, what Joe kept coming back to was the gift of family, and the privilege of public service.

America has known Vice President Biden in moments of great triumph and also on occasions of immeasurable pain. We revere the dignity with which he carries himself through all of it. We admire him. We love him. And above all, we thank him—a great Vice President, a "Senate man" still to the core, and someone I know I can call on and count on as a friend long after we both leave office on January 20th. Thank you, Senator—Mr. Vice President—"Joe"—and I know you will carry on in contribution to the cause of country.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor JOE BIDEN, the 47th Vice President of the United States.

After I came to the Senate in 1992—known as "the Year of the Woman"—then-Senator JOE BIDEN invited me to lunch at his office in the Russell Senate Office Building. We sat at small table in his elegant office and discussed the importance of having a woman on the Judiciary Committee, of which he was chairman at the time.

This was in the wake of the Anita Hill hearings, and there were no women on the committee. It was a real honor when JOE BIDEN asked me to join. He then asked Senator Carol Moseley Braun to join, giving the committee two women for the first time.

Serving on the committee with him, I noticed immediately that he had a commanding presence. As I watched him chair the committee, I was impressed by the passion he displayed while working to slow the drug trade, protect women from domestic violence, and help advocate for a ban on assault weapons. These were issues that I, along with millions of other Americans, felt strongly about, and we had a champion in JOE BIDEN.

During discussions about a proposed crime bill in 1993, I told JOE I was working on an assault weapons ban. This was in the wake of a mass shooting in San Francisco that shocked me. I told JOE we had at least 48 votes and I wanted to introduce it as an amendment to the crime bill. He laughed—a big raucous laugh—and said, "Well, you're just a freshman. Wait till the gunners get to you."

He may have had his doubts, but he was a staunch supporter of the amendment, and with the help of President Clinton and CHUCK SCHUMER in the House, we were able to secure bipartisan support and pass the amendment. It was a proud day for me when it was signed into law.

JOE was right about the gunners, though. The gun lobby did come after us, and they continue to oppose commonsense gun laws today.

During that debate and in every fight since then, JOE BIDEN has been staunch, impassioned, and a committed partner.

That crime bill was a monumental piece of legislation. In addition to our assault weapons ban, it put 100,000 more cops on the street, protected children from dangerous predators and included a very important piece of legislation: the Violence Against Women Act.

It has been two decades since JOE introduced the Violence Against Women Act. In that time, domestic violence rates have decreased by 64 percent, conviction rates for abusers increased, and 3.4 million women and men have been helped by the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Beyond the numbers, JOE changed the debate around domestic violence with enactment of this bill. States and localities changed outdated laws. Victims were given courage to speak out and seek help, and millions of women felt empowered knowing that in Amer-

ica, they had the right to be free from violence and free from fear.

JOE's legacy as chair of the Judiciary is matched by his time leading the Foreign Relations Committee. From atop the committee, he was a forceful advocate for peace and stability around the world. He called for strategic arms limitations with the Soviet Union, helped secure peace in the Balkans, helped bring former Soviet bloc states into NATO, called for U.S. action to end the genocide in Darfur, and spoke out against failed policies in Iraq.

He was also a critic of the CIA's detention and interrogation program and backed our efforts to release the torture report. During heated debate, JOE made the argument simple and easy to understand: America will be stronger by saying the following: "This was a mistake, we should not have done what we've done and we will not do it again."

He was right, and our Nation is stronger for having the courage to admit that.

JOE BIDEN's willingness to speak the truth is one of the many reasons President Obama tapped him to be his running mate. The President knew JOE would discuss every issue with the same frank honesty—whether he was offering counsel in the Oval Office or chatting with someone on the train ride back home.

President Obama relied on his Vice President to oversee the recovery after the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. He was tasked with implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Ready to Work Initiative and to chair the Middle Class Task Force.

JOE BIDEN was the perfect choice for the job. He is the product of his Catholic faith and the values instilled in him growing up in Scranton. Those same values that he carried throughout his career in Delaware and into the Vice Presidency.

He is a tough individual who has faced adversity that would knock a lesser man down; yet through it all, JOE never wavered from his commitment to serving others.

To those of us who have had the pleasure of working with him and to millions of Americans, JOE BIDEN is a good and honest man who simply wants to make the world a better place.

After 44 years in this Chamber, the last 8 as the President of the Senate, JOE can leave knowing he has accomplished just that. The world is a better place thanks to you, and it is grateful for your service, JOE BIDEN.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, for more than 30 years, Vice President JOE BIDEN has held a big place in my heart. Through thick and thin, he trusted me to be his partner in so many fights, and I will be forever grateful to him.

JOE first impressed me after he took a stand against the Reagan administration's support of South Africa when it was still in the depths of apartheid. So when he asked me to help organize

women for his 1988 Presidential campaign, I was all in.

While that race wasn't meant to be, I fell in love with JOE's vision of "reclaiming the idea of America as a community" and his beautiful, persistent optimism and hope—qualities we all still love him for today.

I cherished our time serving in Congress together, and I was so honored that he asked me to carry the Violence against Women Act in the House. JOE was determined to put the spotlight on this quiet epidemic—and he has been doing just that ever since.

I took 5 years, but President Bill Clinton finally signed VAWA into law in 1994. It was one of JOE's many monumental achievements.

By then, I had won election to the U.S. Senate where JOE played a major role in one of my own biggest personal accomplishments: the Dolphin-Safe tuna label law. Well, if I am being honest, it was his then 8-year-old daughter, Ashley, who got him involved.

Schoolchildren across the country were boycotting their tuna fish sandwiches after learning that dolphins could be killed as tuna was caught, and Ashley was begging her father to take action.

I was so proud that JOE chose to partner with me on a bill that required companies that sell dolphin-safe tuna to prove that dolphins were not hurt in the fishing process. Like any good father, JOE wanted to show Ashley that he would come through for her—and he did.

Our bill became law in 1992, and it is estimated that it saves tens of thousands of dolphins every year.

JOE also served as an extraordinary chairman on the Foreign Relations Committee, where I am a member. He was gracious and respectful, listening to every viewpoint, but he also wasn't afraid to speak up and take charge. I thought he was very courageous to point out a better way to solve the civil war in Iraq, and I was so proud to stand with him.

For all of these reasons, and so many more, it is no surprise that President Barack Obama chose JOE BIDEN to serve as his Vice President.

And it is no surprise that JOE will go down as one of the most effective Vice Presidents in history because of his warm, open relationship with President Obama. They have spent a great deal of time together, exchanging thoughts and ideas, and JOE was one of the key advisors who influenced President Obama as he successfully confronted horrific challenges, such as: two wars; the worst recession since the Great Depression; and rising violence in our communities.

Who could ever forget JOE BIDEN's immense respect and gratitude for our men and women in uniform and their families and his determined fight to bring them home safely?

Who could ever forget how he shepherded the Recovery Act through Congress—a near impossible feat in this polarized political climate?

Who could ever forget his long history of fighting for community policing and to strengthen the bonds between police officers and their communities?

No one has fought harder for the things he believes in than JOE BIDEN—no one—and there is nothing that he will not do for the country he so deeply loves.

Love of country is second only to the love JOE has for his beautiful family. When he talks about his incredible wife, children, and grandchildren, you know they are his guiding star.

It is because of this love that we have all come to know and adore JOE, and for that same reason, it is why our hearts broke for him over the profound, unspeakable loss of his son, Beau. All of America mourned with JOE.

He had every right to stay down, but JOE is as resilient as they come. He likes to tell the advice that his father gave him as a child: "Champ, when you get knocked down get up. Get up."

Well, JOE always gets up. He gets up again and again and again.

And we are all so fortunate that he does because, from the U.S. Senate to the Office of the Vice President, JOE has never stopped fighting for the things he believes in—for civil rights, women's rights, worker's rights, economic fairness, a world-class education for our kids, health care for all, and a safe and peaceful world.

JOE has taught me so much, and I am so proud to call him my forever friend.

Many of you know that I love to re-write song lyrics.

This is what I wrote for JOE:

Joe is a many splendored thing.
He is tough and smart and strong and wise.
Winter, fall and spring.
He's for kids and health and child care.
Our Joe will always be there.
A smile, a glow,
It's not for show, it's true.
Joe worked with us for years and years,
And there is no sleep for our busy Veep.
He has hope not fears.
Whether guy or gal,
Joe is our pal.
And this we know is true,
Joe Biden, colleagues,
All love you.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today in honoring you and thanking you for the incredible devotion you have shown to the United States Senate and to express my deep respect for you—respect that I know the people of Michigan share.

You have been a longtime friend to me and to the people of my home State. One thing we have always had in common: our parents were both in the automobile industry. As of course you know, your dad was a car salesman, and my father owned an Oldsmobile dealership.

So we have both known, from the very beginning, how critically important American manufacturing is for so many people in Michigan and across the country.

We worked together, both when you were the Senator from Delaware and

then as the Vice President of the United States, to save the auto industry back in 2008.

You know that the only way we succeed is if we do everything we can to support and grow America's middle class, which you have done your entire career.

There are countless instances over your 40 years of service when you were on the right side of history: when you led the passage of the Violence against Women Act; in your work as the chair of the Judiciary and Foreign Relations Committee; through your wise counsel as Vice President and your ability to work with us to get so much done over the last 8 years; with Dr. Biden, who is here today, for your work supporting Michigan's military families and community colleges; and now in your effort to cure cancer through the Cancer Moonshot.

Early on in your career, you said that the work that we do here allows us to "literally have the chance to shape the future—to put our own stamp on the face and character of America, to bend history just a little bit." I would believe, as every one of my colleagues does, that you have done more than bend the future of America "just a little bit."

You have changed this Nation and you have changed this Senate for the better.

There is a great quote from a poet I know that you admire very much, William Butler Yeats.

It is a piece of advice that he gave out frequently to young writers. It goes: "Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people."

Yeats—like you Mr. President—understood that the best way to reach people is by appealing to their heart, meeting them where they are.

And I think, moving forward, we have to remember that we all have to reach people's hearts and strive to serve as well as you have.

Thank you for your service to this Senate and to the American people.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, it is fitting that JOE BIDEN ascended from Senator to Vice President—or as the office is known around here, President of the Senate.

JOE was elected to the Senate as a very young man. We have heard JOE talk about how hard it was after losing his wife, Neilia, and baby daughter, Naomi, in an automobile accident, just weeks before he was to be sworn in, to come to Washington and assume his duties. He credits his older colleagues like Mike Mansfield, Ted Kennedy, Danny Inouye, Hubert Humphrey, Fritz Hollings, and Rhode Island's Claiborne Pell, who opened his Washington home to the young Senator, with convincing him to stick it out, just for a few months.

Well, he did more than stick it out. He dove in. The Senate saved his life, he has said, in that time of grief. And in return, he gave his life to the Senate, serving the people of Delaware for more than three decades.

JOE BIDEN presided over Supreme Court nomination hearings as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He shepherded the assault weapons ban and the Violence Against Women Act. He served also as the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, facing down dictators and championing nuclear nonproliferation.

He is, of course, recognized in Senate lore as a particularly strong speaker and debater. From his familiar perch in the back row of the Chamber, JOE would hold forth on the merits of legislative proposals and the positions of his colleagues. If the Chamber was empty of Senators, he would even turn and deliver his speeches to the captive audience in the staff gallery behind him.

But JOE can always be counted on for telling it like it is. Not long ago, he was in my home State of Rhode Island to tout needed infrastructure projects. Now, Rhode Island has one of the highest rates of structurally deficient bridges in the Nation, and my senior Senator, JACK REED, and I have worked hard to bring Federal resources to bear in addressing that need. But JOE put it no uncertain terms. Standing under the East Shore Expressway Bridge on Warren Avenue in East Providence, the Vice President cried, "For 10 years you've had Lincoln logs holding the damn thing up! No, I mean go look at it. The press went and looked at it. If everybody in Rhode Island watched the news tonight and saw that, they'd try to go around the damn bridge!"

Whatever his style or accomplishments, JOE will always pin his success in the Senate on the personal relationships he forged so deeply and so sincerely, with ideological allies and strange bedfellows alike. "Every good thing I have seen happen here, every bold step taken in the 36-plus years I have been here, came not from the application of pressure by interest groups, but through the maturation of personal relationships," he said in his 2009 farewell speech. "Pressure groups can and are strong and important advocates. But they're not often vehicles for compromise. A personal relationship is what allows you to go after someone hammer and tong on one issue and still find common ground on the next."

That is why JOE BIDEN was uniquely well suited for the one job in this country with one constitutional foot in the executive branch and the other in the legislative. He was at the center of a number of high-stakes compromises between the White House, Congress, and the two parties. And every once in a while, he still got to vote.

"Except for the title 'father,'" he said, "there is no title, including 'vice president,' that I am more proud to wear than that of United States senator." JOE BIDEN is a great father to Hunter and Ashley, and to Beau, whose passing last year was felt by the entire Senate family. He served honorably as Vice President. But he will always be the pride of the Senate.

I thank him for his faithful service and for his enduring example. And I wish him and Jill great happiness in the adventures to come.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Vice President JOE BIDEN, a man who has dedicated his life to serving our country, working across the aisle whenever he can, and always doing his best to get things done for the American people.

I am proud to have known and admired JOE a long time. I first met JOE toward the end of his first campaign for the Senate, in the fall of 1972. My father, Stewart Udall, had been called to Delaware to help the young Democratic candidate with environmental issues. I tagged along with my dad and spent a day on the campaign trail with a man who would come to spend 36 distinguished years in the Senate and become our 47th Vice President.

The following summer, I worked as a staffer in his Senate office—writing constituent letters, researching policy issues, preparing press materials. That was my first job in the Senate.

In so many ways, JOE Biden is the same person now as then—caring, passionate, energetic, tenacious, and ready and able to get things done.

JOE gave me my first Senate job, and this January—44 years later—he swore me in for the 114th Congress.

I note that Senators from across our country—from both parties—have lined up to speak to JOE's character and accomplishments. We respect him as a colleague, and we love him for his passion and commitment to public service.

JOE has never forgotten his blue collar roots. He has never forgotten our country's working class. JOE has fought all his life to make sure the working class gets a fair shake. He sounded the clarion call in the last months and weeks of the Presidential campaign—that we not forget working families and, more broadly, America's middle class.

In his words, "The middle class is not a number; it's a value set. It's being able to own your house and not have to rent it; it's being able to send your kid to the local park and know they'll come home safely. It's about being able to send your kid to the local high school and if they do well they can get to college, and if they get to college, you can figure out how to [pay to] get them there, and when your mom or dad passes away, you can take care of the other who is in need and hope your kids never have to take care of you. That's JOE BIDEN's definition of the middle class, and the middle class has been clobbered."

JOE championing the working and middle class helps my State of New Mexico, helps all of our States.

His policy expertise is broad and deep but maybe in no area as much as foreign policy. He has spent decades working on international matters—as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as the committee's chair or ranking member, as President

Obama's foreign relations troubleshooter.

From my service on the Foreign Relations Committee, I have a keen appreciation for the complexity of foreign policy matters in today's world.

JOE's foreign policy is at once pragmatic and sophisticated. He has stalwartly promoted peace and nonproliferation. But he understands the need for military force when national interests are at stake, diplomacy is not an option, and such action will bear intended results.

JOE recently summed up what can be called the Biden Doctrine in Foreign Affairs. He identifies the broad themes of Obama foreign policy strategy and advises the next administration. The essay should be required reading for anyone serious about foreign policy, and I hope the new administration takes his advice to heart.

While JOE's legislative accomplishments are too many to list, I would like to underscore one achievement that has made a difference in my home State of New Mexico—The Violence Against Women Act.

As chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, JOE drafted VAWA and led the charge for enactment. Passed in 1994, VAWA reordered how the Federal criminal justice system handled rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence cases. VAWA gave victims needed protections and strengthened prosecutors' tools.

I was attorney general of New Mexico in 1994. In the wake of VAWA's passage, I formed the Violence Against Women Task Force. We got strengthened antistalking laws passed in the New Mexico Legislature in 1997.

While VAWA was easily reauthorized and strengthened during the 2000s, reauthorization became difficult in 2012. As Vice President, JOE was instrumental in breaking impasses.

VAWA represented a sea change for how our society addresses violent crime against women.

