

independence. They backed shutdowns and mandates that destroyed the American workforce. They shuttered American businesses and sent our supply chains into a shambles. And let's be clear—they didn't make these decisions blindly. They have the same data that each Member of this Chamber has. They watch the news. They knew what they were doing. They knew it was wrong. They did it anyway. It was intentional. They are focused on an outcome, and now they are applying that same destructive strategy to the members of the U.S. military.

Every year, we come into this Chamber and fight as hard as we can to make our military the most lethal fighting force in the world. We authorize billions of dollars for aircraft, for equipment, for weaponry. The NDAA represents an incredible investment in the future of this country. But it also represents the trust the American people put in this Congress to keep them safe and to keep the enemy at bay.

I join my Republican colleagues in asking Leader SCHUMER to bring the NDAA to the floor so that we can get this very important piece of legislation to the President's desk. There is no reason for delay.

And I also implore all my colleagues to remember that the greatest military in the world is nothing without the brave men and women and their families who have volunteered to be a part of this. We ask so much of them. They are already busy enough putting out fires, fighting wars. The least we can do is spare them the pain of fighting our political battles.

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. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT— Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 449, H.R. 8404.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 449, H.R. 8404, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, let me say a few words about the cloture motion we will file.

In a few moments, I am going to set up the first procedural vote on legislation that will codify marriage equality into law. Members should expect the first vote on Wednesday.

The Respect for Marriage Act, which my colleagues Senators BALDWIN, SINEMA, COLLINS, and others have done a great job working on, is an extremely important and much needed bill. No American should ever, ever be discriminated against because of whom they love, and passing this bill would secure these much needed safeguards into Federal law.

I want to make clear that passing this bill is not a theoretical exercise, but it is as real as it gets. When the Supreme Court overturned Roe, Justice Thomas argued that other rights, like the right to marriage equality enshrined in Obergefell, could come next.

Now, the Senate had a chance to bring marriage protection to the floor for a vote back in September, but at the urging of colleagues from both sides of the aisle, I agreed to wait because we were given an assurance that enough votes would materialize after the election. Because my top priority is to get things done in a bipartisan way whenever we can, we determined that this legislation was too important to risk failure, so we waited to give bipartisanism a chance.

I hope, for the sake of tens of millions of Americans, that at least 10 Republicans will vote with us to protect marriage equality into law soon. The rights and dignity of millions of Americans depend on it.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 449, H.R. 8404, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Margaret Wood Hassan, Patty Murray, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Jacky Rosen, Richard J. Durbin, Debbie Stabenow, Elizabeth Warren, Mazie Hirono, Alex Padilla, Gary C. Peters, Jeanne Shaheen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, November 14, be waived.

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

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

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

The Senator from Indiana.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, panel 2E, row 71. Not long ago, a young lady visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial during a visit to Washington, DC. She walked along the wall searching the black granite panels, and she saw the name right there in front of her. She stopped and pressed her hand against it. It was panel 2E, row 71, Alvin C. Forney.

Across our country, not just on our National Mall but on the boulevards of our State capitals and in the squares of our small towns, there are names of brave Americans etched in memorials, the names of those who never came home. And there are those who did come home, whose names may not be on monuments but whose example of service and sacrifice for their country is no less inspiring.

For two and a half centuries, they have answered the calls. They have protected our freedoms. They placed their lives in the line of fire oceans away so that their countrymen can live lives in peace here at home. They are the citizen soldiers who defeated the King's army, who ended the scourge of slavery, who saved Western civilization and liberated concentration camps, who stood down communism and stand vigil against terrorism. They are more than just names, though. They are the spirit of this country: strong but merciful, forever guarding our freedoms, and devoted to our fellow citizen.

Cpl Alvin Forney lived this example out in his all-too-brief life. He seemed destined, no matter his path, to make a difference. And he did. Tall, handsome, with a bright smile and infectious optimism, he was an ace athlete, a football, track, and basketball star at Shortridge and Washington High Schools in Indianapolis.

A member of a military family, Corporal Forney enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1961, and he went west. He graduated from Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, and then trained in the mountains near Camp Pendleton. He endured the forced marches and step hikes in the tarantula- and rattlesnake-filled scrub.

San Diego-trained marines are sometimes derisively called Hollywood marines by their Paris Island peers. You see, Tinseltown is just up the Pacific Coast Highway. But if Hollywood did ever try to create the ideal marine, Corporal Forney could be its muse.

You can see it in the old photos, the focus, the confident air, the spotless uniform. He looked like a gentleman marine, a hero. And he wasn't just courageous or strong. He was patient and decent. Slow to anger, he seldom swore—a rarity, of course, for a U.S.

marine. He loved his family, and he loved his country.

