

John Adams said, "It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand." President Washington, again in his farewell address, said, "With caution we must indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

"The role of religion in public life is an important one which deserves the public's attention."

The signers of the Declaration of Independence appealed to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of their intentions, and avowed a firm reliance of the protection of divine Providence. That we will find in the Declaration of Independence.

The first Congress urged the President to declare a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many single favors of Almighty God.

The first Congress reenacted the Northwest Ordinance, which states that "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

And the Declaration of Independence demonstrates this Nation was founded on a transcendent value which flows from the belief in a supreme being.

The Founding Fathers believed devotedly that there was a God, and that the unalienable rights of man were rooted in him, as was clearly evident in their writings from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution itself.

Religion has been closely identified with the history and the government of the United States. Our national life reflects a religious people who earnestly pray that the supreme lawgiver guide them in every measure which may be worthy of his blessings.

That we will find, Mr. Speaker, in quoting James Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments.

Whereas these words "In God We Trust" are over the entrance of the Senate Chamber, and our national motto, as I mentioned before, is prominently engraved on the wall just here above us in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, and is reproduced on every coin minted by the United States, the Congress should encourage the display of the national motto of the United States of America in public buildings and throughout the Nation.

That is the basis of the resolution that has been introduced today. I urge Members to consider it favorably and to cosponsor the resolution, and to help defend it as it is considered by the House of Representatives.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks to pay tribute to our friend Ron Lasch, who surprised a good number of us with his retirement earlier this week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO RON LASCH ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise tonight to pay tribute to a very good friend, Ron Lasch. I came as a staff Member to this body more years than I would like to think ago, and Ron was always a friend, whether I was a staffer, whether I was a Member of Congress, whether I worked at the White House or here on the Hill.

For many years and many decades, in fact, Ron Lasch watched virtually every debate, every vote on this floor more than probably any other American, in fact. His retirement, his surprise retirement this week did catch a lot of us surprised because Ron Lasch was a good friend. He was a confidante, a member of the staff that would sit in the back that really did know everything. Yet, he did not tell everything unless he was asked.

We would ask him about amendments. Today, as an example, I chaired a hearing on our nuclear labs and the security that has been lapsing at them out West, a hearing that literally took 8 or 9 hours today. Lo and behold, as we had a number of votes on the floor, a number of us came to find out what the order of the amendments were, what precisely they did.

Ron Lasch was always one that could tell us. He had sat here during the debate. He knew what was going on. His word was his bond. You could rely on Ron Lasch to get the right information. It was a little trouble today sitting in the back trying to figure out which amendments were coming up and precisely what they did. It took a little extra time.

We miss Ron. We miss him already, not 24 hours after he announced his retirement.

As we would sit with him in the back, he had great patience. We would sit with him sometimes for 20, 30 minutes talking about things going on on this House floor, and continually Members would be coming asking him, what is going on, what time are we going to get out, what amendments are coming up? And always he had the same patience with virtually every one of us.

As we tried to work our will on this House floor, on parliamentary procedures, how to instruct conferees, how to have a re-vote, he had invaluable advice, as he knew all the rules. He made sure that he could train us, as well.

He had a wealth of information. At the end of every session he and I always had a little special thing. He had a little crystal ball, and I hope that he

leaves that in the cloakroom, as he would make his prediction as to when we would get out of session, maybe what time, what day. Usually we were all wrong and he was always right.

As I look at the folks that have gone before him, the great folks here, the Billy Pitts, former Speakers, J.J. Cullen, he ranks with all of them. He knew what was going on. We are going to miss him.

When Jim Ford left this place, I think it was Roll Call or the Hill asked him about his thoughts. They said, You know, Jim, for all the years that you have been here, you could write a book, and based on the book sales you could probably go to the Bahamas. And Jim Ford's response was, no, I could buy the Bahamas if I wrote that book.

Well, Ron Lasch could probably do more than that. He loved this place. He had great respect for the institution. We will miss him, and I know the staff, Peggy and Jim and Tim and Jay, Joelle, Martha, all of us here will miss his wisdom, his insight, his hard work, his loyalty, and just him.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I can only echo what the gentleman has said about Ron. Ron Lasch was my friend. As the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) has said, when I first arrived here 28 years ago, he was one of the first people who greeted me.

I learned to enjoy, and not only enjoy but respect, his wisdom when it came to votes. He was one who could always say, this is the right thing for you, if you would like to see your way to vote that way. More than that, when I went through some trials and tribulations physically, he was one that watched out, with Joelle and Peggy, watched out for me and my health when I would get a little bit excited, and that happened quite often. He always was a great adviser and a good friend, and told me when I should in fact back down and go away for a while and come back when I had cooled off, and do what is correct.

He is not really gone, he is just retired. He will still be around, I am confident, and give us a little bit of advice whenever we will ask for it. He will always be part of my career in this great House of ours, this House of the people.

It is rare when we have an individual who is hired to work for a large body such as ourselves that stays stable and maintains the decorum and maintains the wisdom that is necessary to go forth with the job and to advise those that are elected.

We hired him, as we hire the Chaplain and other Members of this House who have served for us, but he became more than just a hired person, he became part of us. As the gentleman from Michigan has said, he is a person we will miss. I am sure there will be some who will replace him some day, but not too soon.

Ron, again, may I say, has been a great asset to this House. More than