The law was reauthorized and strengthened in 2013, and now extends protections to gay and transgender persons, immigrant women, and on-reservation Native Americans.

Like JOE, I am a husband and father of a daughter. I am proud to have voted in favor of reauthorization.

We all know that JOE has faced deep, personal tragedies. But he has confronted tragedy with courage and love for his family and with an unimaginable determination to keep working for the American people—turning his own losses into ways to help others.

JOE and his equally capable, determined, and indefatigable wife Jill have brought new energy and urgency to the fight to cure cancer. The Cancer Moonshot has already had many successes. JOE turned the premature death of his son into actions to help others with cancer.

This week, the Senate that JOE gave so much to gave something back, sending the 21st Century Cures Act to

President Obama for signature. The \$1.8 billion cancer initiatives in that bill are the direct result of Vice President BIDEN's Cancer Moonshot initiative.

It is fitting that we named the cancer initiatives in the Cures Act after Beau Biden.

JOE BIDEN leaves the Vice Presidency, but he will never leave the fight for all Americans—Black, Brown, White, poor, working class, middle class, gay, straight, Muslim, Christian—everyone—fighting for what is right, fighting to make sure we all have a fair shot.

JOE's heart is as big as they come. I honor his decades of work, commitment, and accomplishments, and I look forward to JOE continuing being JOE—the same guy I met in 1972—working hard every day to make a difference in the lives of all Americans.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the contributions and the long and colorful career of Vice President JOE BIDEN—the pride of Scranton, PA—and of Wilmington, DE—and the pride of the entire United States.

JOE BIDEN lived, learned, and grew up among hard-working Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, when everything in America seemed possible—and it was. Remarkably, this gifted orator grew up with a crippling stutter—a challenge which he overcame through determination and perseverance. He displayed that same uncommon strength after he lost his wife and daughter in a horrific car accident just weeks after being first elected to the United States Senate.

Vice President BIDEN considered giving up his seat to tend to his injured children. It is one of this country's great fortunes that JOE BIDEN decided against that. Scarred by the tragedy and by a close brush with death himself and more recently by the loss of his son Beau, the Vice President has shown us the power of and the comfort derived from a deep personal faith.

When he was first elected to the United States Senate in 1972, he was only 29 years old. And in a Senate career spanning 36 years, Senator BIDEN left behind a legacy as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Perhaps his greatest achievement was his tireless advocacy for civil rights, especially the protection of women and children from domestic violence. The passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 is an enduring Biden legacy which we will continue to build upon for years to come.

And now, even as he is about to retire from political life, Vice President BIDEN has taken on a new cause: to find a cure for the disease which has claimed too many millions of Americans, including his beloved son, Beau. The Cancer Moonshot has refocused and reinvigorated our Nation's efforts to eradicate this devastating disease, and I was proud to support renaming the legislation to honor Beau Biden.

Vice President BIDEN is as honest and authentic a person as you will find, providing a welcome dose of humanity and authenticity to the business of governing. And he has served with great honor and humility.

I recall a dinner the Vice President attended at my home where, before he greeted a single guest, he made sure to spend time with my children—greeting them and engaging them in a real conversation. They have never forgotten that.

And, as the meal was ending, the Vice President said he wanted to hear from each of our guests. Now, this may come as no surprise to those of you who know JOE BIDEN, but he actually spoke at some considerable length about how important he thought it was to hear from everybody who was there. Two and a half hours into a dinner scheduled to last just 90 minutes, I think one guest got to ask the Vice President a question.

I know Vice President BIDEN and his exceptional partner, Jill, will continue to be engaged in the life of our Nation, so I will simply thank him today for four decades of public service—and pledge my continued respect for his many contributions to this great Nation which he loves so completely.

Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I want to join in honoring Vice President BIDEN's lifetime of service and sacrifice to our country.

Throughout his career, Vice President BIDEN has carried out his work with a sense of humility, integrity, and authenticity that often seems missing in today's politics.

He served as either chairman or ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee for 17 years. In this capacity, he crafted the Violence Against Women Act, which provided critical new protections to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The landmark bill also supported local law enforcement to help increase prosecutions and convictions of abusers. He has continued this legacy by serving as the White House Adviser on Violence Against Women.

Most recently, he led the White House's efforts on the Cancer Moonshot initiative, which seeks to hasten our advances in cancer research, prevention, and treatment. Earlier today, the Senate passed a bill to help make the Cancer Moonshot initiative a reality, which is a further testament to the Vice President's leadership and character.

The Vice President's involvement in the Cancer Moonshot initiative was born out of the death of his son, Beau, who lost his battle with brain cancer last year. The Vice President also grappled with tragedy at a young age when his first wife and his 13-month-old daughter were killed in a car accident. The poise, dignity, and humility that the Vice President has been able to maintain in the face of these tragedies speaks to his strength and his char-

acter. Through all this, he has continued to serve the American people with the utmost integrity and authenticity, which have undoubtedly contributed to his successful career in public service.

The Vice President has also consistently advocated for the leadership role the United States plays in the world. Over the years, Vice President BIDEN has lent his diplomatic hand to U.S. engagement in development and security in places like Eastern Europe and the Northern Triangle countries of Central America. He has worked tirelessly to strengthen our partnerships across the globe, in places like Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, in an effort to further U.S. interests and the values upon which our Nation has thrived.

When he was in Denver this past September to speak at the Korbel School, the Vice President warned against "turning inward." JOE has no capacity to turn inward in any walk of life. His career is characterized by reaching outward to the American people and to the world, working to listen, collaborate, heal, and serve. We can all learn a lot from that open and inclusive approach.

We are grateful for the Vice President's leadership and example. I thank him and his incredible family for their service to our Nation.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to an incredible leader, public servant, mentor, and friend.

It seems impossible to place a period on the public service career of JOSEPH ROBINETTE BIDEN, Jr.

So perhaps this is just an ellipsis.

For 36 years, JOE BIDEN was a towering presence in this body. As a member, ranking member, and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, he dove headfirst into the most challenging issues in a volatile world, shaping a generation of U.S. foreign policy. He tackled arms control issues, stood up directly to Slobodan Milosevic, fought against apartheid in South Africa, and strongly advocated for NATO bombing of Serbia in the 1990s. He once called his contribution to ending the Yugoslav wars one of the "proudest moments" of his political career. For years, he worked to shape our policy in Iraq and the Middle East. He did so not just from his Washington office, but through regular visits to warzones, where he met face to face with military leaders and enlisted men and women, alike. This is JOE BIDEN's legacy.

As a member and chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator BIDEN spearheaded the Federal assault weapons ban, presided over Supreme Court confirmations, and—in perhaps his most significant legislative triumph—authored the Violence Against Women Act.

For generations, violence against women was a private matter—a tragedy suffered over and over by women with no recourse against abusive partners. VAWA brought this scourge out

of the shadows and into the open, affirming that domestic violence survivors would NOT also be victimized by the system that was supposed to protect them. Because of VAWA, which Senator BIDEN helped reauthorize three times, 3.4 million women and men have called the National Domestic Violence Hotline and gotten the support they need. From 1994, when VAWA became law, until 2010, the rate of domestic violence in the United States has fallen by 64 percent. These are real accomplishments and real people—not just statistics. This is JOE BIDEN's legacy.

And, as everyone knows, he did it all commuting daily from and to his beloved Delaware.

Then he got a job that included accommodation in Washington, DC.

JOE BIDEN has transformed the job of Vice President. A key liaison to Congress because of his years of relationships on the Hill, JOE BIDEN stood shoulder to shoulder with President Obama and brought our economy back from the brink. Vice President BIDEN was tasked with implementing and overseeing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which laid the foundation for a sustainable economic future we are experiencing today.

He also tackled longer term economic challenges, traveling the country in support of American manufacturing jobs and working tirelessly to rein in the exorbitant cost of college and spiraling student loan debt. JOE BIDEN believes in his bones that all Americans deserve a fair shot.

That is why he was an early advocate for marriage equality. He accelerated change, forcing a conversation that, at its heart, was about love and the simple premise of all men and women being equal.

His belief in a fair shot for all is why Vice President BIDEN devoted incredible energy after the Sandy Hook shooting to sparing other families the heartbreak felt by too many in Newtown. Some of the most challenging days of the Obama administration were days of mass shootings.

Aurora, San Bernardino, Orlando, Fort Hood, Charleston, Tucson, and of course Newtown—to anyone who has been active in the push for common-sense gun safety measures—as I have—the Vice President's steady hand, commitment, and leadership in this space have been obvious. Along with the President, he has comforted families, devoted countless hours to healing, and contributed energy and ideas to a years-long push that will eventually affect real change and keep the most lethal weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous people.

And that will be JOE BIDEN's legacy.

Vice President JOE BIDEN was taught early on by his parents that hard work mattered, that how you treat others matters, and above all else that family matters most. Throughout his career, he had a rule in his office: if one of his children, his wife Jill, or a sibling called, staff was to pull him out of a

meeting so he could take the call. The same rule extended to staff. He never wanted to hear that someone had stayed at work instead of making it to a graduation, Little League game, or school play.

That, laid bare, is JOE BIDEN. He came to Washington on the shoulders of his family, which fanned out across Delaware and knocked on doors until there were no more doors to knock. When tragedy struck—between his improbable election victory and his swearing in—and he suffered the unimaginable loss of his wife and infant daughter, his family pulled him closer. He stayed by the hospital beds of his two sons, Beau and Hunter, and nursed them back to health, questioning all along whether he would ever serve in the Senate.

But this body—this Senate—pulled him closer, too. Senators Inouye, Mansfield, Humphrey, Hollings, and Kennedy all pleaded with him to give the Senate a chance: “Just six months, JOE. Just stay six months.”

He stayed 36 years. And he learned lessons about character and motives—lessons we are all still learning today. He learned from Mike Mansfield never to question another man's motive—question his judgment but never his motive. It was a lesson that bridged divides that too often keep us apart. The lesson made for lasting friendships with Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond—whose eulogy he delivered.

JOE BIDEN arrived in the Senate after a 1972 campaign heavy on civil rights. Years later, the centerpiece in his Senate office was a large table that had belonged to Senator John Stennis, around which Senator Richard Russell and Southern segregationists had planned the demise of the civil rights movement. In 2009, JOE BIDEN became Vice President to our first African-American President.

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it does indeed bend toward justice.

We have not seen the end of JOE BIDEN. Just this week, he presided over this body as we took an important step toward realizing the dream of the Cancer Moonshot—an ambitious project to end cancer as we know it.

It is another effort that has profound personal meaning to the Vice President, who lost his son Beau to this horrible disease. It is also a place where JOE BIDEN's work will have lasting, indelible effect on Americans—indeed all of humanity—if he is successful.

And that is JOE BIDEN's legacy.

He brought people together. He tackled the impossible. He overcame obstacles. He bridged divides. Tireless and fierce, JOE BIDEN put family and country first. We cannot ask for more than that.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues to pay tribute to Vice President JOE BIDEN.

JOE has made countless contributions to our country throughout his more than 40 years in public service and six terms in the U.S. Senate.

Whether it was passing the Violence Against Women Act, leading the congressional opposition to apartheid South Africa, or advocating for Amtrak, JOE honored the Senate with his service.

This year, after the loss of his beloved son Beau, JOE harnessed his grief to spearhead a new Cancer Moonshot initiative to accelerate finding cures for cancer.

This past Monday night, with JOE presiding, we named this initiative in memory of Beau.

After Monday's vote, JOE said that it made him realize all of the support he has had since Beau's passing.

In the face of his own loss, JOE has supported countless other families in similar situations.

I will remember JOE for this incredible empathy.

This year we lost our colleague and friend Congressman Mark Takai of Hawaii.

I affectionately called Mark my younger brother, and his passing was a shock to many of us.

JOE joined us to honor Mark at a memorial service here in the Capitol.

Reflecting on his own life, JOE spoke directly to Mark's wife, Sami, and his children, Matthew and Kaila:

I promise you that the day will come when Mark's memory brings a smile to your lips before it brings a tear to your eye.

My prayer for you and your family is that they come sooner rather than later. But I promise you. I promise you it will come.

Like so many times in his life, JOE's words spoke to our hearts.

From his own experience, he comforted the Takais and so many of us who knew Mark.

That is who JOE is—a man of empathy and soul, who always had a kind word, and who will leave a legacy of commitment to doing the right thing, and a legacy of hope.

JOE, you will be missed.

Mahalo for your service.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I would like to join with my colleagues to honor Vice President JOSEPH R. BIDEN.

Though I did not have the privilege to serve with Vice President BIDEN while he was a Member of the Senate, I have long admired JOE and his sincere commitment to the people of this country and especially to those in his beloved home State of Delaware.

The details of JOE's early years are well known to this body and to the Nation, but because they are so central to his character, they bear repeating. After an upset win of a U.S. Senate seat at just 29 years old, JOE experienced a tragedy that most of us cannot even begin to fathom—the death of his wife, Neilia, and his young daughter, Naomi, in a car accident just weeks before he was set to take office. A now-iconic photograph shows a young JOE being sworn into office at his sons' hospital bedside.

A tragedy of that magnitude, so early in JOE's career, would have been

reason for most to put on hold—or even end—a promising future in public service. Indeed, no one would have faulted JOE had he decided that the demands of the work he was set to undertake were not worth pursuing after the unimaginable loss he had just experienced. But, from the depths of his sorrow, JOE summoned the courage to press forward, committing himself to his two sons and to his work fighting for Delaware in the U.S. Senate. Committed to caring for his young family in the wake of such loss, JOE would take the train from Wilmington to Washington each day the Senate was in session.

During his 36 years as a member of this body, JOE distinguished himself as a thoughtful, principled leader on a number of critical issues. JOE's leadership on the Senate Judiciary Committee put him at the center of some of the most consequential debates in recent years, from passage of the 1994 Crime Law to the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act. In his role on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, JOE garnered the respect of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle as he helped to shape U.S. foreign policy. His leadership in both of these areas, as well as the respect of his colleagues in Congress, made JOE a natural pick to join then-Senator Obama as his running mate in 2008.

As Vice President, JOE has been a trusted adviser to President Obama and has been tasked with overseeing significant initiatives within the administration. From his work on the economic stimulus package in 2009 to his continued leadership in the fight against sexual assault and domestic violence, JOE has brought to the White House his characteristic dedication and charisma. It has been a pleasure to observe the real friendship that the Vice President has forged with President Obama, one grounded in mutual respect and admiration for one another.

We saw again last year JOE's strength in the face of adversity when cancer claimed the life of his son, Beau. Like his father, Beau Biden was a gifted communicator, and the Nation mourned alongside JOE at the news of his passing. In the aftermath of Beau's death, JOE accepted the President's charge to lead the Cancer Moonshot initiative to accelerate cancer research—yet another shining example of JOE channeling his experience with loss into advancement for the public good. It is a fitting testament to JOE's leadership that the cancer provisions in the bill currently under consideration in the Senate, the 21st Century Cures Act, were renamed in honor of Beau. I know of few people who have endured the magnitude of loss that JOE has over the course of his life, and the fact that he carries on every day with a full heart and renewed dedication to fighting for the American people is an inspiration.

Beyond his accomplishments—which are many—JOE is perhaps best known for his good humor and genuine ability to connect with people. In a city asso-

ciated more with political rancor than authenticity, JOE has long been a breath of fresh air, an homage to a more amicable past. His ability to get things done while making steadfast friends on both sides of the aisle is a model for all of us and an inspiration to me.

I wish JOE and his wife, Jill, nothing but the best as they move onto their next adventure. I know in times of trial, I will look to JOE's leadership and example for the wisdom to make the right decision.

Mr. Vice President, on behalf of the people of Maine, I thank you for your service to our country.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues in celebrating the many contributions of Vice President JOE BIDEN, a man who has spent his career fighting for working families.

For more than four decades, Vice President BIDEN has tirelessly served the people of Delaware and the United States. As many of my colleagues have already noted, he has been on the frontlines of some of our Nation's toughest battles—from steering the Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees, to introducing the Violence Against Women Act and championing efforts to reduce gun violence in our communities. He takes on every fight with restless energy and relentless optimism.

I first met then-Senator BIDEN back in the 1990s when I was a law professor with no experience in the ways of Washington. We tangled over an issue, each of us laying into the fight with determination. Senator BIDEN won, and I lost. Years later, when I next saw him, he held out his arms and shouted from halfway across the room, "Professor! Come here and give me a hug!"