When he arrived in Vietnam in the summer of 1965 as part of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force, his chief concern was not for himself. It was for his brother. You see, Army SGT William Forney, the corporal's brother, was departing for Vietnam. Corporal Forney wrote their mother, Minnie:

I don't mind being over here, but I worry about Bill coming over.

You see, his brother William had married shortly before deploying, and Corporal Forney was concerned about his brother's separation from his new bride.

Shortly after that letter arrived, a military car pulled into the driveway. It was a telegraph from the Department of Defense that came. Cpl Alvin Forney had been struck by fragments of a mine during a patrol, and he was killed in action near Da Nang. It was September 1, 1965. He was 22 years old.

Corporal Forney was awarded the Purple Heart, and he was laid to rest in Indianapolis's Crown Hill Cemetery among a President and Vice Presidents, poets, businessmen, inventors, and all the rest. And he wasn't at all out of place.

Corporal Forney's mother visited his grave every September until the day she died. Beneath the words on his headstone "Beloved Son and Brother" and after the mention of Vietnam, his headstone read: "The first casualty from Indianapolis"—which he was. But a mere statistic he was not.

It was a half century later that that young lady came to the wall in search of Corporal Forney's name. She came because her grandfather asked her to, because 50 years earlier, he had served with Corporal Forney at Naval Air Engineering Station at Lakehurst, in New Jersey, and he never forgot him. He could still see that squared-away marine. He could still hear his soft-spoken voice. And he could still remember the day in September 1965 when he walked into headquarters at Lakehurst and saw the secretaries sobbing and heard the tragic news: Corporal Forney had been killed in action in Vietnam.

The corporal's family, too, they never forgot him. He is still in their hearts. His younger siblings and cousins, they still remember the days before he left for Vietnam, how kind, loving, and protective he was; the memories of the dinners he treated them to; of popping his fingers and whistling; his enthusiasm and joy.

Just weeks ago, I met Mary Allen, Corporal Forney's younger sister, on a flight back to Indiana. She shared her brother's story and asked that I remember him. I will.

Of course, on Veterans Day, which just passed, we remember all of those who wore the uniform, who pledged their lives to freedom's cause—yes, because they are owed our grateful devotion, our eternal gratitude every day, not just one day in November.

Beyond that, though, to forget them is to take them for granted in an act of

national self-destruction. Decades pass, generations come and go, and values change. In many ways, that is the natural course of a society in search of a more perfect Union. But those who have defended that Union carry with them unbending values—values that are essential to a democracy. Our veterans set an example. They are a monument to the values at the heart of this experiment in liberty: service and sacrifice, humility and honor, loyalty to country and love of countryman, dedication to others and to causes greater than oneself.

Panel 2E, row 71. When that young woman went to the wall in search of panel 2E, row 71, it was not just because her grandfather had served with Alvin Forney. It was because, as her grandfather said, he set an example that all Americans should be proud to follow.

Without citizens like Corporal Forney, there is no America. He is not forgotten. None of our veterans or the example they set are, nor will they ever be.

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 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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 1130, Maria del R. Antongiorgi-Jordan, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Charles E. Schumer, Raphael G. Warnock, Tim Kaine, Sherrod Brown, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tina Smith, Angus S. King, Jr., John W. Hickenlooper, Cory A. Booker, Christopher Murphy, Amy Klobuchar, Benjamin L. Cardin, Edward J. Markey, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Alex Padilla, Catherine Cortez Masto, Gary C. Peters.

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 nomination of Maria del R. Antongiorgi-Jordan, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 353 Leg.]

YEAS—51

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Heinrich | Reed |
| Bennet | Hirono | Romney |
| Blumenthal | Kaine | Rosen |
| Booker | Kelly | Sanders |
| Brown | King | Schatz |
| Cantwell | Klobuchar | Schumer |
| Casey | Leahy | Shaheen |
| Collins | Lujan | Sinema |
| Coons | Manchin | Smith |
| Cortez Masto | Markey | Stabenow |
| Duckworth | Menendez | Tester |
| Durbin | Merkley | Tillis |
| Feinstein | Murphy | Van Hollen |
| Gillibrand | Murray | Warner |
| Graham | Ossoff | Warren |
| Grassley | Padilla | Whitehouse |
| Hassan | Peters | Wyden |

NAYS—43

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barrasso | Fischer | Portman |
| Blackburn | Hagerty | Risch |
| Blunt | Hawley | Rounds |
| Boozman | Hooven | Rubio |
| Braun | Hyde-Smith | Scott (FL) |
| Burr | Inhofe | Scott (SC) |
| Capito | Johnson | Shelby |
| Cassidy | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Cornyn | Lankford | Thune |
| Cotton | Lee | Toomey |
| Cramer | Lummis | Tuberville |
| Crapo | Marshall | Wicker |
| Cruz | McConnell | Young |
| Daines | Moran | |
| Ernst | Paul | |

NOT VOTING—6

| | | |
|--------|--------------|---------|
| Cardin | Hickenlooper | Sasse |
| Carper | Murkowski | Warnock |

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I asked my colleagues to join me in honoring and thanking the heroic individuals who have served our country.

