

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks and those of Senator REID, Senator HOLLINGS be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

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

 FAREWELL REFLECTIONS OF THE
 HON. RICHARD H. BRYAN

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, within the next few days, I will cast my last vote as a U.S. Senator, and by the end of this year, I will conclude 36 years of public experience.

Permit me to reflect for a moment on this experience and share with you some observations.

The last decade of the 20th century has witnessed more change than any decade in human history. When I began my Senate service in January of 1989, the world was a very different place than it is today. The Soviet Union and the United States faced off in a cold war, a cold war that dominated global politics from the end of World War II. The ancient capitals of Eastern Europe were satellite appendages of the Soviet Union. There were two Germanys and a wall divided Berlin. The economic pundits were telling us that the Japanese economic model represented the wave of the future, and it was feared that America was in decline.

All of that has changed. The Soviet Union has imploded. It no longer exists. Eastern Europe is no longer a series of satellite states of the Soviet Union, but nascent democracies are developing in most of eastern Europe. The Berlin Wall has come down. Germany is reunited. And once again, Berlin is the capital of that country. The Japanese economy for the past decade has remained largely stagnant. And here at home, America enjoys the longest economic expansion in the Nation's history.

The way in which we live our day-to-day lives has experienced dramatic change as well, from the omnipresent cellular telephone to the advent of the Internet and the world of e-commerce.

What about the Senate, this place where we spend our working hours. It has seen much change as well: The great debate that preceded a resolution of support for operation Desert Storm was in the finest traditions of Webster and Calhoun—many have said that this was our finest bipartisan hour—the unpleasant duty of sitting in judgment of a fellow colleague and ultimately rendering the appropriate judgment; and the awesome responsibility of determining the fate of an American President, only the second Congress in our Nation's history to be so charged.

There have been moments of inspiration as well. None of us will ever forget listening in those joint sessions of Con-

gress to Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel share with us their struggle to achieve democracies in their own countries. The democratic spirit may be suppressed but never extinguished.

In the history of the Senate, there have been 1,581 men and women who have served, only 23 of them from Nevada. It has been a great honor and privilege for me to be one of those and to represent the State of Nevada. How effectively I have discharged that responsibility awaits the verdict of history.

As a youngster, I dreamed of serving as Governor of my own State. It was my life goal. Serving in the Senate of the United States is like adding a little frosting to that cake.

I have thought often of my parents during these past 12 years. My father, like so many Nevadans of his generation, came from a poor family. His dream was to become a lawyer. But America was gripped in a great depression. This city and the patronage of Nevada's Congressman James Scrugham made it possible for him to achieve his goal. While attending law school in the Nation's Capital, he met my mother, a native Virginian. The following year, I was born in this city. So in a sense, I have been here before.

I spoke about change a moment ago. The Senate today is a very different institution than it was a decade ago; I fear in many respects a diminished institution. Those of us who seek election to the Senate today frequently denigrate it and seek public favor by demeaning it. This has taken a toll on the public esteem in which we are all held. A media that is appropriately critical of our shortcomings is not always able to find its voice in telling the American public of its successes. We are more partisan, more polarized than we were a decade ago. And for some, compromise has become a nasty word, forgetting our own heritage, because the Senate itself is a product of the great compromise of our Constitution—a Senate with equal representation for each State, and a House of Representatives based on population.

The role of money: Yes, it is fair to say that it has always been a factor in American politics, but today it has become too much of a dominant force. It consumes more of our time. It drives our schedule. It is a corrosive force that threatens to undermine public confidence in our institutions of government.

I believe there is a direct correlation between the decline of citizen participation in government and voting, to the public perception that politics is all about money. Most Americans feel they are excluded from this process.

Perhaps less visible to the public, the rules which have served this institution so well for decades and which govern the way in which we process legislation have broken down.

There is much that I will miss: My colleagues, who represent a broad spectrum of political views, who bring their

varied experience to the Senate, dedicated men and women who labor mightily on behalf of the constituents they represent, most especially my senior colleague with whom I have worked in this body, as well as the State legislature, and on issues affecting the State of Nevada for the last 37 years.

My personal staff, both here in Washington and at home—I have simply loved our working relationship. It has been a joy for me to come to work each morning. I have appreciated their hard work, the long hours, the personal sacrifice. Nevadans have been well served by their dedication. Without their support, any success I might have had would not have been possible.

The people who make our hectic lives a little more manageable—the elevator operators, the Capitol Police, the food servers, those who staff the Cloakrooms, our floor staff and many, many others.

This building in which we work, so rich with the history of our country—there has not been a single day in the past 12 years that I have not felt a sense of awe when coming to work.

And this city, with its magnificent cathedrals of governance that serve as the guardians of the American dream—I will miss that as well.

My wife joins me this morning in the gallery of this great Chamber. Nothing I have been able to do, nothing I have been able to achieve, would have been possible without her support, her personal sacrifice, and those of our three children, Richard, Leslie, and Blair, who have all been a part of my life and a part of public service in my life. Whatever I have become, whatever I am, is largely because of their support of my efforts to pursue my own dreams and goals.

I leave the Senate with a great sense of respect for this institution, which has been so much a part of my life for the past 12 years. It is troubled in many ways, as I have said. However, none of those problems is insurmountable. If we can resist the temptation to seek momentary partisan advantage, if we can restore civility in our public discourse as we debate the great issues and policy differences of our time, if we can apply the rules that govern the process by which we conduct the Senate's business fairly to all, and if we can work together for the common good, I am confident that the future of the Senate can be as bright as the past.

Mr. President, I yield the floor for the last time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, is recognized.

 TRIBUTE TO SENATOR RICHARD
 BRYAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend leaves the floor, I want to say a couple things to him and have on the record of the Senate for the remainder of time of this Republic the fact that