He had not forgotten our earlier battle, but he made it clear that he continued to think and rethink issues about working families and that, even when we disagreed, we could respect—and even like—each other. And when I was later sworn into the United States Senate, I thought about the example he set to fight hard, but to treat each other with respect.

The Vice President has faced down hardship with exceptional grace and courage, and he continues to wake up every day with a steadfast commitment to ensuring that the voices of ordinary Americans are heard here in Washington. And for me personally, he has provided encouragement, wisdom, and good counsel, time and again—and for that, I am truly grateful.

So, Vice President BIDEN: those of us here in the Senate are fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside you. And I know I speak for millions of Americans when I say that we all are enormously grateful for your many years of service to this country. Thank you, and I wish you the very best as you begin the next chapter of your life and career.

Mr. COONS. We have five Senators remaining who have asked to speak

briefly: Senator ALEXANDER, Senator CARDIN, Senator CASEY, and Senator KAINE. My senior Senator, TOM CARPER of Delaware, will conclude this session today.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Tennessee.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, knowing there is a reception coming, I will try to set a good example. After hearing a speech, my late friend Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," said: May I make a suggestion?

I said: Well, yes.

He said: If, when you make a speech, you would say "Instead of making a speech, let me tell you a story," someone might actually listen to what you have to say.

I have always remembered that, so let me tell one short story about a Vice President who knows how to get things done.

Nearly 2 years ago, you and President Obama invited Senator CORKER and me to go with you to Knoxville when the President announced his community college program. Before that, we had lunch privately, and we talked about many things, but the President talked about his interest in precision medicine.

I said: Mr. President, we are working on something we call 21st Century Cures. Why don't we fold that into your precision medicine interest, and we will do it together.

At the State of the Union address a year later, the President talked about the Cancer Moonshot and announced Vice President JOE BIDEN would be in charge of that. So I talked to you and said: Well, we will just fold that in as well.

It wasn't moving along as fast as I would like because, as you know and as most people here know, it is full of difficult issues—FDA, safety, moving things through, drug companies' incentives, and then the funding issue on both sides of the aisle.

So I called you and I said: JOE, we are not moving as we should.

You said: Well, let me see what I can do.

And you held a meeting of the Democrats and Republicans in the House—Senator MURRAY and me—and you moved us along pretty well and off we would go. You didn't take credit for that; nobody knew much about it. You were the key to that.

Then it got stuck again. So I called you again. I said: JOE, I have the precision medicine, I have the Cancer Moonshot, we have the BRAIN Initiative, we have the opioids money, but I can't get a response. I feel like the butler standing with a silver platter outside the Oval Office, and no one will take the order.

You said: If you want to feel like a butler, try being Vice President.

Well, the fact was, you went to work again. The President called; he went to work. Speaker RYAN went to work,

Senator MCCONNELL went to work, and today that legislation on which you worked so hard passed the Senate with 94 votes. That is an example of a man who understands the issues, who knows how to get things done, and who has the respect of everyone in this body.

This is Pearl Harbor Day. Pearl Harbor Day reminds us of the greatest generation of men and women who cared about the country, didn't care about the credit, resolved their differences, and realized that diversity is important but turning that diversity into one America is even more important. You are not of that generation, but you show the same spirit as that generation did. Your work on 21st Century Cures and the fact that the Cancer Moonshot section is not only something that is your initiative—is named for your son—is important not just to you but to all of us.

You are a friend of every single one of us. We honor you today. We are delighted you came down to let us tell a few stories about your effectiveness as Vice President of the United States.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I also wish to join in thanking you for your incredible service. Senator MIKULSKI talked about a lot of things you have done. The two of us represent the State of Maryland. Other than the two of us, there is no other Senator who has spent more time in Maryland than the Vice President.

Admittedly, most of that time was spent on an Amtrak train, but we consider you to be a resident of Maryland. We have tried to find a way to tax you, but we will let you get by. We very much appreciate your interest in our entire region and in our entire country.

When I was elected to the Senate in 2007, I talked to Senator Sarbanes—the person whom I was replacing in the Senate—about committee assignments, and we talked about the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said: Get on the committee. JOE BIDEN is an incredible leader. Any time you can spend with him is going to be time well spent.

I talked to Senator MIKULSKI, and she told me the same thing. I was honored to be able to serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and saw firsthand your extraordinary leadership on behalf of our country. But bringing us together in that committee, you didn't know who the Democrats and who the Republicans were. We worked together in a unit in the best interests of our country. That really was a model for all of us in the service of the Senate and service on behalf of our people.

A little over 8 years later, I became a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and we had some extremely challenging issues that could have divided us. You helped me through that period. I really wish to thank you for that. Your extraordinary leadership in helping us resolve some

very difficult issues, your openness, your willingness to listen, and your ability to find a way to go forward were incredibly helpful. I think it allowed the Senate to do the right thing on that issue—as well as the oversight. I thank you very much.

That wasn't your only opportunity to help us resolve issues. You have heard Members talk about the Violence Against Women Act and how important that was. The Cancer Moonshot is going to be incredibly valuable. Each one of our families has been affected by cancer. Through your efforts, we know we are going to find the answer to this dread disease. You have done this in so many different areas, law enforcement—the list goes on and on.

Last year I was in Central America. I think there you could easily run for office and have no problems at all. They know what you have done to give them a hope, to give them a future. You take an interest in an area and find a way to be helpful that I think has made our country stronger. You have given hope to people all over the world.

You have a love for people. You hear that. You hear that often. It was Will Rogers who famously said he never met a man he didn't like. That is true of JOE BIDEN. It is incredible.

I remember when I was being sworn in, in the ceremony in the Old Senate Chamber, you not only talked to Members of the Senate, you talked to every member of our families. I don't know if you had the best staff work or not, but you knew every Member's family. To this day my grandchildren talk about the conversation they had with you during that swearing-in ceremony. You really care about people, and that really shows. This is a family here, and you have truly shown that to us. Myrna and I look at you and Jill as people who are part of our family.

I think you are, perhaps, the most ebullient politician in America. Horrific family tragedies and life-threatening cranial aneurysms severely tested, but ultimately didn't diminish, your faith in God or your love for the "retail" aspect of politics—meeting and greeting people, making those human connections.

Mr. President, for those who may not know your story, I would like to tell them part of it. JOE BIDEN was born in Scranton and raised there before his parents moved the family to Delaware. He was the first member of his family to attend college. He earned his B.A. from the University of Delaware and then went to law school at Syracuse University, during which time he married his college sweetheart, Neilia Hunter. They had three children—two sons and a daughter.

In 1972, just four years after JOE graduated from law school and when he was just 29 years old—he ran a bare bones, longshot campaign for the U.S. Senate against the incumbent, Caleb "Cale" Boggs, who had previously been Delaware's Governor and had served three terms in the U.S. House of Rep-

resentatives. JOE's sister Valerie ran the campaign; most of the other "staff" were other family members. He demonstrated his extraordinary ability to connect with voters and won the election by 3,162 votes and became the sixth-youngest Senator in U.S. history.

Just a few weeks after the election, JOE's wife and their infant daughter Naomi were killed in a traffic accident; their two young sons, Hunter and Beau, were seriously injured. JOE was sworn in to the U.S. Senate next to his sons' hospital beds and steadfastly began commuting to Washington from Wilmington every day by train, a practice he maintained throughout his career in the Senate.

In 1977, Vice President BIDEN married Jill Jacobs. Jill has a Ph.D. in education and is a lifelong educator. Together, JOE and Jill had daughter, Ashley, who is a social worker.

JOE's affinity for the people of Delaware was reciprocal: he was re-elected to the Senate six times, including in 2008 when he was also elected Vice President.

In February of 1988, JOE was admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He had an intracranial aneurysm that had begun leaking. The situation was dire, a priest had actually administered last rites at the hospital. The surgery was successful but he suffered a pulmonary embolism and had to undergo another operation, which was successful, in May 1988. Two brain operations might slow down most people, but not JOE. Two years after he nearly died, he won re-election to a fourth Senate term.

JOE's Senate career wasn't just long; it was distinguished. He became the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee in 1981. Three years later, he helped to steer the Comprehensive Crime Control Act to passage. It was the first of many major legislative accomplishments which included the Violent Crime Control & Law Enforcement Act of 1994. That bill contained the assault weapon ban and the Violence Against Women Act, and it established the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program.

JOE's accomplishments on the domestic policy side are impressive, but he also became a foreign policy expert. When Congress refused to ratify the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) II Treaty Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and President Jimmy Carter signed in 1979, JOE met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. He was able to secure changes to the Treaty to overcome the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's objections. He has played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy ever since. I was honored to serve on the Foreign Relations Committee for the last 2 years JOE served as Chairman. I have been honored to work with him in his current capacity as Vice President to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, to include the former Warsaw Pact

countries of Eastern and Central Europe and support a sovereign, democratic Ukraine. He is a champion of Israel and has been one of the principal architects of administration's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. He has developed deep relationships with the world leaders by excelling at face-to-face diplomacy.

Mr. President, we were all devastated when your beloved son Beau lost his battle with brain cancer last year. Beau was just 46. It was a poignant moment on Monday when you were in the Chair, presiding over the Senate as we voted to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House message to accompany H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act. The bill contains provisions to implement the administration's "Cancer Moonshot"—yet another one of your sparking accomplishments. I want to commend Senator MCCONNELL and the majority for renaming that title of the bill the "Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot and National Institutes of Health (NIH) Innovation Projects". I know it means a lot to you and your family.

I have made my lifetime serving in public life. You have made that profession an honorable profession through the manner in which you have conducted yourself, your integrity, who you are, and the way that you bring people together. I am proud to have served with you in this body.

Mr. President, you have been an extraordinary public servant for nearly half a century. You have also been a dedicated family man and a good friend. I said at the beginning of my remarks that you never met a man you didn't like. I don't think anyone who has ever met you didn't like you, too.

Congratulations.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, it is an honor to be here today. I was thinking about what I would say today and making it as brief and as personal as I could. I have to say that on a day like today it is difficult. We all have the privilege of being able to go to this floor on a regular basis to talk about issues, to talk about our country, and to talk about the world, but we also have one of the great privileges to talk about those with whom we have served and for whom we have great respect.

This is one of those moments. It is of great significance for me that I am able to stand on the floor of the Senate as a native of and as a resident of the city of Scranton in Lackawanna County to talk about a son of Scranton.

I know this is a pretty big day for Delaware—Delaware's No. 1 citizen and on this historic day for Delaware. But I have to say I am so grateful to be able to say on behalf of the people of Scranton and Lackawanna County in Northeastern Pennsylvania how proud we are today to be able to pay tribute to Vice President JOE BIDEN.

There is so much to say about that history, so much to say about what it

means to be able to stand on the floor and talk about his record, his life, his achievements, but mostly to talk about who he is.

When I consider what he has contributed to our country, to his State, and to the world, it is difficult to encapsulate it. I tried to jot down a few notes to remind myself of how best to encapsulate that life.

I guess I would start with the word "integrity." It may be a word that we take for granted, but it is a word that has to be part of the life of a public official. I would say in the case of JOE BIDEN, he has the kind of integrity that is uncommon—uncommon not because it is a rare trait but uncommon because it is so much a part of his whole life. He was a public official with integrity, and we hope he is again when he might consider public office again. But he is also a person of great integrity when it comes to the fights he has had to wage on behalf of people without power, the work he has had to do as a public official infused with that kind of integrity and, at the same time, the same kind of integrity we expect from a family member and a friend. So I would start with that word.

Certainly the word "compassion" comes to mind. Every one of us can tell a story. I was hearing stories just yesterday from a colleague about a phone call the Vice President made over the last couple of years to someone who was grieving, who was in the depths of the darkness of grief, and the phone call he made to that person.

I have heard stories over the years about not just phone calls but visits with people, stopping into a funeral home for a long lost friend who had lost a loved one, letters he has written. I know a personal friend who lost his wife and his sons had lost their mom and what the Vice President wrote to them just this summer. Over and over again, he has demonstrated that kind of compassion.

I can remember my own case in a very personal way. It was only an election loss. I ran for Governor of Pennsylvania in a primary. As many of my colleagues know, primaries are particularly difficult. I lost badly. No one called on Wednesday after Tuesday. One reporter showed up at my door, and I opened the door and I really couldn't say much to this reporter, but I was grateful she was there. But I got one phone call on Wednesday—maybe a couple of family members; I come from a family of eight. I think my wife was talking to me, but other than that, the only person who called me was JOE BIDEN. He made some kind of grand prediction—I thought he was just being nice—that I would somehow come back. But he was right. And he made me feel much better that day. He may not remember it, but I will remember that for the rest of my life.

I think certainly when we think about the Vice President, we could center on another one word: "justice"—an abiding and enduring commitment to

justice. His whole public life could be summarized in that word and the commitment he has had to justice. We could quote from the Bible: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied." I am not sure JOE BIDEN has ever been satisfied yet with justice. He is always pursuing it, always trying to bring justice to a problem or to a situation or to the life of a fellow citizen.

We think of what Saint Augustine said about justice a long time ago, but it still bears repeating: "Without justice, what are kingdoms but great bands of robbers?" That is what Saint Augustine said hundreds of years ago. JOE BIDEN has lived his life as a public official and as a man, as a citizen, with that same burning desire to bring justice into the dark corners of our world. And he knows that without that justice, someone is, in fact, robbed of so much—robbed of their dignity, robbed of their safety, robbed of a full life.

But I think I would say that maybe the best line, with all due respect to the Scriptures and to Saint Augustine, was one my father said. He wrote it down years ago, but he probably gave maybe the best description of what a public official should be about. I am not sure I have ever attributed this to anyone else but him. He said the most important qualities a public official can bring to their work are two things: No. 1, a passion for justice—which, of course, JOE BIDEN has in abundance—and a sense of outrage in the face of injustice; that if you have both of those, on most days, you are going to get it right. And his life as a U.S. Senator for 36 years, as Vice President for 8 years, and as a citizen for all of those years and more, has been about that passion for justice and a sense of outrage in the face of injustice.

We all know his record; we don't have to recite all of it. From the Violence Against Women Act, which we know is an acronym—VAWA—but it doesn't do justice to the name of what that meant. So many today have talked about how he saved the lives of women and families because of that legislation. So from VAWA to ARRA, as we call it—the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the act that helped dig this economy out of the ditch it was in and rescued this country and improved the lives of so many people—he not only worked to get it passed, but then he made sure it was implemented. It might be the most popular piece of legislation 25 years from now when people really appreciate what happened with the Recovery Act.

From diplomacy, to law enforcement, to not just supporting our troops, not just working on legislation and supporting them not only when his son was a member of our Armed Forces but long before that, to what he did very specifically to protect our troops—we know the scourge of IEDs, which was the No. 1 killer of our troops in Iraq and in Afghanistan. A lot of those troops' lives were saved because of JOE

BIDEN up-arming vehicles and doing all the work he did to protect our troops.

So whether it was national security or security on our streets, whether it was protecting women who would be the subject of abuse or helping children or improving our economy—on and on—we could talk about that record. But just as you can't just list achievements in a record and encapsulate what it means, so the same is true of a 36-year career in the U.S. Senate and then 8 years as Vice President.

Lincoln probably said it best. Lincoln said, "It is not the years in your life that matters, in the end, it is the life in those years." And that is, I think, true of JOE BIDEN as well.

Two more points. One of the best qualities of the Vice President as a man especially but also as a public official is his sense of gratitude. If you knew him for half an hour or for your whole life, you know that almost always he is speaking about people in his life who made him who he is today, whether it is his mother and father or whether it is his whole family, including brothers and sisters and his sons and daughters and, of course, Jill. It is a reminder of how grateful we should be. In so many ways, when you hear JOE BIDEN speak, his speeches tend to be, on many occasions, a hymn to gratitude, and that comes through all the time.

We know how much he suffered with all of the losses he has sustained. I was talking to him recently at an event in Scranton about his son Beau and his life and what a patriot Beau Biden was. I think today we can say the following about the Vice President: This is a man who was a great, great Vice President. This is a man who was a committed and very effective U.S. Senator, but maybe most important, he has been a faithful son, a loving and proud husband and father, and a patriot.