Every year on Veterans Day—just a couple of days ago—we come together as Ohioans or Oregonians and New Mexicans and Americans generally to remember with deep respect and gratitude all that our veterans have done for our country.

Veterans and their families have sacrificed so much to keep us safe. They put their lives on the line to protect us.

So often veterans don't speak about their service. My dad was a World War II veteran. He rarely talked about it. It was pretty typical of that generation; not so different from Vietnam vets, many of whom suffered from Agent Orange, or from Iraqi or Afghan war vets. They don't brag, they don't ask for recognition, but they have earned it.

As we pay tribute to all who serve and all who have served, we must remember that we owe veterans and their families more than just a thank you on Labor Day—or on Veterans Day. We owe them what they have earned: healthcare benefits, education opportunities. Taking care of our veterans is a cost of going to war.

Now, I have heard—I am going to talk about the PACT Act in a moment. Senator MERKLEY and I were just talking about it, the long overdue step we took to pass the PACT Act. A number

of our more conservative colleagues said it cost too much. They never say it costs too much to send people to war. It only costs too much to take care of the men and women who have served us in providing healthcare at the CBOC in Mansfield or the VA in Dayton or the VA in Cleveland.

We took this year a long overdue step to pass the PACT Act. We secured the most comprehensive—the single-most comprehensive benefit expansion for veterans in our Nation's history.

Some of you in this body remember, with Agent Orange, at the beginning, to get Agent Orange benefits you had to prove that you got sick because of the exposure to Agent Orange, and some veterans had to hire lawyers, and it just didn't make sense.

Well, we learned the lessons from Agent Orange in the PACT Act. When President Biden signed this bill he delineated—we delineated—23 illnesses, mostly bronchial and cancers—bronchial illnesses and cancers. And if you as a veteran who served in Iraq or Afghanistan or, you know, in some other theaters, if you had one of those illnesses, you could get treatment at the Zanesville CBOC or the Chillicothe VA or the Cincinnati VA.

It means now that post-9/11 combat veterans are now eligible for this VA care. It means we also expanded coverage for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and for those exposed to burn pits and other toxins.

It means if you are exposed to toxins while serving your country, you get the benefits you have earned—period, no exceptions.

We couldn't have done it without the lessons of Agent Orange and the activism of our servicemembers and families.

I have spent much of the last 6 weeks doing roundtables of 6, 8, 10, a dozen veterans, in rural communities and cities alike in my State, and most of them weren't yet aware of what this bill meant. It does mean that if they have any one of these illnesses and they were exposed to these burn pits—these football field-size burn pits that burn everything from industrial waste to tires to computers to human waste to who knows what—if they were exposed, then they got the help that they have earned.

I encourage all veterans to go to va.gov/pact—p-a-c-t—to find out more about the law and see what benefits you may be eligible for.

This is just the start of veterans finally, finally, finally getting the help of a grateful nation.

This bill came to my attention about 5 years ago. This problem came to my attention. A woman from Sandusky, OH, told me about her son-in-law, who was healthy, a distance runner, until about a year earlier, and he was diagnosed with a bronchial illness and then a cancer—a rare cancer, but a cancer that was recognizable to VA doctors.

He has since passed away. His name is Heath Robinson. We named this bill

that Senator TESTER worked so hard on and Senator MORAN, a Republican and a Democrat—they worked so hard on it to make sure it was enacted into law.

Again, I urge veterans to go to va.gov/pact to find out more about the law.

Earlier this month, the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced an 11-percent drop in veterans' homelessness over the last 2 years, in part because of the work of this new President and this new Senate and the work we are doing with the VA.

It is progress. We have more work to do. I will continue to travel across Ohio and to hold roundtables with veterans to talk about the PACT Act. I am going to keep talking to veterans around the State.

With my colleagues in the Senate and with members of the Veterans Affairs Committee, we will continue fighting so every veteran has the benefits they deserve.

