

RETIREMENT OF SENATOR BOB KERREY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last January we were told that Senator BOB KERREY was going to retire from the Senate this year. I remember saying to him that I wished it were not so, but knowing BOB as well as I did, I understood the reasons.

BOB KERREY has been an invaluable Member of this body. He has advocated for improvements in education. He has worked in a bipartisan way to reform Medicare and has been willing to speak up about the things necessary to reform it. He has helped to improve the lives of farmers in Nebraska. And he has been a forceful voice on America's role throughout the world.

But I understand and respect his desire to fulfill those spiritual needs that are often ignored in politics and to focus more on his personal and family life. As a proud father and grandfather, I, too, want to spend time with family. So we can all respect and appreciate his decision, though we are going to miss his candor, his wit, and his strong advocacy for families and children in the Senate. I will miss one who was willing to stand up on the most explosive issues of our time and speak out forthrightly, whether popular or not.

He served this country well as a member of the elite Navy Seals in Vietnam, was Governor of Nebraska, and a U.S. Senator for two terms.

I once heard him refer to it modestly as "whatever," but the "whatever" was the Congressional Medal of Honor he earned for service in Vietnam. It is a testament to his strength in the face of adversity and intense love he has for this country. It is a call he brought with him to the Senate.

A photograph I took once sticks in my mind. It was of BOB KERREY at the Inaugural, standing—suit, tie, overcoat, hat—and around his neck was something that very few Americans ever got to wear, the Congressional Medal of Honor. It is not something about which any of us ever heard BOB brag. But it has been my experience that people who win the Congressional Medal of Honor are really never the people who do brag.

I thought that here, in these extraordinary times of our Nation's history, every 4 years the Inauguration of a President, what BOB was saying was: I am standing up as an American saying how proud we are of this democracy as we go forward with our form of government—a government and a country he risked his life to defend.

What has he accomplished at this short time? Vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence where he protected and defended our national security interests and fought for issues from encryption to better intelligence. As cochairman of the IRS restructuring committee, BOB spearheaded reform legislation designed to improve the relationships between taxpayers and the IRS, something that affects every single American. On the

Agriculture Committee, he and I fought hard to protect family farmers in our Nation. Even if we had regional differences which might divide us, his advocacy was always so strong, you had to listen.

His next move is north, actually getting a little closer to my home, where he is going to become president of the New School University in New York. The New School has a reputation for intellectual freedom and innovation, the belief that education can be used as a tool to produce positive changes in society. There cannot be a better leader for the New School. This really is a case where the Senate's loss is the New School's gain.

I first met BOB KERREY when he was running for the Senate and I went out to Nebraska as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee to campaign for him along with the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. Jim Exon. When we went out—BOB KERREY probably won't mind me mentioning this—we were using Willie Nelson's airplane. BOB KERREY was the former Governor of Nebraska, extremely popular, well known, running for the U.S. Senate; Jim Exon, then the senior Senator of Nebraska, former Governor; and of course in farm country, I was there wearing my hat as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

We flew up to a small town in Nebraska in Willie Nelson's airplane. The tail insignia was well known. When we got off that airplane, a huge crowd was gathered. We thought: Boy, this is it: Former Governor KERREY, Senator Jim Exon, Chairman PATRICK LEAHY. Man, no wonder they turned out.

As we got off the plane, they kept looking and kept looking, until finally it was obvious we were all off the plane. There was a look of disappointment in the crowd. Finally, somebody expressed the disappointment: Where's Willie Nelson? I thought you guys had Willie Nelson with you.

But, notwithstanding the fact that I was partially responsible for disappointing the crowd, BOB KERREY's abilities and brilliance were so well known in Nebraska that he survived my campaigning for him and he won that seat resoundingly and served his second term. We have been friends ever since.

I admire him as I have admired few people in my public career. I hate to see him go.

As I said, I was saddened to learn that BOB KERREY was retiring from the Senate this year. BOB KERREY has been an invaluable Member of this body, advocating for improvements in education, working to reform Medicare, and helping to improve the lives of farmers in Nebraska. But I understand and respect his desire to fulfill spiritual needs that are often ignored in politics and to focus more on his personal and family life. As a proud father and grandfather, I know what it's like to long to spend time with family. We can all respect and appreciate his deci-

sion, though we will miss his candor, his wit, and his strong advocacy for families and children in the Senate.

BOB KERREY has served his country well as a member of the elite Navy SEALs in Vietnam, as Governor of Nebraska, and as a United States Senator for two terms. Though I once heard him refer to it modestly as "whatever," the Congressional Medal of Honor he earned for service in Vietnam is a testament to his strength in the face of adversity and an intense love for this country, qualities he has brought with him to the Senate.

In this body, he has accomplished a great deal in a short time. As the vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, BOB continued to protect and defend our national security interests, fighting for strong encryption measures. As a co-chairman of the IRS Restructuring Committee, BOB spearheaded reform legislation designed to improve the relationship between taxpayers and the IRS. On the Agriculture Committee, BOB and I fought hard together to protect family farmers in our Nation. Though regional differences sometimes divided us, I respected BOB's strong advocacy for farmers in Nebraska.

BOB's next move is north, where he will plan to become president of New School University in New York. The New School has a reputation for intellectual freedom, innovation and the belief that education can be used as a tool to produce positive changes in society. I could not think of a better leader for the New School. The Senate's loss is their gain.

SENATOR CHUCK ROBB

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, earlier today Senator CHUCK ROBB of Virginia spoke on this floor. I worked with him. I have admired him since he came to the Senate over 12 years ago. I talked with this former marine at the time my own son joined the Marine Corps and was touched that he always asked for progress reports on his career in the Marines.

He is only the fourth person from the State of Virginia to serve as both Governor and U.S. Senator, and he came to Washington ready to build on a distinguished career in public service. In 1961, he joined the Marines as an infantry company commander in Vietnam, saw combat, and was in harm's way time and time again. He demonstrated the kind of determination and stamina that would characterize his political career. In Vietnam, people depended on his leadership for their life, literally. He then served Virginia as Lieutenant Governor and Governor before being elected to the U.S. Senate. In fact, it is fair to say his tenure as Governor laid the basis for Virginia to become such a leader today in the high-tech industry.

During his time here in Washington, he has shown his dedication and concern for our men and women in the military, fighting for a strong defense