Thank you, sir, and God bless you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, these speeches were just supposed to go on for 1 hour, and we are already at the 2-hour mark, but perhaps, since we are honoring you, this is most appropriate.

I would say to our colleagues and our guests, you say the name among us of JOE BIDEN, and a smile automatically comes to our lips, and that is because the Vice President is a lover of people. That is true. We know it is true. And that is why today we have this genuine affection being expressed.

Since the hour is late, my remarks are going to be very short, but I just want to highlight that it is very true and it is very characteristic. I can even tell all of the stories of the Biden family because I have heard them so much.

It is also very true that if you are talking to JOE and suddenly your wife comes up or your daughter comes up, all of a sudden, JOE is not focusing on you, he is giving his total attention to the ladies present, and that is most ap-

preciated. That, of course, is why he is such a big fan of the Nelson household, not only of Grace and Nan Ellen but also of Bill Junior. He always treats our children with respect and goes out of his way.

In Florida, fortunately we had the good fortune of seeing him a lot in his two campaigns as Vice President and then the campaign for the ticket in this last campaign. I can remember those days. It was so cold in a horse pasture west of Ocala. And I can remember recently just absolutely cooking in North Palm Beach on the stage in the hot sun, and JOE was always there making the case for whoever it was he was standing up for.

Of course, he always made you feel that you were welcome. I remember one time we got off an airplane, and he was going to his limousine and I am going back to the guest van in the back. He motions, I am to come with him. I said, "Mr. Vice President, I never presumed that I should come here." He says, "I always want you here with me when we are traveling together." That is what makes him so special.

Finally, I want to comment about Moonshot. Why is the effort at cancer research called the Moonshot? It is because we achieved what was almost the impossible when the President said we are going to the moon and return safely within the decade, and America marshaled the will and in fact did that incredible accomplishment. That is why we are going to have the Moonshot for cancer.

We have already made so much progress; but now, with the former Vice President of the United States heading up all the efforts where we can keep the attention on NIH, so it doesn't go from a level rocking along about \$24 billion, \$25 billion a year, and the stimulus shoots it in the first 2 years of the Vice President's office up to \$30 billion a year, then it drops down to \$24 billion, \$25 billion, and Dr. Francis Collins has to cancel 700 of the medical research grants that he has already issued. Because we have the Moonshot headed by JOE BIDEN, we are going to find the cure for all those kinds of cancer. That is the great legacy that the Vice President of the United States will have.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise in honor of your service.

I just want to tell my favorite JOE BIDEN story. This is a story the Vice President has heard me tell, but I want it on the Record because everyone should know this story. It is the story of an interaction between our Vice President on one of the most important days of his life and a young man from Richmond, VA, my hometown, on one of the most important days of his life.

It was election day 2008, and I was Governor of Virginia. I was responsible for the running of the elections in my

State that day when Senator JOE BIDEN was running for Vice President with our President, Barack Obama.

I received a call in the middle of the morning: There was going to be a surprise visit to a polling place in Richmond. After having voted in Wilmington, Senator BIDEN was going to make a stop in Richmond and wanted to meet some voters before he headed to Chicago to await the election results. We gave him the address of an elementary school polling place that was very near the Richmond Airport, and I raced there with my security detail to get there a few minutes before he arrived for a surprise visit with voters who were going to love having the chance to meet the soon-to-be Vice President. I got there a few minutes before Senator BIDEN arrived, and I saw a friend who had come to vote. I asked how he was doing. He said: I am doing great. I am really excited about voting today. And it is also a special day because I have a nephew with sickle cell anemia and he is casting his first vote, but he is so sick, he can't even get out of the vehicle.

I watched the election officials at the polling place take a voting machine from inside the school into the car so that his 18-year-old nephew could cast the first vote of his life. I saw this young man, the nephew of my friend, and he was very ill.

I said to my friend and his nephew: Can you wait here for 5 minutes? Because I think we can do something really exciting.

What?

Well, just wait.

And they said they would.

Within 5 minutes, Senator BIDEN came up to meet voters and shook the hands of those in line. I said: Senator, there is a young man here, and just as this day is very important to you, because I think you are about to be elected Vice President of the United States, for this young African-American male, who is very ill but extremely excited even in his illness to get out of his house to come here and cast his vote to elect the first African-American President—he is sitting there in that vehicle. Will you go and visit with him?

I didn't even have to finish the sentence and put the question mark at the end before Senator BIDEN shot across the parking lot and went up to the vehicle. The press corps was following him. The young man was sitting in the back seat. JOE just jumped in the front seat, closed the door, rolled up the window so nobody could hear the conversation, and the press corps gathered around all four sides of the vehicle with their cameras taking pictures of Senator BIDEN in an extremely animated and somewhat lengthy conversation with the 18-year-old who had just cast his vote. To me, that will always be the quintessential JOE BIDEN story.

JOE BIDEN is the Irish poet of American politicians. He and I share a passion for the Irish poet William Butler Yeats. Yeats, like our Vice President,

was not just a poet. He was a man of the public. He was a public official. People asked him to weigh in on political matters all the time.

Once, in the middle of the First World War, somebody asked Yeats to write a war poem. He wrote a war poem, and the poem was titled "On Being Asked for a War Poem." The poem says this:

I [often] think it better that in times like these

A poet's mouth be silent, for in truth . . .

He has had enough of meddling who can please

A young girl in the indolence of her youth,
Or an old man upon a winter's night.

The meaning of the poem is this: I may be a public figure. I may have a public job to do. I may be asked to do a public job and to claim upon matters of public importance. But sometimes even more than the matter of public importance is the ability to please a young girl or an old man—or an ill young man casting a first vote, an important vote.

The fact that you took your time on that day of importance to you to shed some light and offer some joy to someone who was struggling—that is the JOE BIDEN who has us here for 2 hours offering these tributes.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I never had the privilege of serving with you in this Chamber, but, like many of my colleagues, I have come to know you as a friend and public servant and a model and a mentor. I have barely enough time to say a few words of tribute here, but I will add more to my remarks on the RECORD.

What I want to say very simply is that you have inspired so many of us, beyond this Chamber, beyond the people whom you have known directly, and beyond the people with whom you have worked. Countless young people are involved in this noble profession because of your example.

At a time when public officials and politics are often held in little repute and often challenged in their integrity, you have given us a good name, you have given politics a good name, and you have enabled so many of us to serve with pride in a profession that is so vital to the continuance of our democracy. Beyond pieces of legislation, whether it is the Violence Against Women Act or the assault weapon ban or criminal justice—the list goes on—is that model of public service.

I want to close by saying that as long as I have known JOE BIDEN, I really came to know him through the eyes of his son. I had the honor of working and serving with Beau Biden when he was attorney general of the State of Delaware and I was attorney general of my State of Connecticut. My ambition in life is to have my four children talk about me with the sense of admiration and love and pride that Beau Biden talked about his dad.

I am very proud and grateful that we had the opportunity to vote today on a law that bears his name. As proud as

his dad is of him, his pride in his dad is an example that all of us as parents hope our children have for us.

I am proud to be in this Chamber and to have been sworn in to this Chamber by you, Mr. Vice President. I hope our paths will continue to cross, as I know they will, with so many of us in this Chamber and in this country. Thank you for your service.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, me too.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, in 1972 I was a young man in my last year at Boston College Law School, and I decided to run for State representative. I had a cousin who worked at NASA, an older cousin, the smart one, the physicist. He said: Well, there is a young man in Delaware who is running for the Senate.

So what is his name?

JOE BIDEN.

From that moment on, I was following the career of this Irishman, this latter-day descendent of Hubert Humphrey, a happy warrior, the man who stands up for the common man and woman in our country.

In 1972 you had this great campaign team led by John Marttila—the great John—who captured your spirit, your soul, what you represented now in this half century of American politics.

In 1976, when I ran for Congress, just 4 years later—the same as you, age 29—saying "I think I can run," I walked into the office of this man, John Marttila, in Boston, and it looked like a museum to JOE BIDEN with all the JOE BIDEN literature and messages on his wall. So from that moment on, from John Marttila, through Larry Rasky, through Ron Klain—through all of these people who worked for me and worked for you, I have been privileged to be able to chronicle your journey of work and inspiration for our country.

I think it is just perfect that you are the commander in chief of this rocket ship to the Moon to find the cure for cancer because that is a mission that has the right man who is going to be leading it. I think that each and every one of us out here knows that one of the reasons this bill is receiving such an overwhelming vote today is because of you, Mr. President. It is because of the respect we have for you. It is the knowledge that when you were negotiating this bill, at the end of the day, you were going to put the American people first, you were going to make sure that bill reflected the highest aspiration of every American.

So I want to speak briefly because there is a reception after this, and many people are still waiting to say hello to you. I think every Member wanted to come out here, and you inspired them to speak a lot longer than they may have intended on speaking, but it is because of the incredible respect and admiration they have for you. My best to you. My wife Susan's best to you. There has never been a

better public servant in American history. All my best.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, on behalf of all the people in our great State—and our dear colleague Senator Bayh is here because of his love as well—we want to tell you how grateful we are for your services, for the extraordinary job you have done as Vice President for President Obama.

Everybody is telling stories. As you know, I had the privilege of having you put your arm around me, and when everybody said there was no chance I could ever win, you said: You and I are a lot alike and you can do this and you can win.

I came back, and they said: What advice did Vice President BIDEN give you?

I said: He told me that I could win.

They said: Well, he is right a lot; I don't know about that one.

You turned out to be right.

Then we were blessed that your sons, Hunter and Beau, often came to Indiana during the summers. You would then come out as well. I will never forget going to the coffee shop one Sunday morning. The lady at the coffee shop said to me: This has been an unbelievable day because the Vice President came in with all his grandchildren; and, by the way, JOE, he bought ice cream for everybody in the store, and you have never done that.

I said how sorry I was that I never did that.

She also said: This is one of the greatest days of my life, to meet somebody who has always looked out for working families, who has always looked out for us.

That is how we see you back home. You have always looked out for us. You have always cared about us. As a second-generation Irish immigrant, you have always been an example to all of us that we can accomplish anything we dream of.

God bless you and Jill and your whole family. We are so lucky to have been touched by you.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Vice President BIDEN, earlier Hubert Humphrey's name was mentioned. You know the great love the people of Minnesota have for you. Vice President Humphrey was your mentor when you first got to the Senate, where you didn't even know if you were going to last a few months here, and he was there for you. You have extended that kindness to so many since then.

Vice President Mondale, another Minnesotan, has great affection and love for you, and I will report back to him tonight that I was here with you today.

When I first got elected to the Senate and made one of my first speeches about police funding to a completely empty Chamber—and I thought even my mom wasn't watching on C-SPAN—I walked out of this place and I got a

phone call on my cell phone and it was JOE BIDEN, then a Senator, saying “that was a really great speech.”

When you came to my State and one of my best friends suddenly lost her husband and you heard about it, you did not know who she was, you just heard the story, and in 2 weeks, on her first day back at work, she was driving home and she got a call from you. You talked to her for 20 minutes. When you were done and had given her all this wonderful advice, you said: We are not done; I want you to write down my phone number.

She said: I am driving, Mr. Vice President; I can't do that.

You said: Pull over.

She wrote your phone number on her hand. You did that for her, Mr. Vice President, and you have done that for so many Americans. On behalf of our entire State of Minnesota that has loved you forever, thank you.

I yield the floor.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, I sent up a note to you that I handwrote that said: “Flattery won't hurt you if you don't inhale, so don't breathe too deeply up there.”

I also recall walking into a hearing with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy not too long ago in the House of Representatives, a joint House-Senate hearing. A lot of people had been there asking questions, and she was in the seat for 4 hours. It finally became my turn to ask a question, and I said to her: Is there any question, Administrator McCarthy, that you have not been asked today? She said: I wish somebody had asked me if I needed a bathroom break.

There are 30 more Senators in the cloakroom who want to come out and speak. If you need one, let us know and one of the pages or somebody will take your spot up there.

It has been a joy to sit here and listen to all these stories. JOHN CARNEY, our Congressman, Governor-elect, has been here and come and gone. He has gone back to the House to go into session. He used to work for you, and you are one of his great mentors. He wants you to know he was here, in case you didn't.

I want to say to CHRIS COONS, who put this all together, making possible a wonderful tribute, this is the Senate at its best. It is wonderful to see some of our still young colleagues who have come back to visit us and to be with us on this special, special day.

Over the years, people have asked me why I have had some success in my life, and I say that my sister and I picked the right parents. My sister and I picked the right parents. JOE BIDEN and his brother and sister picked the right parents. I have had the privilege of knowing them both. When your dad was sick and in the hospital, I visited and spent time with him, just the two of us.

JOE, I want to say for those who maybe didn't know your parents, they

valued education and made sure you got a good one, along with his brother and sister. Val is up there somewhere. I want to say hi to Val. They valued education and people of faith. I am Protestant, and JOE and his family are Catholic, but he doesn't wear it on his sleeve. I will tell you this, nobody believes in the Golden Rule of treating other people the way you want to be treated any more than JOE BIDEN.

Nobody adheres to Matthew 25, the “Least of These,” any more than JOE BIDEN. Nobody does a better reading of James 2: “Show me your faith by your words, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.” He doesn't just talk a good game. He doesn't talk a whole lot about his faith, but he sure lives it.

From his family—from his mom and dad—he learned the importance of family and the importance of loyalty to his family and, frankly, to his friends—his multitude of friends. He learned there is a difference between right and wrong and figure out what it is and do right. Do it all the time.

He learned a little bit about common sense. My dad used to say to my sister and me when we did some boneheaded stuff, just use some common sense. I think your dad said that to you once or twice as well. One of the things your mom used to say to you was, if you are knocked down, get up—the idea you just never give up. You know you are right, never give up. That is JOE BIDEN.

People say to us in this Chamber I am sure every day that they wouldn't want our job. I wouldn't want your job. I know you heard that a lot of times. I think we are fortunate to have these jobs and responsibilities to serve. An even tougher job is to be married to one of us. Several people talked about Jill and your bride—for how many years? Almost 40 years. Is that possible? I first saw Jill Biden when I was a graduate student when I was just out of the Navy. I was a graduate student at the University of Delaware. I happened to see her on campus. I thought then, and I would say now, one of the two loveliest people I think I have ever seen. The other being Martha Carper. Not only is she lovely—as JOE knows—on the outside, really lovely on the inside. She is a person with deep caring, a person with incredible warmth and compassion. She is a terrific educator. She taught in our State in public schools. She taught in a hospital for folks with special needs. She taught at Delaware Technical Community College when it was selected as the best technical community college in the Nation during the time that she was on the faculty there.

She continued as Second Lady to continue to critique, but she started off in a place called Willow Grove, PA. There is a naval air station there where I used to fly P-3 aircraft—mission commander—out of there. I retired as a Navy captain in 1991. She was just down the road, growing up with her four sisters, Jill Jacobs and the Jacobs girls. I am sure they broke a lot of hearts.

In the case of Jill Biden, she helped to mend one. As much as anybody, Val and your family are hugely supportive and helped you get through a terribly tough time, but I think Jill perhaps made you whole. She got her undergrad, I believe, from the University of Delaware. She has two master's degrees—a Ph.D. focused on how to increase retention in community colleges around the country. She got those advanced degrees while working and raising a family, three kids that any of us would be proud to claim as our own.

Last week, I happened to be in a classroom in a school where the Vice President probably has been before, Mount Pleasant Elementary School, right down the road from the high school. I was in a classroom of a woman by the name of Wendy Turner, who is the Delaware Teacher of the Year. I had a chance to be with her and her grade school kids. We all gathered around together, and I sat on a stool. They gathered around me. There were about 20, 25 kids. I said: Why is she such a great teacher? Talking about Wendy Turner, Teacher of the Year.

They said: She loves kids. She loves us. They said: She knows her stuff. She really knows what she is talking to us about. She knows how to make clear why it is important, like when we leave school, and why it is important we learn these things. She believes everybody can learn—everybody can learn.

I thought about her, and I think about Jill Biden today. She is that kind of educator as well, continues to be that kind of educator as well.

A lot has been said today of the Cancer Moonshot that JOE has been leading with great skill and success here, especially today. Before there was Cancer Moonshot, there was JOE BIDEN's breast health initiative, which helped thousands of young women to learn about the importance of early detection for breast cancer.