We will never forget the debt we owe. We are humbled by their commitment to service. And you can't talk about veterans without thanking the military families—the families of Heath Robinson—the family of Heath Robinson, who fought to make sure he got those benefits. And his legacy—in spite of his tragic death, his legacy of helping veterans will move on.

It was the county veterans service officers. Ohio is lucky. Most States don't have this. We have a veterans service organization, a commission in every one of the 88 counties, so that there are at least 2 employees—and in some cases 50, in the largest counties—who take care of veterans who have all kinds of issues and problems. So for our veterans service officers and then all the veteran service organizations, like the VFW and the DAV and the American Legion and the Polish-American Veterans, and so many others who work every day to support veterans and their families, we honor their sacrifice.

This bill happened because of the activism of veterans' families, because of the veteran service organizations, and this body recommits—as Senator MERKLEY does, I know, and the Presiding Officer recommit—to fighting for veterans, fighting for military families.

On behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I couldn't agree more with the words of my colleague from Ohio, Senator SHERROD BROWN.

It is unbelievable how long it took to do basic justice for our veterans serving us in some of the most difficult conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan to get their illnesses treated without them having to basically solicit legal help to connect that illness to their work.

The fact that these 23 illnesses are now automatically covered for a vet-

eran who served near a toxin is just a terrific step forward.

And I am so pleased that we are making encouraging progress on veterans' housing. For our veterans to come back and be in the situation of facing the stress of return, the stress of reentering the workforce, and not have basic housing is unacceptable, and it is one of the ways we show that we are, in fact, a grateful nation for their service.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER "J.P." PIORKOWSKI

Mr. President, I am pleased to be on the floor tonight to say thank you to one of my team members who has been part of my Senate team for 14 years and is now headed over to work with the Peace Corps, and I want to say a little bit about the critical role that she played in my office and on my team.

When I first came here for orientation in 2009, I heard wise words, and that was that perhaps the most important person on your team is not your chief of staff, it is not your legislative director, it is not the head of your communications. It is your scheduler, the person who monitors and controls your time, because time is what you can't make any more of, and everyone will want a piece of it. The key person on your team—the hub of your team—is your scheduler.

The scheduler has to figure out how to fit in meetings with organizations, both from your home State and from national organizations, into already busy days, and has to figure out which policy conversations need to take place and how many are urgent today and how many can wait until tomorrow or next week, and which networking meetings with other legislators are essential to get onto the calendar.

The scheduler is also essential to our family lives. We have to have a scheduler who understands that our spouses are a key partner in serving in a legislative body, who have to understand that our time spent with our children is a critical part of our responsibilities as a parent. The scheduler has to ensure that the family has its appropriate presence in a Senator's life.

So you need someone who can take all of these competing demands and make sure that attention is paid to them and there is a balanced strategy to address them. Otherwise, serving in the Senate can become an absolutely miserable experience for all involved.

Well, 14 years later, I can say that this piece of advice that I received at orientation was the best piece of advice I heard, the best piece of advice that can be there for an incoming Member.

Over time, the person who schedules your hours, your meetings, makes all those judgments in consultation with you becomes not just a member of the team but a friend, a confidant, a member of your extended family.

And my wife Mary and I, along with our two children, have been blessed to have Jennifer Piorkowski as a member of the Merkley family, and I am so pleased she is able to be with us here tonight.

In fact, Jennifer, who goes by J.P., was part of Team Merkley before there was a Team Merkley.

In 1998, J.P., who had a passing interest in international affairs, called me out of the blue to ask for an informational interview when I was head of World Oregon. So we got together, and I was immediately impressed by that conversation. So I immediately recruited her for a project that we had funded to archive 50 years' worth of World Oregon's records.

It takes somebody with a real organizational mind and energy to accomplish that kind of task, and once we saw her at work on our team, I knew I would have to do everything I could to keep her with us, and she ended up staying with us in many different roles—from bookkeeper to office manager to programming speakers on international issues.

But we couldn't keep her forever because the international world called to her. The Peace Corps called to her, and she started a new chapter in her life of service when she joined the Peace Corps and headed to Albania as part of the first group of volunteers to reenter the country after civil unrest broke out in 1997.

During her 2 years in Albania, she worked with civil society organizations and with children living on the streets and survivors of human trafficking. She worked on enrichment programs to help at-risk Roma girls, a minority population in the country. She secured \$65,000 to increase participation of disabled citizens in municipal decision making.

Her time in-country was so transformative that after her Peace Corps stint ended, she remained in Albania for another year, working as deputy head of mission for a transnational project to combat child trafficking in Kosovo, Greece, and Albania. In that role, among a whole host of great accomplishments, J.P. struck a memorandum of understanding, or MOU, with the Albanian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, which led to the opening of child protection units—child protection units that are still in place and operating to this day.