Beau went into the military, Delaware National Guard, deployed to Iraq. Some people would send cookies and packages to their kids and maybe write emails or Skype with them. Jill decided she was going to take that experience and create something with Delaware Boots on the Ground to look out for families. Later on, as Second Lady, working with Michelle Obama, she created something they called Joining Forces, which focuses on education for military families—education, employment opportunities, access to wellness services.

She even managed to write a book. She wrote a book from a child's point of view of having a loved one in their family deployed overseas in the military. As I said earlier, she helped raise three terrific kids.

Sometimes I like to quote Maya Angelou, who sang at the second inauguration of Barack Obama and JOE BIDEN, and she passed away not long ago. Maya Angelou said something that I think is appropriate for all of us today when she said: People may not

remember what you said, people may not remember what you do, but they will remember how you made them feel. One of the threads through everything that has been said here today really reminds me of what Maya Angelou said because people may not remember what we said. They may not remember what we do, but there are not just thousands, not just tens of thousands, not just hundreds of thousands, but there are millions of people in this country who will remember how you and Jill made them feel—cared for, important, loved.

I know our Vice President likes music, and as a Boomer he later on liked a British group. I forget what their Fab Four was called. I think it might have been the Beatles, and maybe the best rock 'n' roll album ever, "Abbey Road," ends with these lyrics—the last part of Abbey Road, side two, was largely written by Paul McCartney. The last words on "Abbey Road" were these words: "The love you take is equal to the love you make."

You are going to take a lot of love with you, and Jill as well, far from here and for the rest of your lives. God bless you.

Mr. President—I have always wanted to call you Mr. President. With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would like to invite all of my colleagues to join us in a reception in honor of the Vice President. I remind any colleagues who wish to speak who did not have the opportunity to submit their comments for the RECORD, and I very much look forward to our jointly presenting a bound copy to the Vice President.

Thank you for your service, and we look forward to hearing from you at the reception.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this is one of those weeks where, every 6 years or 4 years or 2 years, we pause and pay tribute to those who have been elected to the Senate and have served with us and will be retiring or were possibly defeated in the last election.

KELLY AYOTTE

The first Senator I wish to talk about is KELLY AYOTTE, from the great

State of New Hampshire. KELLY's departure from the Senate is a great loss for all of us. I remember the day KELLY AYOTTE became a rising star, not only on the horizon of Republican politics but more importantly on the horizon of the Senate.

During her campaign 6 years ago, we would get phone calls asking: Have you heard about KELLY? Everybody knew who KELLY was. She was the attorney general of the State of New Hampshire, running for the U.S. Senate, and she was catching fire. She did catch fire and won in convincing fashion. She is a great lady with a great family and has done a phenomenal job.

Our U.S. Armed Forces are better today because of her efforts and hard work. We passed the agreement to go to the final passage on the authorization of the military appropriations today, and in large measure, KELLY AYOTTE was behind that. When we were debating our policy on interrogation and torture, KELLY AYOTTE was on top of that. Every significant decision we have made in the last 6 months, whether it was our military, policies, or process, she has been at the forefront of those decisions and has done a phenomenal job.

I wish her the very best in her career and future, and I thank her for the service she has given to our country.

As a son of the South, in Georgia we love New Hampshire anytime we can get one, and KELLY is the best. They have the best lobsters, the best clams, and the best attorney general and Senator in KELLY AYOTTE.

God bless you, KELLY, and best of luck to you.

BARBARA BOXER

At this point, I wish to pause and pay attention to BARBARA BOXER from California. A lot of my colleagues will say: Wait a minute. Why are you talking about BARBARA BOXER? You are a Republican. She is an icon in the Democratic Party. She is a liberal, and you are a conservative.

She is a great Senator, and I will tell you why. BARBARA and I served on the Ethics Committee for the last 9 years. When I was asked to go on the committee, she was the chairman. Later on, I succeeded her as the chairman. I am the chairman today, and she is still a member until she retires.

The Ethics Committee is the one assignment nobody wants to get. But when you get it, you want to have somebody who will do what is right. Regardless of their party, you need somebody who will do what is right for the Member, the institution, and will carry out their responsibilities under the Constitution, which all of us are obligated to do in the Senate.

In the last 9 years, I worked with BARBARA BOXER on any number of complaints, allegations, and cases against Members of the Senate for unethical conduct or conduct unbecoming of a Senator. We have admonished some, cleared some, and recommended the expulsion of some, and some have re-

signed because of our investigation. I take no pride in anyone leaving the Senate because of the actions of the committee, but I take great pride in the fact that no one in 9 years has questioned the integrity of the Senate Ethics Committee, the job it has done, or the final decision it has made, and I give most of the credit for that to BARBARA BOXER. She is a liberal Democrat, and I am a conservative Republican, but when it comes to calling balls and strikes in terms of ethics, we call them down the middle. That is a credit to the institution, a credit to her, and a credit to the Ethics Committee.

At this moment, I want to pause and say to my retiring friend BARBARA BOXER: Thank you for your service to the country, thank you for what you have meant to the State of California, and thank you for what you have meant to the institution of the Senate and the commitment to ethical behavior by our Members. Thank you for making it a standard that you and I stood for. It was a pleasure for me to serve with you and be called one of the members of the odd couple. ISAKSON and BOXER, the two Senate chairs that love our country, are committed to ethics and will always try to do what is exactly right.

God bless you, BARBARA. Best of luck to you.

I yield the floor.

HURRICANE MATTHEW RECOVERY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, about a month and a half ago, I came into this Chamber to talk about the damage that occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew. It was actually 2 months ago to the day that Hurricane Matthew hit eastern North Carolina, and I don't think that many people, unless you have been down there—even in the State, it is hard to really conceive of the extent of damage that Matthew caused, even for people in my part of the State, the middle part of the State, Charlotte, so I know it is difficult for those who may be in other States and did not see the local news coverage. Matthew took 28 lives. It displaced tens of thousands of people in the near term, and now thousands of people are still without homes. It damaged businesses and infrastructure. Miles of Interstate 95 were underwater. Bridges have been washed out. We have a lot of damage we have to recover from.

We have one community that was washed away by Hurricane Floyd and was washed away again just about 17 years later with Hurricane Matthew, neighborhoods completely underwater. I was in Fayetteville. There was a Habitat for Humanity neighborhood that had 90 homes. Six of the houses are uninhabitable now. They were in areas that were not flood plains.

This was a 1,000-year rain event, a 500-year flood event. In other words, this is not likely to happen again in our lifetime, maybe not even in the pages' lifetimes.

It was an incredible event that is going to take a lot of time and effort to

recover from and a lot of resources to rebuild. We are still trying to tally the human and economic toll. It is going to take probably decades to fully recover from this disaster, as we are seeing with Floyd, but we will recover because that is what North Carolinians do. That is what Americans do.

To begin the long rebuilding process, though, we need Federal assistance. That is why Gov. Pat McCrory formally requested a disaster assistance package and why we very quickly got a team together—my staff, who led the effort, working with Congressman PRICE, members of the delegation, Senator BURR—to try to figure out what we need to do to provide assistance to North Carolina so that they can begin their recovery. Over the past weeks, we have worked very closely with the Appropriations Committee.

I want to particularly thank the leadership of the Appropriations Committee. They have done an extraordinary job of working with us, advising us on what we need to do to make our requests clear, to make it more likely that we would be able to get some resources for North Carolina.

I specifically want to thank two of my staff who have worked very hard. They were literally working on the disaster plan after the rains fell and before the rivers started cresting. I want to thank Towers Mingledorff and Kayla Dolan from my office. They did extraordinary work. I am proud of the work they have done on our behalf and on behalf of North Carolinians. At the end of the day, we now have a continuing resolution as a result of their hard work and cooperation with the Appropriations Committee. We have a provision in the continuing resolution to allocate some \$300 million to North Carolina for immediate needs to assist in recovery efforts. This is a beginning. We will continue to work with the Federal agencies which that money will be directed to and then ultimately down to the State so that we can find out what additional needs are there.

I think it is extraordinary that 8 weeks to the day, we were able to work together, get the support of the Members of this body, and get the support of the Appropriations Committee to at least begin the process. We have to help these North Carolinians get back to their normal lives. We have to put people back in their homes. We have to allow businesses to recover and bring people back in and let them go back to their daily lives and working. We are going to do it.

We also need to help the farmers. There are thousands of acres of land that were affected by the floods. In some cases, the flooding was so extensive that these farms—many of them were already ready for next year's crops. Some of them still have crops in the field, covered by sand and sediment. They will need to be cleared.

In other cases, there are washed-out bridges, and there are ditches and drainage areas that will all have to be

cleared out so that we can get the ninth largest agriculture State in the Nation ready to produce crops next year.

I know we will do it. I know we will do it because we have the support of this body, and we are going to be able to start sending that money and that desperately needed support to North Carolina. But in the coming weeks and months, we will also spend time figuring out what more we can do. In the meantime, I want to let everybody in North Carolina know that if they need help, they should contact my office. They can reach me online at tillis.senate.gov. We will do everything we can to help them recover and to get back to their daily lives.

Again, I thank the Members of this body who have supported our efforts to provide this much-needed aid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to introduce the Senate to a young man I met last Friday. His name is Luke Hwang. Luke was born in Korea. His parents brought him to the United States when he was in the fifth grade. They took him to New Jersey. Luckily he had taken some classes in Korea and was able to speak English. He grew up in Palisades Park.

He said:

It didn't take me long to adjust and assimilate because my elementary school offered bilingual classes. . . . This is the kind of America I have known and experienced—not just mundanely accepting diversity but going above and beyond to serve the unique needs of a diverse community.

This is an amazing young man. He started off with a passion for science. He was accepted into the math and science magnet school called Bergen County Academies, ranked by Newsweek as one of the top five public high schools in the United States. At Bergen County Academies, Luke won several awards at regional science fairs. He volunteered as an emergency medical technician in the local ambulance corps as a high school kid.

Because of his academic achievements, Luke was accepted as a university scholar in the Macaulay Honors College at the City College of New York. In 2013 Luke graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's of science in chemistry. He received an award for the highest grade point average of any chemistry major in the school.

This brilliant young man is currently a Ph.D. candidate in chemistry at the University of Chicago. He works as a researcher at the university. In his spare time, he volunteers for the Chicago Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, an organization that tries to help poor people in that community.

Here is the kicker: Luke is undocumented. He was brought to the United States in the fifth grade and turned out to be one of the smartest chemistry

students in his high school, in his college, and now in his graduate program.

When I met him last Friday—he is a very quiet fellow—I said: What do you want to do, Luke?

He said: I want to teach. That is what I would like to do, research and teaching.

Well, here is the problem: He is undocumented. He is not legally in the United States of America. His family brought him here. They did not file the papers, or if they could have, they did not file the papers. Whatever the case, this young man grew up here in the United States, took advantage of the best schools in New Jersey, and now is going to one of the best universities in the United States and is destined to do great things in his life. Maybe he will teach. Maybe he will start a company. Maybe he will just come up with some breakthrough achievement in chemistry that will change the lives of many people.

What are we going to do with Luke Hwang? Well, there are 744,000 people just like him. These are young people who are undocumented, whom President Obama gave a chance to stay here in the United States after they went through a criminal background check, after they paid their filing fee.

He said: You can stay and study in the United States of America. We won't deport you. You can travel to another country and come back without being arrested. You can work in this country if you wish. You have a work permit.

There are 744,000 of them under what is called the DACA Program. Well, the new President says he is going to eliminate that program and eliminate the only thing that is keeping Luke Hwang in the United States; that is, the DACA Program protection against deportation. We can't let that happen. Why would we do that to this young man who was brought here as a fifth grader? Why would we walk away from his talents? Why would we say: Despite all that you have achieved with the highest grade point average in chemistry, America does not need you, Luke. Of course we need him and many more just like him.

I am trying to find a way to give people like him a chance to stay in the United States without being deported, to continue their education in medical school, in law school, in graduate programs, and in so many other different fields. Well, there was a breath of hope today. The President-elect was interviewed for Time magazine. Here is what he said about DREAMers and people like Luke:

We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud. They got brought here at a very young age, they've worked here, they've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs. And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen.

That statement by the President-elect gives me some hope that I can

give Luke some hope and others just like him.

We can straighten out this immigration system in this country, but let's not do it at the expense of these young people. Let's do our job, but in the meantime, let's us protect them. Let's let them continue their education. Let's let them achieve what they want to achieve for themselves and for America. We will be a better nation for it.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I are working on a bill. Whether you are for immigration reform or against immigration reform, join us in the basic proposition that we need to protect young people like this while we debate this important issue. I think that is the right to do. It is certainly the right thing to do for this young man. Some day, he is going to do something very important in this world. I would like to have it happen in the United States.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REGULATORY REFORM

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the need for regulatory reform and also on the work that we have been doing and are doing in the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management, and Regulatory Oversight, of which I have had the great privilege to chair in the 114th Congress. I would be remiss if I did not also recognize our ranking member from Massachusetts, Senator MARKEY, for his contributions to our oversight efforts.

As chairman, one of our main goals has been to conduct a thorough and systemic review of the regulatory process, focusing on the impacts of these regulations on citizens, businesses, and—most importantly—solutions to these problems. We have sought to make certain that Federal regulations are promulgated in a transparent, open process with adequate public participation. Our subcommittee has held hearings conducting oversight on various aspects of the rulemaking process. This includes the adequacy of the science the agencies rely on when promulgating regulations, the increasing number of unfunded mandates agencies impose on State and local governments, the impact of lawsuits on the rulemaking process, and the impact these regulations have on small businesses, State and local governments, and landowners.

Since I began working in the Senate nearly 2 years ago, it has become increasingly clear that economic growth, American innovation, and job creation are being smothered by heavy-handed

Federal regulations imposed by Washington bureaucrats who think they know what is best for American families, States, local governments, and businesses.

According to the American Action Forum, since 2009 this administration has finalized 2,973 regulations at a cost of \$862.7 billion dollars as of today, December 7.

Of these, 179 regulations have come from the Environmental Protection Agency, costing American taxpayers \$342.5 billion.

Since writing this speech—or beginning to write it, about 1 week ago—10 more regulations have been finalized, with 5 of those coming from the EPA. EPA regulations alone make up nearly half of the cost of all the regulations finalized in the last 7 years.

As chairman of the EPW Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management, and Regulatory Oversight, it has become clear to me that EPA is one of the most egregious government agencies in imposing burdensome Federal regulations on citizens, States, and businesses. We have found a failure to review the most current and important science the Agency supposedly bases its regulations on.

We have found that the sue-and-settle process utilized by special interest groups leads to a rushed and reckless rulemaking process that does not follow the proper regulatory process or allow for adequate public participation from those these rules will impact the most.

Further, the EPA regularly fails to take into account how their regulations will impact States and shows little regard for how the States will use their limited resources to comply with these regulations, thereby issuing rules that impose Federal unfunded mandates on States and local and tribal governments.

From 2009 to 2015, the EPA issued a total of 19 rules that contained costly, unfunded mandates on State governments.

The Office of Management and Budget's 2015 report to Congress estimated that Federal regulations and unfunded mandates cost States, cities, and the general public between \$57 billion and \$85 billion every single year. State and local governments are then required to enforce these misguided regulations that have been promulgated by Washington bureaucrats who lack any understanding of the real-world consequences of their regulations or the unique characteristics of the various States.

Alarming, we have also found that the EPA regularly fails to conduct a thorough and accurate economic analysis, which should provide an accurate representation of the cost their regulations will impose on taxpayers and businesses.

This leads to grossly inaccurate economic analysis of regulations that affect huge swathes of the U.S. economy and thousands of U.S. businesses and American jobs.

A 2014 report from the Government Accountability Office found that on multiple occasions and with major costly regulations, the EPA did not provide the public with an explanation of the economic information behind its decisionmaking, despite its obligations to do so.

The U.S. Supreme Court recently issued the *Michigan v. EPA* decision, finding that the EPA unreasonably failed to consider costs when deciding to regulate mercury emissions from powerplants. This impacts the ability of our businesses to conduct business on a daily basis, to compete in a competitive global marketplace, and to employ Americans in steady, well-paying jobs. Notably, small businesses make up 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms.

Federal agencies are required by law to examine the impact of their regulations and what it will have on small businesses. Throughout our oversight process, we found that the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy submitted comments to the EPA expressing concerns over a number of recent rulemakings, such as the waters of the United States rule and the EPA's greenhouse gas regulations.

However, the EPA moved forward with these regulations with little to no regard for their impact on U.S. small businesses. They are the backbone of the U.S. economy.

As a result, rather than creating jobs and focusing on growing their business, U.S. small businesses are forced to use limited resources to comply with a myriad of costly and burdensome regulations.

This year alone, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals imposed a nationwide injunction on the waters of the United States rule, and the Supreme Court imposed a nationwide stay on the Clean Power Plan. While I applaud these decisions, we should not be forced to rely on the courts to prevent such regulations from taking effect.

I am also deeply troubled by the reports that the EPA and the Army Corps are illegally continuing to implement the Waters of the United States rule despite the court's nationwide stay.

During our subcommittee field hearings in Rapid City, SD, earlier this year, we heard from several witnesses about the difficulty and confusion landowners are facing with regard to the waters of the United States. I am concerned that, if this continues, it may get to the point where the property that is the subject of these burdensome regulations loses its value.

Make no mistake. I understand that rules and regulations have a place in society. We all want clean air, clean water, and safe chemicals, but there is a better way to achieve this without imposing burdensome regulations. These flaws in the EPA's rulemaking process have prevented agencies from making well-informed decisions. Even more troubling, the public, State and

local governments, and American businesses are prevented from understanding the need, basis for, and the real impact of regulations.

This regulatory quagmire did not happen overnight. It comes from decades of increased Federal bureaucracy, out-of-control spending, and Federal agencies not being held accountable for their actions. Similarly, we will not come to a solution overnight. It will take a serious bipartisan effort to move the ball forward to address this problem. Throughout this Congress, the goal of our subcommittee has been to unify and lead an effort to advance meaningful regulatory reform in Congress.

We must make certain the regulatory process reflects transparency and sound science and is based on a realistic economic foundation and meaningful public participation that considers the multitude of facets of the U.S. economy.

With an ally in the White House next year who has committed to reducing burdensome regulations, I plan to continue this effort throughout the next Congress and beyond. The success of the U.S. economy and the creation of American jobs depends on Congress making a concerted effort to take back their authority and rein in the rule-making process.

I thank you, and I yield the floor.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, if the Senator from South Dakota would rescind his request to yield the floor, I would like to share one thought.

First of all, I am honored to chair the committee of which you are a subcommittee chairman, and what a Godsend the Senator from South Dakota has been, I have to say to my friend. I was concerned, with this last election coming along, with what might be happening. I think people are aware of what has happened to our military. They are aware of what is happening with the debt going all the way up from \$10.6 trillion to \$20 trillion, the largest increase of all the Presidents, from George Washington, Bush 1, and Bush 2.

My concern was that people wouldn't realize what an impairment the overregulation has been to our businesses in how we are no longer competitive. I think the Senator really struck the note here that it had a lot to do with the awareness of the public.

The Senator knows how many hearings we had on the Clean Power Plan in our committee, and the Senator's subcommittee. We actually had 10 hearings and we had three oversight reports.

I have to say the liberals really like overregulation. Does the Senator know why? This is the question I want to ask the Senator because, generally, if you are of a liberal philosophy, you want to have as much control centered here in Washington, DC. However, when you

get home and they get complaints about overregulation, what this is costing them, they then say: Well, that is not the case now because I had nothing to do with it. That was the regulation.

That is what we are in the midst of right now.

I have a friend who is the head of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau who came to me and he said: Have you seen this document that we have? This is true in South Dakota as well as Oklahoma, that the major problem with the farmers in America today is not anything that is found in the agriculture bill, it is overregulation, primarily by the EPA. The Senator from South Dakota struck a nerve when he spoke about the waters bill, the Waters of the United States. My State is an arid State, but they know full well if the Federal Government can take away from States that jurisdiction of regulating water, what will happen in my State of Oklahoma?

So I would ask my friend—I think a lot of what happened on November 8 has to do with overregulation, and I think we have devoted a lot of time to that. I would suspect the same thing is true in South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. I thank the Senator for the question. The answer is, yes, we have spent a lot of time not only because it is critically a very important item to address—because in the United States today we spend over \$1.9 trillion a year responding to the Federal regulatory morass that we have. That is one-half of a trillion dollars more than what we pay in personal income taxes on April 15.

For people who are producers and have to respond not only in terms of the cost of the regulations but in terms of requesting from a Federal agency the ability simply to mow the ditches, seems to me to be overreach that most people with common sense and the rest of America simply don't think is necessary.

Mr. INHOFE. And, too, I would say the wisdom of the statements brought out that if we stop and think about it, over half of the States had a lawsuit against the Clean Power Plan. That is 29 States. Of course, I am sure that had a lot to do with the U.S. Supreme Court putting a stay on this, and now of course we will have a different administration, but I guess maybe we missed the boat on that one.

Overregulation has been the problem. People have not been as aware of that as they are of other problems. I think that had a lot to do with what happened on November 8 and what is going to happen in the future, particularly in your subcommittee and my committee.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I appreciate those comments, and I appreciate the facts that the Senator is bringing out here. This is something that cannot be done overnight; it has to be done in a businesslike manner.

The real challenge is to listen to the individuals who are impacted and to make reasonable regulations because

we all want to make sure we have a clean America but also an America that can get back to business again employing people, putting them back to work. Then we can begin building the economy so we can afford to actually provide for the next generation so they don't have the problems we see right now with family income down over 6 percent in just the last 9 years.

So this is a part of it. It is a significant part not just in the cost but in the impact on our economy as well.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business, and I ask unanimous consent that our distinguished colleague from Colorado, Senator BENNET, follow my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

FAMILY FIRST LEGISLATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, right now, this evening, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable youngsters across America are living in foster care, separated from family and growing up in a constant struggle instead of in a loving home. For years, this body has worked on a bipartisan basis to come up with an alternative—we call it the Family First legislation—in order to give new hope to our youngsters.

I am particularly grateful to Senator BENNET because he and I have teamed up on this with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, including Chairman HATCH, KEVIN BRADY—the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee—and Congressman BUCHANAN. We have had a bipartisan team working for this. Now, in the waning moments of this Congress, after the legislation passed the House unanimously, after there were a number of hearings in the Finance Committee, and after objections were raised when we used the process in the Senate called the hotline to see if Senators had problems with this legislation and three indicated they had concerns, and we resolved all of them—yet it looks like this Senate is going to go home and end up continuing a policy that causes so much pain to vulnerable children and their families.

What our bipartisan bill would do is to say that for the first time, foster care dollars could be used to keep families together instead of ripping them apart. For example, if in a family a parent has bumped up against substance abuse challenges or mental health services and a grandparent or an uncle would like to help out, that is exactly what could be done under our proposal.

Now, over Thanksgiving—and I truncated the description of what happened into just a couple of sentences—over Thanksgiving, the Family First Act was included in the 21st Century Cures package. The legislation passed earlier

today. And all of us—Senator BENNET, Chairman BRADY—all of us said together that it sure looks like we are on our way.

After having months to come forward to work out concerns—and I will say to the distinguished Presiding Officer who has been kind enough to talk to me about this, we basically said that if a State is having problems meeting these kinds of opportunities—perhaps there aren't enough families—well, we just give them more time. In effect, we would say: OK. You have made a good-faith effort, we will give you a bit more time. But still, at the last moment, there was opposition that swooped in—opposition that really hadn't registered any specific concerns during those years and months in which we worked on this legislation. At the eleventh hour, the Family First Act was stripped out of the Cures package. That is why I voted no.

By dropping Families First, the Senate basically is sending a message today to the most vulnerable, neglected children in America that it is just fine with us if they just wait a little bit longer. They probably are saying: Well, where else do we look for help? By the way, there aren't a lot of places because Chairman BRADY, Chairman BUCHANAN, Congressman LEVIN, the other part of the Capitol, did a terrific job coming together. So when those families who have been neglected go looking for somebody else to help, when the House has done its job and the administration is with you, there is only the U.S. Senate. I am curious whether anybody is going to come here tonight and say they are not on the side of the neglected youngsters and families whom Senator BENNET and I want to stand up for.

So I am going to just make a couple of additional comments and then turn this over to Senator BENNET.

The Family First Act reaches out to the families who are struggling with addiction to opioids or other substances, it helps with programs that fight child abuse and neglect, and it also makes it a special priority to set basic standards for foster care facilities and group homes. I want to emphasize that point just for a moment. Some troubled or abused youngsters have been through such severe trauma that they need the kind of help you can only get in a temporary, high-quality treatment facility. They are kids who are struggling with mental illnesses and behavioral problems, young people suffering from addiction, victims of sex trafficking. The support they need is unique and they need access to reliable care in a safe place.

But these kinds of placements shouldn't be a destination; they should really be an intervention. And whenever we can, we need to make it possible for the kids to have the opportunity to reunite with kin or join a foster or adoptive family.

For the first time, our bill laid down a roadmap so youngsters don't have to

face the prospect of growing up in the kinds of struggling circumstances I have described. There would be standards guided by the States and laid out to protect the kids. They would raise the bar for group homes and make sure the kids aren't sent away and forgotten. In effect, the bill turns the system on its head. I think I shared that thought with the distinguished Presiding Officer. Instead of paying a dollar for families to be split up, the bill says let's find a way to use that dollar to help the families stay together. Let's see if the dollar can keep a youngster safe at home or with kin, where he or she is most likely to be healthy and happy and succeed in school.

The bill has 28 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate.

I also want to thank Chairman GRASSLEY because he has been in our corner, along with Senator BENNET and Chairman HATCH, month after month after month. I hope we can work this out overnight so Families First can pass; if not tonight, in the morning. It is the right policy for vulnerable kids. It is the right policy for families, the right policy for taxpayers. What we are doing today isn't helping vulnerable kids and families the way it ought to.

Five hundred organizations, led by the pediatricians, nurse practitioners, the Catholic bishops, and the Children's Defense Fund, all agree with our basic premise: try to find ways to keep families together and only look for something else where you have those extraordinary circumstances where you need another kind of care. The status quo is not working, and it seems to me we have a choice. We have a choice tonight and in the morning, with the 114th Congress wrapping up, closing the books, packing up, heading home for the holiday season—let's make sure before that wrap-up is finished that we haven't forgotten vulnerable children and families.

With that, I yield the floor.

I note by virtue of unanimous consent that Senator BENNET has recognition. He has been an invaluable colleague, a terrific member of the Finance Committee, and I appreciate his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I will be brief.

I want to thank Mr. WYDEN, the Senator from Oregon and the ranking member of the Finance Committee, for his leadership on this bill. I thank, as he did, Senator HATCH for his leadership on this bill and Senator GRASSLEY for his leadership on this bill.

As the Senator from Oregon indicated, this bill passed unanimously in the House of Representatives. This bill passed with 500 groups supporting the bill from every geographic area in the United States. There are groups from Oregon. There are groups from Colorado. There are groups from the Presiding Officer's State that have

weighed in on this and said we should have this legislation passed. We have had testimony in the Finance Committee from people who were foster children who came to the Congress to testify about what had gone wrong in their lives as a result of the system we have in place today, who still made the time to come here to advocate on behalf of children all over the country who are situated in the same way they once were.

Now, because of a disagreement in the Senate, this bipartisan bill that passed the House unanimously, that has almost 30 cosponsors in the U.S. Senate, a bill that was supported universally by the testimony we had in the Finance Committee, somehow can't get done before we leave for the holidays. That would be a terrible shame, a terrible stain on this Senate.

Tonight there are 50,000 children in Colorado who are in foster care. There are over 650,000 children in the United States of America. What we have heard from them, what we have heard from their advocates, what we have heard from people who serve them—Republicans and Democrats alike—is that the institutional settings that too many of them are consigned to because of the way the law is written today is not the best thing for foster children; that families who can support them and who can nurture them, when they get the benefit of some help, are a far better place for foster children to be than these institutions. When it comes to drug addiction, when it comes to graduation rates from high school, when it comes to attending college—all of these things are affected by the way the current law exists.

The Presiding Officer may know that half of the cases of foster children in the United States are related, one way or another, to the scourge of opium addiction that is happening in the United States. This bill allows us to recognize that. It allows the people who serve the children and the families best to be able to intervene in a way that can keep the families together longer. What we know from the testimony in the hearings is that is the best thing for foster kids, it is the best thing for our States, and it is the best thing for the country.

So I join my colleague from Oregon in saying we should not go home with this unresolved. We should not go home, with the kind of momentum that exists for this bill inside the Congress and, much more important than that, outside the Congress, without having addressed this vulnerable population of people who live in the United States.

It is my fervent hope that we in the Senate will find a way to come to our senses and do our job, just as the people who came here to testify did their job, expecting that the U.S. Congress would respond to their description of their life experience, and what went wrong in a foster care setting has been established by the U.S. Congress. It is

up to us to fix it, and that is what we can do tonight or tomorrow morning, I hope, at the very latest.

With that, Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oregon for his leadership on this bill. I thank, once again, the thoughtful chairman of the Finance Committee, ORRIN HATCH from Utah, for his leadership on this bill, and I hope over the next 12 or 24 hours we find a way to get this through the Senate.

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

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

PEARL HARBOR DAY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, on this Pearl Harbor Day, we should learn the lessons of the past and seize new opportunities for America and Asia and beyond. The great lesson of Pearl Harbor—and more broadly World War II—was America's commitment to utterly defeat our enemies by whatever means necessary and then, when victory was secure, to bring them back into the community of civilized nations.

It was an extraordinary achievement. To think that if, on December 7, 1941, I were to tell you that Japan would be, on December 7, 2016, a staunchly democratic ally, a vital security and economic partner to the United States, you would have said that I was barking mad.

Here we are, three-quarters of a century later, and the day of infamy has become a day of remembrance, reflection, and above all gratitude—gratitude for that greatest of generations who answered the call to service after Pearl Harbor, who stood staunchly with our allies, looked the evil of the axis squarely in the eyes, and saved the free world. They are leaving us now, making it all the more important that we assure each and every one of them of our boundless thanks while we still can. Indeed, I would encourage each and every one of us to thank every veteran we know, every veteran we encounter, every man and woman serving this country who risks their lives to keep us safe.

We can also find much to be thankful for today as what had seemed unthinkable has come to pass. A nation that brutally attacked us 75 years ago today can now be a great and good friend. It is a tribute to both the Japanese and the American people that we have been able to not ignore or whitewash the past but to learn from it and come to the understanding that we are so much stronger as allies than as adversaries.

As a Texan, I am personally appreciative of the fruits of this alliance. We host a range of Japanese companies who have invested in our State, with Toyota, for example, building its new

North American headquarters in Plano this year and creating some 4,000 new jobs, all in Texas. Also this year, the Lockheed Martin plant in Fort Worth has started to produce the F-35s that Japan is purchasing to bolster its defenses against increasing regional aggression from China and North Korea.

So against all odds, the attack on Pearl Harbor has been transformed, and as we face great challenges around the world, and particularly in Asia, we can be grateful today to have our Japanese friends standing by our side, which is yet another lesson from the post-World War II era to be on the lookout not just for challenges and dangers but for unexpected opportunities. We might be forgiven as we contend with hostile nations with nuclear capability or intent—nations such as North Korea or Iran—to see a glass half empty and become consumed with fears of another Pearl Harbor-like attack potentially so much more catastrophic and deadly than the one in 1941.

That would be a mistake. As with some of the fortitude our parents and grandparents showed, we can now count new allies as our partners, not just Japan but also—and equally stunningly—Germany. The list does not end there. We have Israel, which had yet to be born in 1941, not to mention the eastern and central European countries that languished so long under Soviet domination but now are helping build enduring democracies, many of which have joined NATO.

That is simply amazing. If I had told you even 30 years ago that there would be a Czech Republic or a Republic of Poland that would be key NATO allies, I would have again been met with well-founded skepticism. But they are, and as we look forward to a new American administration, it is my hope that we can get off on a much better foot than the last one did in the region when they canceled the missile defense installations intended for those countries, squandering an opportunity to link them more closely to us.

I have to say I am encouraged in this department by the activities of the President-elect, particularly in terms of the congratulatory phone call he received last week from the President of the Republic of China, Tsai Ing-wen. The liberal foreign policy elites were, of course, shocked and appalled. How, they wonder, could the President-elect have committed such an appalling gaff? Wasn't he aware we had degraded our relationship with Taiwan for more than 35 years and no longer recognized this friendly, prosperous, and democratic country as a nation state? Compounding their consternation was the concern that the People's Republic of China might not like it. Quelle horreur. The Chinese might not like it.