I can only imagine how many young children have led better lives because J.P. helped open those centers.

So Mary and I arrived here in 2009 and started on this adventure of serving in the Senate, and we pondered: Who can fill this key role, this essential role of scheduling? Who would be the bridge between our office life and our family life? Who would be the extraordinary individual who would serve as a hub for the entire team?

And then we suddenly realized that J.P. was back from Albania and that she was right here in Washington, DC, continuing her terrific work on human trafficking at the Labor Department. It is pretty important work, and we were not sure we could pry her away, steal her away, from that to be on our

Senate team, but, fortunately, we held our breath and she said yes, and we are so lucky to have had her with us this last 14 years.

It was J.P. who initiated my "Good Morning, Oregon" meetings. Every Thursday while we are in session, we open the doors of our conference room to welcome Oregonians who happen to be here in DC for a discussion and a good cup of Stumptown Coffee.

It was J.P. who initiated our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to address unconscious bias, to work to ensure greater inclusivity, to better integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of our team's work, internally and externally.

It was J.P. who organized our annual staff retreats, both in Oregon and in DC, with unique exercises, including this last year's Scrollathon that made us all ponder our key mission and shared commitment to public service.

And when COVID upended life as we knew it, she stepped in, took charge, and innovated new human resource strategies and helped our team pretty seamlessly transition to the scary world of Zoom and Skype and Teams and other countless tools to ensure we could continue to function on behalf of the people of Oregon.

It was J.P. who strived, year after year, to set the atmosphere of competence and graciousness and supportive connectedness as team members navigated the challenges of both our work life and our home life. She loved nurturing team members as they sought to grow and thrive in their careers.

And I think you would be very hard-pressed to find a member of my team over the past 14 years who did not, at some point, go to J.P. for insight or sage advice.

Over time, J.P. grew in her career, taking on ever-newer and expanded parts of our team work. She was no longer doing the day-to-day scheduling, but was our deputy chief of staff, keeping our whole operation running smoothly.

Now, life often travels in circles. J.P. was an integral part of my team at World Oregon; and after serving in the Peace Corps and returning from Albania, she again became an integral part of my team here in Washington, DC.

And now, J.P.'s life is completing a circle. Seventeen years after her Peace Corps work in Albania, she is returning to help the Peace Corps thrive in the position of Executive Secretariat in the Office of the Director. And I could not think of a better person to help organize that team leading the Peace Corps. Their mission is to help build a better world for all, and my dear friend, my family member, J.P., is just the right person to undertake that mission.

J.P., I cannot begin to thank you enough for all you have done in each chapter of service throughout your life: your service at World Oregon, your service in the Peace Corps, your service

following up in that extra year in Albania, your work at the U.S. Labor Department combating human trafficking and, of course, here in the Senate as a founding member of our team. Thank you for all of that terrific work. And we know that the work you are going to continue to do to contribute to making the Peace Corps an incredibly effective organization will be a significant way to help build a better world. Thank you.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

REMEMBERING TOM EMBERTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last month, Kentucky lost a statesman, a model gentleman, and one of the key mentors of my early career. Former Kentucky Court of Appeals Judge Tom Emberton of Edmonton, KY, passed away this October in a tragic house fire, a sudden and devastating loss for the entire Commonwealth. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Tom's legacy of public service and paying tribute to his extraordinary career.

Tom was born and raised in south central Kentucky and prioritized service to that distinctive community from the outset of his career. He served a 4-year tour of duty with the U.S. Air Force then returned to the Commonwealth for an undergraduate degree at Western Kentucky University and a law degree from the University of Louisville School of Law. Not long after, he moved to Metcalfe County to serve as county attorney, beginning his long work on behalf of the region.

I first got to know Tom a few years later when, upon returning to Kentucky after a stint in Washington, DC, I got involved with his 1971 gubernatorial campaign. Four years prior, Louie B. Nunn had become the Commonwealth's first Republican Governor in two decades, and Tom bet he could build on his success to bring another four years of conservative leadership to the Commonwealth. Tom's campaign was instructive for me; he traveled all across Kentucky, including to deeply Democratic strongholds, to preach the Republican policies that most Kentuckians agreed with but, historically, did not vote for. Ultimately, Tom couldn't pull out a win that year—my future colleague in the U.S. Senate Wendell Ford was elected—but he earned respect from leaders and voters across Kentucky.

Tom was undeterred by his electoral loss and returned to Metcalfe County