Now, to be fair, given the flaming train wreck that is the Obama foreign policy writ large, our relationship with the PRC is, by comparison, a bright spot. All they have done is throw Mr. Obama's successor as Nobel Peace lau-

reate, Liu Xiaobo, into prison, constructed 3,000 acres of weaponized artificial islands in the middle of one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, and utterly failed to contain North Korea, while dismantling the last vestiges of freedom in Hong Kong. Even so, I don't think our President-elect needs to clear his phone calls with Beijing. The phone call between President Tsai and the new American President was, in fact, an acknowledgement of a simple truth: that Taiwan has become an important friend to the United States, even after Jimmy Carter downgraded them in 1979 in acknowledgement of the "One China" policy the elites are so eager to perpetuate.

That is another thing. Just because a policy is old doesn't make it sacrosanct. I don't think anyone here can honestly say our relations with the PRC is so fantastic that we shouldn't do anything to rock the boat. I don't think the Carter-era foreign policy was such a success that we should unquestionably continue it.

I hope the President-elect continues to make clear that while he understands the importance of China and looks forward to a positive relationship with Beijing, he is not going to ignore our friends in the region.

The call between President Tsai and the President-elect reminded me of another phone call which took place in September of 2013. At the end of that year's United Nations General Assembly in New York, while driving to the airport, the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hasan Ruhani, took out his cell phone and called President Obama. The Obama administration was in a tizzy of excitement over Mr. Ruhani's election, as they believed him to be a "moderate" who would be a good-faith partner in their planned and hoped-for negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. Even at this early day, the signs were not promising. Despite Mr. Obama's offers, President Ruhani had refused to have a face-to-face meeting at the United Nations, opting for a call instead. There were no preconditions placed on this first direct exchange between an Iranian and American leader since 1979, such as, say, demanding that the Iranians release their American hostages and acknowledging Israel's right to exist—steps that would have indicated a fundamental shift in Iran's virulent hostility to the United States and our allies and suggested we were truly on a new path.

We all know what has happened over the last 3 years as the Obama administration made concession after concession to get a deal—any deal—with Tehran. Even as Iranian belligerence and hostility had grown, as they have tested ballistic missiles, violated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, detained our citizens, and repeatedly threatened to wipe Israel off the map, Mr. Obama has over and over again proffered his hand in friendship, even sending them \$1.7 billion in cash as a

sweetener, all of which may well result, as I said earlier, in a terrible threat to the United States that could dwarf Pearl Harbor.

In closing, I want to leave you with a message of hope. Our friendship with Japan, as well as Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, and Poland, makes me hopeful. There is a discrete reason these nations are now aligned allies: the persistence and resolve of American leadership—leadership to discern moral from immoral, freedom from tyranny, right from wrong, life from death, and then to fight for the right. Such leadership has been sorely lacking in the past 8 years. Yet the past month affords ample reason for hope.

Quite frankly, I think talking to President Tsai and not to President Ruhani was a material improvement for the national security interests of the United States, and it demonstrates renewed resolve to once more assume the mantle of leadership. That is enough to make all of us hopeful.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5456

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a moment, I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass the bipartisan Family First Act, to help the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children and their parents stay together and make the biggest improvement in child welfare policy in decades and decades in America.

Right now, Federal policy says taxpayer money can be used to split families apart and uproot the family home. With Families First, our bipartisan bill, terrific work has been done by so many Members on both sides of the aisle. Senator BENNET was here and gave an eloquent address about how important this is. With Chairman HATCH, Chairman GRASSLEY, and Chairman BRADY, this has been a bipartisan effort for months for a number of Members for close to 3 years.

With our reform, the Family First bill, families will finally see that they will get some assistance to stay together and stay together when it is safe to do so. If a parent can get a leg up with some help if they face a drug addiction or a mental health problem, everybody wins because the family stays together.

A grandparent can step in. One of the things I am proudest of is that I wrote the kinship care law as part of welfare reform when I was a new Member of this body. So we know that there are hundreds of thousands of grandparents out there who could step in in those situations, or an uncle, and they could get a little bit of help raising a young-

ster, again, keeping the family together.

Sometimes foster care is lifesaving. I think all of us have said that from the beginning. But it should not be the only option. That is what kids who have been in the foster care system came to the Senate this week to tell us. It is our job as policymakers to protect the most vulnerable. Those kids don't have a powerful lobby. They don't have deep pockets.

It just seems to me, as we wrap up this session and everyone here goes back to their families and their holidays, that it is not in good conscience to turn our backs on the foster kids and allow this important bipartisan legislation to wither and to die in the last days of the 114th Congress.

So in a moment I will make this unanimous consent request. I ask that our colleagues end this standing in the way of providing a new measure of hope for vulnerable kids and their families and that we help lift the weight of this broken status quo—this broken status quo that falls heaviest on the hundreds of thousands of foster kids living in a quiet struggle every single day.

So at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 527, H.R. 5456; that the Wyden substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I was wondering if I could direct a question through the Chair to the Senator from West Virginia. I was curious as to whether or not the good Senator, my friend and colleague, intends to object to this measure.

Mr. MANCHIN. To this measure? No, sir.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I actually think Senator WYDEN has done some good work on this measure. I hope that we can get to a point where we can bridge the gap and address some concerns that some of the Members have in States that are concerned with unintended consequences. But at this time, and for reasons unrelated to this measure but to our inability to get other unanimous consents through, I am going to have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I will be very brief. As I have indicated to our colleague from North Carolina—and he is new to the Senate—he really brings a refreshing openness to these debates. I know this was a new topic for him. He has not had a chance to hear a lot about it over the last few years. He was concerned about what this would mean

to group facilities and group homes in his State.

I said: Look, if there is a problem in North Carolina in terms of trying to meet these measures, we said we will give States more time. We will give them more flexibility. I would just like to point out that there seems to be enormous support across North Carolina with respect to this bill because in North Carolina they seem to be saying that they understand that what this legislation is all about—what Family First is all about—is just getting high-quality care for these youngsters.

All of the providers would be eligible. It does not speak to the type of provider. It is all the providers. So I am just going to wrap up by a few quotes that came into the Finance Committee over the course of this legislation. From the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, which, as I understand, is the association of entities that administer child welfare programs in the State of North Carolina supports the legislation, we have a letter that reads: "We go on record as supporting the act and respectfully request your support in passing this important legislation."

The North Carolina Association of Social Workers supports the bill. They wrote: "The legislation would strengthen families so that more children could remain safely with their parents and family caregivers and avoid the need for foster care." For the overwhelming majority of children, this North Carolina group says: This legislation could be a lifesaver.

The North Carolina Pediatric Society writes:

The bill is a pivotal opportunity for a major Federal policy shift away from placing children in out-of-home care and toward keeping families together. Congregate care remains one of the options on the continuum, and the bill doesn't impose time limits or restrictions on the use of these settings for children who need them. But the focus is on keeping families together. The only changes this bill makes for congregate care providers is raising the standards for quality so that all children-needs settings benefit from the therapeutic value of the best providers, of which we have several in North Carolina.

So the Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Children's Hope Alliance, the Exchange Family Center, Family Preservation Community Services, and FIRST North Carolina—a number of groups, all based there and serving in North Carolina citizens—have come out for this.

So I recognize that there has been an objection. It is my intention to keep working through the night, through the early part of tomorrow. I appreciate that this Senator from North Carolina has kept an open mind on this. He has indicated in our conversations that he understands that there is a lot of good in this bill, and for the reasons he has stated, he cannot support it tonight and I gather reasons unrelated to the bill.

I look forward to working with him. He has come to the Senate fairly recently, but I have found him open and

accessible. That is all you can ask of a colleague.

With that I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from Oregon. I may be new to the Senate, but I am not new to North Carolina. I was speaker of the house for 4 years, and I worked with a lot of the agencies that the Senator from Oregon referenced. But the fact of the matter is that the first time I heard that these agencies supported the bill was about 90 seconds ago.

This has not been fully vetted in the Senate. It sounds like it has a lot of merit, but even having said that, this is not why I am objecting to the bill. I am objecting at this time, in large part, because of a number of other objections we are receiving that are not allowing things that would otherwise move through unanimous consent.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2912

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, on that note, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2912, the Trickett Wendler Right to Try Act of 2016, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will continue to object to any unanimous consent on legislation until the CR includes a permanent long-term solution for our miners' health care, as included in the Miners Protection Act, S. 3470.

So this is something that we have been talking about and working on for 2 years. That is all we have asked: Fulfill our promises as those representative of people who have given everything. So I will have to object for these reasons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I appreciate that, but the reason I directed the question about the objection to the motion of the Senator from Oregon is that there seems to be maybe selective application of a strategy that the Senator from West Virginia is trying to do to get a measure passed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3084

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, if I may move on. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 695, S. 3084, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be withdrawn, the Gardner substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the

motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we have heard a lot of talk during the election, since the election about communities like my hometown of Mansfield, OH, not far from where the Presiding Officer grew up—communities that have been ignored by their representatives in Washington.

A lot of politicians responded during the election, since the election. They pledged to do better. This is our chance to actually show that we mean it—with the work that Senator MANCHIN has done, and Senator CASEY, Senator WARNER, Senator PORTMAN in my State, a Republican, and Senator DONNELLY of Indiana—simply to take care of these mine workers.

Senator MANCHIN has been on this floor, as I have—but he has been on this floor even more times—talking about taking care of those mine workers, living up to the promise that Harry Truman made, extending their health insurance.

Instead, the only offer we have had from the majority leader, the one person—Senator TILLIS is not standing in the way. Senator SULLIVAN is not standing in the way. It is one Senator—the majority leader. For whatever reason he does not like the United Mine Workers union. I don't really care about what he thinks about the union. I support the union.

But I care about these workers. What they proposed is a 4-month extension, which means these workers, these widows, these retired workers got a notice back in the last couple of weeks saying they were going to lose their health care. We do 4 months, and they will get another notice—Senator MANCHIN, right?—in January.

We are going to make these retired mine workers, these widows who saw their husbands die from an accident in a mine or died from black lung disease or died from heart diseases every 3 months get another notice and then say: Well, we will extend it for 4 months. No, we have to make sure that we provide them—this is not giving them—the health insurance they have earned.

It is the right thing to do. It is the moral thing to do. For one Senator, who happens to be from Kentucky, of all places, who happens to also be the majority leader, to stand in the way—Senator WYDEN is on my committee and Senator HATCH, Senator PORTMAN, Senator TOOMEY.

We passed 18-to-8 a bipartisan bill to move forward on this and do this right. Senator MCCONNELL asked to go through regular order. We have to do this right. Yet we are going to go home for Christmas. We are going to go home for the holidays. Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, we are going home for the holidays.

We are going to have fun with our families. These widows, these retired miners, well, it is not so much fun with their families because they don't know when their health insurance is going to run out.

Mr. President, we need to do this. We need to do it right. We need to do it today or tomorrow. We have no business going home before that. For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from Ohio. I believe, if I have the facts correct, that it was the majority leader who pushed for the patch into the CR.

I am not quite sure I agree with some of the specifics that were put forth by the distinguished Senator from Ohio, but I would like to move on.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2763

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 654, S. 2763, the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, with a committee-reported substitute amendment. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a crisis facing 16,000 retired coal miners and widows across the country. We made promises. Roughly 1,000 of these people are in my State. These retirees will lose their health insurance at the end of this year unless Congress acts.

My colleagues, Senators MANCHIN, BROWN, CASEY, and WARNER have spoken on this topic, and together, along with a larger bipartisan group, we pushed for months for the passage of the Miners Protection Act to guarantee pension and health benefits to hundreds of thousands of retirees.

We have a responsibility to enact this legislation to ensure that the Federal Government makes good on its promise—its promise to the miners. It wasn't a suggestion. It was a promise to these people who risked their lives to help our country meet our energy needs. In fact, many of us stood here together in June calling for action before it was too late.

Well, now it is almost too late. While Congress is in a rush to get out of town, those 16,000 retirees are desperate for help. Their health needs are not dependent on our schedule. Their desire to be able to stay alive shouldn't be subject to our desire to leave town. They are praying this legislation is enacted so the health insurance is still there next month when they still need it.

It is inexcusable. It is beyond disappointing to learn that the bill we are set to consider to keep the Federal Government running includes only a scaled-down provision for our miners. Rather than guarantee the promised benefits, leadership chose only to include the bare minimum of a 4-month extension of health coverage through April without addressing the pension concerns.

I have seen leadership. That is not it. I will repeat once again: 16,000 mining retirees, 1,000 from Indiana, will lose their health coverage in 3 weeks unless Congress acts. For the health and the financial security of thousands of families, immediate attention is required. Kicking the can down the road for 4 months has never been a solution. Enrollment periods for other health plans end this week and next. These retirees are watching us closely and are already in the process of making painful and costly decisions.

This is about life and death for thousands of retirees across the country right now. They are praying that we will stand up and keep our word. We made a promise. The United States made a promise to our citizens, to our coal miners. The provision in the spending bill does not come close to meeting that promise that was made.

I urge the Senate to act immediately to consider a stronger measure that addresses this crisis facing thousands of retirees in my State and in so many other States across the country. These are not just numbers. These are our citizens. These are the people we represent. These are the people who dug the coal to keep the lights on in this building. Their ancestors dug the coal that helped win the war in World War II. We made a promise, and here we stand making a decision whether it will be kept or whether it will not.

This is about who we are as a country and who we are as Senators. Do we honor the word of the people before us?

Do we honor the coal miners with black lung, with broken kneecaps, with broken shoulders, with widows who are wondering if they are going to be able to make it alone?

I will continue to object to any unanimous consent request or legislation until the CR includes a permanent long-term solution for our miners' health care as included in the Miners Protection Act, S. 3470. Therefore, Mr. President, for these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, let me direct a question through the Chair to the Senator from Indiana.

I don't believe the Senator was in at the time that the Senator from Oregon offered his motion. Would the Senator have objected to that motion—Senator WYDEN's motion?

Mr. DONNELLY. I was not here to listen to what he said. I was elsewhere. So I cannot answer the question because I didn't hear what the Senator had to say.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3364

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 3364, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to accept the donation of facilities and related improvements for use by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to explain why we are here and what is really happening, so people have a good grasp of things.

First of all, the Miners Protection Act—this protection act basically goes back to a commitment, a promise, and a transaction that we have done in Congress in 1946, under President Harry Truman. It is the Krug act. Basically, it was said that from that day forward, we are basically taking certain amounts of money from all the coal that is mined. This is not public funds. We are not asking for public funds. If we had done what we were supposed to do, we would have taken that money and put that money in the funds for the miners' protection of their health and their pension. They had nothing before that. They are the ones who basically gave us the energy that we had to win two world wars and become the super power of the West. All they asked for was that. It wasn't guaranteed by taxpayers going to pay it. It was going to come from the coal that was mined.

Now this same Congress comes back 20, 30 years later, and we changed the bankruptcy laws to allow companies now to declare bankruptcy and to shed their legacy costs. They don't have to pay it no more. So we are caught. Every promise we made now is this: Oh, I am sorry; we can't pay you.

So we did step in. We stepped in a couple of times—in 1993, in 2006. Congress has basically a history with this piece of legislation. So we are working now to shore it up.

AML means abandoned mine lands. That is money that goes from every kind of coal into a reclamation fund that takes care of any reclamation that is needed from the mining process. As you are putting the mines back or putting the environment back and taking the environment and putting the land back, that money would be used for that. If there was not much reclamation or if that money accumulated, then we have a surplus. We have only asked for the surplus.

So we were all on the same page, and we have been negotiating back and forth. This is 2 years ago and up until present. We have been negotiating back and forth, up to 2 weeks ago. Two

weeks ago we were told, and I have had good, honest, upfront negotiations with the majority leader. He said: I just don't think the pension is going to fly this year. I said: I understand it. I am still going to work my tail off for this thing.

I had to tell all the widows and all the people whom we represent—16,300 who were notified in October. They have to give a 90-day notification that you are going to lose your health care benefits. They gave that notification in October for December 31. That happened. I had to tell them now that we are not going to get the pension this year. We are doing everything we can, but I am almost positive we are going to get the health care because I was told we were going to get the health care. Not until 2 days ago did I have any inkling that now, all of a sudden—I am not blaming my colleagues here—the House said: Oh, I am sorry. We are only going to do an extension for the CR—the same extension for the health care.

I know that my colleagues would agree with this. Let's say it was your aunt or your grandmother or a retired person basically being paid those benefits. They were told in October. Now we are supposed to accept this CR coming over with this language that says: Ok, now let's tell Mrs. Smith again. We are basically going to say: OK, we gave you a 4-month extension, but we are going to notify you again in January that you are going to lose it again in April. They don't even have time to work with the deductibles to get any insurance—nothing.

Let me tell you how they were going to pay for it. This is what came from the House—not my colleagues here but from the House. The House says: OK, we are going to take \$47 million from the VEVA transfers. VEVA was money that was set aside for other bankruptcies. These were bankruptcies that were basically going to give people who were retired under those bankruptcies at least health care coverage until June. Those same people are going to lose theirs because it is going to take their money and they are going to lose theirs also. It is almost incomprehensible that they would give us something like this and think it is something we could do.

We got a bipartisan agreement here on this side, and we can't get just a consideration from our colleagues over in the House. So I just can't explain it. I can't go home and explain this. We are walking out of here, trying to get out this weekend because everybody wants to go home. That is wonderful. The only thing we have this time certain is December 31. They know they are going to lose everything—their health care benefits. It is in doubt that they will have their pensions taken care of, and we won't stay here because it is too much of an inconvenience. That is why we are prepared. We are going to stay. If they want to stay through Christmas, fine—through the

New Year, fine. I think that they think: I know everybody wants to go home; so I am sure everybody will fold their hands and leave.

I want to thank all of you and all of my colleagues for jumping up here because you all have been helping us. They just have to get the message that we are sincere about helping these people.

Everybody is standing for the working person. Every campaign ad I saw this year said: We are all for the working man and the working woman. Well, you got a chance to prove it right now. You got a chance to show that I am for you, that I respect what you did, what your husband did, what your family has done for the country, and I am trying to help you.

What we are asking for is to give us a permanent long-term solution for the miners, included in the Miners Protection Act that we have been working on for so long, S. 3470. Reluctantly, therefore, for these reasons, I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Senator from West Virginia, I believe, is trying to make a compelling argument. I understand that he feels very strongly about this. We feel very strongly about a number of these motions I am going to continue to make and hopefully not get objection.

Mr. President, I do want to remind the Senator from West Virginia that it was the majority leader who worked to at least get the patch in the CR, and like so many things around here, we wish we were working on longer horizons, but that seems to be the challenge we have to deal with and that we will have to deal with in the waning days of this session.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1831

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 1831, the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the Toomey substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I am a bit incredulous. I like the Senator from North Carolina. We sit across from each other in the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We have done at least 2 or 3 bills that reached the President's desk and were signed into law together.

But I think my Republican friends are kind of missing the point here—to give the majority leader credit for fix-

ing this when, No. 1, he wouldn't do it, he wouldn't do it, he wouldn't do it, he wouldn't do it. Senator MANCHIN has asked him for weeks and months and months to take care of the pension and the health insurance, and the majority leader refused month after month after month.

The majority leader said: I need you to do several things. We need you to follow regular order. We did. We went through the Finance Committee, 18 to 8. Senator HATCH, the chairman, helped us. Senator WYDEN, the ranking member, was one of the strongest supporters, joined by Senators CASEY and WARNER, Finance Committee members who represent a lot of mine workers.

The Senate majority leader then said: You have to find a way to pay for it. We did it. We found a way to pay for it. It comes from the abandoned mine fund. There are no tax dollars involved in this. The majority leader still wouldn't do anything.

So finally, Senator MANCHIN comes to the floor, I come to the floor, Senator CASEY comes to the floor, and Senator WARNER comes to the floor over and over, and we say we are not going to agree to anything until you take care of these pensioners, until you take care of these miners' widows. Then, out of the goodness of the majority leader's heart, he gives these miners—these retired miners and widows—4 months. What does 4 months mean?

It means that these widows and miners—these retired miners and widows got a notice in the last couple of weeks saying their insurance will expire December 31. If we agree to the majority leader's bountiful offer, then they will get another notice in January or February saying: Oh, it is going to run out again in 4 months.

What is really interesting around here is, I hear Republican Senators day after day after day—whether it is the Affordable Care Act, whether it is Dodd-Frank—say: All we want is predictability. We want to be able to plan. Businesses can't produce jobs, can't create jobs, unless we have a path forward, unless we can predict what will happen, unless we can have some certainty.

That is all right for corporate America. They want certainty. Corporate America wants to be able to plan. But it is not all right for mine workers' widows? It is OK to jack them around—pardon my language—it is OK for them to stumble around every 4 months and we renew their pensions, we renew their health care? Really.

This is so easy. Give us a year, and then we will be back next year and we will work on this. But, as Senator MANCHIN said, for us to go home for Christmas—whether or not you celebrate Christmas—and be with our families, which I really want to do—I have five grandchildren. I can't wait to get to spend time with them in the next 3 weeks. But we have to do our job. If we don't do it tonight, then we are going to be here tomorrow. If we don't do it

tomorrow, we are going to be here the next day. If we don't do it at the end of this week, we are going to be here next week because we are not leaving. We are going to stay here as long as we need to, even if it means a session on Christmas Day, in order to get these retirees and their widows the pensions and the health care that they earned, not a little 4-month bump.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, earlier the distinguished Senator from Oregon said he recognizes that I am new to the Senate and there may be something different between what we would call a blanket position in the North Carolina House and a blanket position here.

Mr. President, I want to ask a question of the distinguished Senator from Ohio. I might add that I appreciate the kind comments that I think you were recently reported as saying. We are working together on veterans issues, and I look forward to continuing to work for you.

Mr. President, I would ask the Senator from Ohio, if he was in the Chamber at the time of the motion offered by Senator WYDEN, would he have been prepared to object to that motion being consistent with the position that they are having blanket objections to all motions?

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President—Senator TILLIS, I heard the tail end of it. I was in the cloakroom trying to find out exactly what the parliamentary procedure was going to be on this. I would be willing to say yes to a lot of these once we take care of the mine workers. This is a wide-open forum. Let's take care of the mine workers, and then we can consider each of these other bills. But none of these bills has the immediacy of thousands of mine workers, retirees, and their widows in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. None of them have the immediacy of these mine workers' health care being cut off December 31.

These are important public initiatives. I can't think of anything that we are considering—I mean, I really want to get "Buy American" in the WRDA bill. We had it in the Senate bill. It was bipartisan.

Speaker RYAN—even though we tweeted the President-elect of the United States asking him to weigh in on "Buy American," saving thousands of dollars in Coshocton, OH, in Wheeling, and in other places all over this country, we couldn't get any response to that. I want to see us do that. I would like to stay and do that, but the immediate question is, How do we protect these miners and retirees and how do we protect these widows and widowers, for that matter, make sure their health care is protected? That is the fundamental question. I am willing to do a whole lot of other things. Do this first, and then the floor is open to do other things.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3286

Mr. TILLIS. In a moment, I will be making another unanimous consent request. I will give a classic example of the kinds of things I wish we could get done before we leave here.

The unanimous consent request I am about to make would encourage effective, voluntary private sector investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the U.S. military, with annual Presidential awards to private sector employers recognizing such efforts for their purposes.

This is an example of something that right now, today, without objection, we can get through.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3286, a bill to encourage effective, voluntary private sector investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the U.S. military, with annual Presidential awards to private sector employers recognizing such efforts, which was received from the House. I further ask consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first, I say to my good friend from North Carolina, Mr. TILLIS, I have been in the Senate for 6 years, so I have never used this procedure—never believed it, never thought I would have to, never thought anything would be so direly needed that I would even have to stand here and object to all the good things we both have worked on. I have so many good things on my side that I am not moving right now, and you have so many great things on your side that I would love to help you with.

But, sir, if you were in my position—let me go a little bit further because I don't think maybe I made it. If you want to add insult to injury to what has happened to our retired miners and all the people dependent on their health care benefits, the \$47 million that I told you they transferred—that is what they are going the pay for from the House, the VEBA—basically takes it from other bankrupt funds that were set aside. They are going to do that, and when all is said and done—and it has even been scored that Medicaid and Medicare would save so much because now they are paying for it out of the miners health care fund, and they are not going to have to. But on top of that, from the \$47 million they took, they are going to make \$2 million profit returned back to the Treasury. They are going to take \$2 million from money set aside to pay—that the bankruptcy courts put aside to pay miners because they will lose their health care

by June. Now they are going to lose it by April, by this provision that has been passed by the House. And on top of that, they will have \$2 million in surplus.

I had a lady call me today. She said: You know, Senator MANCHIN, where I come from, they call that theft. They call that theft. And why would you all let them do that? If they don't do anything, some of our miners are, till June—16,000 of us lose. We don't want to punish them, but now you are punishing them. You are punishing them an extra 3 months. Why would you all do that?

I am not sure they really realize it on the other side.

Like I said, I am not at our colleagues here, my friends and Republican colleagues I have here, but why would the House send that to you, and why would you all accept it?

That is all we are asking for. We can all gather forces here and send a large message to them that we are not going to do this until they come to their senses and take care of the miners' health care benefits.

You know what. We can come back. We can let all of this—all of our UCs that have been worked on and that I think are so needed can go right through, we can all go home, and hopefully our miners know they have health care, we know we have done a lot of good for a lot of people, and hopefully everyone will have a better Christmas. So all I am asking for—until the CR includes that permanent, long term, I am going to have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—SENATE RESOLUTION

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of a Senate resolution at the desk designating December 17, 2016, as "Wreaths Across America Day," submitted earlier today. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object. We can keep doing this. I think it is very clear what Senator MANCHIN and I are asking for. We are not asking for anything unusual; we are asking for the Senate to honor the pledge made by President Truman more or less seven decades ago to take care of the health care that mine workers earned.

Don't ever forget, we all work around here. We wear coats and ties, and our work might be stressful, sort of, but we are not likely risking our lives, we are not likely picking up occupational diseases from the work we do. But we are

saying to these widows and mine workers and retired mine workers that I guess you don't matter very much because we are going to have our Christmas vacation and you are going to have to worry about your health care.

Their health care runs out December 31. Senator MCCONNELL, finally, after great pressure from constituents and mine workers and us, finally said he would give us 4 months. You can't run your life not knowing your health insurance is going to run out in 4 months or 8 months or 3 months.

So we shouldn't keep repeating ourselves, but Senator TILLIS keeps bringing up one issue after another. We are going to keep saying no until we get in this bill much more time for this health care for these retired mine workers and their families and their widows.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I just want to be clear that my friend from West Virginia, whom I actually consider to be one of my favorites, to be honest with you, since I have been here—I have loved serving with him on committees, and I serve with him on the Senate Armed Services Committee and Veterans' Affairs. I asked the Senator from West Virginia if he would have objected to the motion set forth by the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, and the answer was no. So we have an inconsistency here.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—SENATE RESOLUTION

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of a Senate resolution at the desk honoring the individuals who lost their lives in the tragic fire in Oakland, California, on December 2, 2016, submitted earlier today. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to explain to my good friend, the Senator from North Carolina, that I have been deferring to you the pleasure of objecting, and that is the reason I didn't object to the Senator from Oregon. As you said, we can stay here. I think we all have a lot of appreciation for the situation.

With that being said, we have come to an impasse that if we cannot get the House, with the help of our Senate colleagues on both sides, to agree to a permanent, long-term fix and a solution for the miners' health care—and I would say to the Senator, we took off the pension; you heard me say that. We took the pensions off of that. We thought that might provide us a way to move forward. We thought we had a way to move forward.

With that being said, we stand here today objecting to things that we would all like to move forward on. It pains all of us to be in this position. Hopefully, you all can help us, talking to the House and basically asking them to come to their senses and, hopefully, take care of this.

So for that reason, until we have a long-term solution for our miners' health care as included in the Miners Protection Act, S. 3470, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I would like to direct another question through the Chair to the Senator from West Virginia. I just want to be clear that, hypothetically, if the Senator from Oregon were to come back to the Chamber and offer that motion, would the Senator from West Virginia actually object to that motion?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the Senator posing a question?

Mr. BROWN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, we may have that opportunity.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—SENATE
RESOLUTION

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of a Senate resolution at the desk recognizing the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the lasting significance of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day submitted earlier today. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I was incredulous at the beginning of the night, not quite believing that Senator MCCONNELL—I don't know what he is doing now—was sending his people to the floor and finding ways to push back against the mine workers in West Virginia and Ohio and Pennsylvania and Indiana and Virginia, not willing to help those pensioners and widows. Now we have this incredible coincidence that the last two resolutions—we are talking about mine workers—retired mine workers' health care; we are talking about widows of mine workers who have either died on the job or died perhaps from an illness that mine workers so often have—brown lung or some kind of heart disease. Instead, my friend from North Carolina has offered two resolutions, one to honor people who died in a fire—a tragedy—and one to mark the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, both reasonable things. But they are not resolutions to provide college to the children of the people who died in the fire, and they are not to increase benefits for the grandchildren of people who died in Pearl Harbor; they are resolu-

tions that don't mean anything except they are nice. I am for these resolutions. I love to support anything we do to say something nice and pat somebody on the back. But we have these two resolutions saying aren't they nice, aren't we nice, compared to taking care of widows who are going to see their health care expire on December 31. I don't understand the equivalency.

I suppose we could go all night if Senator MCCONNELL were perhaps in his office or perhaps out to dinner or perhaps he went home. But it is ordering or asking or however we do things around here—Senators come to the floor and delay and delay and delay and try to change the subject so that people forget about these mine workers. Well, we are not going to let the Presiding Officer or Senator TILLIS or Senator MCCONNELL or Senator CORNYN or anybody else—we are not going to let you forget the mine workers. We are going to keep talking about this.

I don't mind working late tonight. I don't mind working late tomorrow. I would rather not work until December 24, but Senator MANCHIN said he will, and I will. My wife is not thrilled about it, and my children and my grandkids aren't thrilled about it. But these are thousands of people who are going to lose their health insurance on December 31, and all that Senator MCCONNELL can do, after huge pressure from mine workers around the country and his constituents in Kentucky and from us—all Senator MCCONNELL can do is say, well, we can give you maybe 4 months, and that is supposed to satisfy us. It doesn't matter if it satisfies us; it matters that we take care of these retired mine workers and their widows.

For all of those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Ohio did mention a couple of resolutions, but I would add there was also the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act that we worked very hard on to provide much needed resources for a number of States, including Ohio. There are a number of other items, including I think hiring vets, providing programs or providing preferences and trying to do everything we can to get our veterans hired; preventing animal cruelty and torture I think is a worthwhile cause, and a number of other things.

But, again, the point here is that we are trying to move things that we generally have consent on, and for one reason or another—and I don't question the motives of the Senator from West Virginia—they are being held up. We kind of have a double standard in that some of these things do not rise to the same level as the unanimous consent request made by Senator WYDEN earlier.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5456

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 527, H.R. 5456; that the Wyden substitute amend-

ment at the desk be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection has been heard.

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am happy to yield the floor to the Senator from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina yields the floor to the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I just want to clarify. I think there is some confusion. It seems like everybody is in a hustle right now. I think they think we are being selective. I want to make it very clear. I have been very clear to everybody. I have had to object on everything. I have had to object on my own pieces of legislation to stop everything. With that being said, I think I was asked about Senator WYDEN's request, and I said, no, I wouldn't at that time, and then I think at that time Senator TILLIS objected. For that you were asked did I object, and I said no.

With that being said, I would have objected to everything, and I think everybody knew where I stood in this body that I will and have to reluctantly—I don't want to be in this position. I am so committed to fulfilling the promise and commitment we have made. That is all.

I am sorry if there has been confusion. I have to, for the position we have taken. I think the good fight that we have here—and, basically, what the House has done to us is not humane to the people we represent. That is all I said. I am sorry for that.

So if there is a motion on the table, I object to that too.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Reserving the right to object, but I withdraw my reservation.

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

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA BOXER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1922, Rebecca Latimer Felton was the first woman to sit in the U.S. Senate. She served in this body for only 1 day, but