

who has some very high principles, because he announced that he was in favor of the hate crimes bill, was labeled, as reported in the St. Petersburg Times, as "the new darling of the homosexual extremists" as a means of trying to cut him down in a Republican primary.

This has absolutely gotten out of control and I am afraid we are going to see more of the same as we come into the general election. It is exasperating. It is not the American way. We have seen this time after time. My goodness, what do we have to expect in the Presidential race in the next 6 weeks?

That is my response to the Senator.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Chair state what the matter before the Senate is at this stage?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business for debate only.

Mr. REID. And the time is not divided between now and 3 o'clock?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from North Dakota has expired.

Mr. REID. Following that expiration of time, how is the time allocated?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no order in place.

The Senator from Nevada.

VOTING IN AMERICA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to comment briefly on the statement of my dear friend from New Mexico about voting and all that he thinks is wrong with our system. I would be happy to look at his legislation. But it seems to me around here what we should be dealing with is giving people the opportunity to vote more easily rather than making it more difficult.

I think it speaks volumes that when you look at the States that have same-day registration, the turnout is much bigger. We have one State where there is no registration, and the vote there, of course, is even higher. In those instances where you have same-day registration and you have no registration, with all the modern computerization, all the ways of checking, there has not been a single case of fraud reported, to my knowledge. So I think what we should try to do is make it easier for people to vote, not harder. I heard my friend, if I understood his statement, say that there are some people out registering lots and lots of people. Well, good. Good. We need more people like that.

I am very disappointed in the State of Nevada. I have tried for years to get the system changed. But, in Nevada, we cut off registration a month before the primary election, and then we cut it off a month before the general election. Just when people are interested in voting, we cut them off. And the county clerk says: Oh, it's so hard for us to get all the records in order. That is silliness. With all the modern technology we have, it is easy.

The reason it is hard is people like to know who they have who voted for

them last time or voted against them. They do not want to make a big impression on getting new people into the system. It is easier to deal with what you have, and it is wrong.

We started off after the Civil War with rules to keep people from voting. We need to get out of that mindset.

We need to make it easier for people to vote, and one way to do that is to have either same-day registration or even no registration. There are plenty of ways of checking to see if people are trying to vote fraudulently.

In the State of Oregon, people vote by mail. They do not have polling places in Oregon, and it works out just fine. The State of Washington also does a lot of their balloting by mail. It works out fine. Those two States decided they wanted to do what they could to increase voter participation, not cut back on it. We need to do more of that rather than all these laws that are going to throw people in jail if they register wrong people. I think there are so many different ways of checking to make sure you have an honest election that you do not need to have all these punitive measures that are proposed.

APOLOGY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know my friend from Florida wants to speak. I certainly want to give him that ability. But I just want to say this: The Senator from North Dakota is absolutely right. Senator DASCHLE is a veteran who has served in the U.S. military. He is a person who has dedicated much of his legislative life to helping people who have served in the military.

There are a lot of people who can take responsibility for dealing with Agent Orange, but Senator DASCHLE, who is a Vietnam-era veteran, knows about Agent Orange, and he has worked tirelessly to get things done in that regard.

I have worked with him on concurrent receipts. He has been a big advocate of concurrent receipts. He is a person who has almost single-handedly taken care of TRICARE, to make sure that National Guardsmen and reservists are treated more fairly with medical care.

To think that in any way this good man has somehow emboldened the enemy—and that is in the way of a fundraising letter—is not very good. I know the man running against Senator DASCHLE. I like him. I am just terribly disappointed that he would allow people to use him the way they have. That Senator DASCHLE has emboldened the enemy is unfair. It is outrageous. And I think that Congressman John Thune should apologize to the people of South Dakota for suggesting that TOM DASCHLE has emboldened the enemy. I assume he is referring to these nameless, faceless, evil people who are committing this war on terror, who are executing this war on terror.

Senator DASCHLE has somehow emboldened the enemy, these name-

less, faceless people who are killing innocent women and children, and others? I think not. And I say John Thune, whom I have the highest respect for, should return the dignity to his person and disavow this statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator withhold?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I will yield to the Senator from Nevada.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business for the purpose of statements only until 3:45 p.m.—that is the next hour—with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I also say, Mr. President, if there is some concern because we used the last 15 minutes, if the Republicans want to come and get a little extra time because of that, we would be happy to take care of that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

THREE MAJOR HURRICANES IN FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, my family has been in Florida for 175 years, and I do not remember in all of the history books where major hurricanes have happened back to back. It has happened with lesser hurricanes, but I think the record book was shattered when three large, major hurricanes in a row have battered our State over the course of a 6-week period: first Charley, then Frances, and now Ivan.

As I flew in a National Guard helicopter last Friday with the Governor over the Barrier Islands, I saw there were no sand dunes anymore in the Barrier Islands of Pensacola Beach. The sugary white sand of the beaches and those sand dunes had been washed across the entire Barrier Island from the Gulf of Mexico to Pensacola Bay. And from the air, it appeared as if the entire Barrier Island was washed in white. There were structures standing, but the structures were usually the newer ones built according to the new building codes. And as we are hearing in the reports out of Alabama, those structures were even uprooted on their foundations and have to be destroyed. If it was an old structure, that old structure is history.

For not only the howling winds of 138 miles an hour, but the tidal surge of the water that came with the hurricane winds—water that then washed up into the very large Pensacola Bay, even taking out major sections of the Interstate 10 bridge—we did some quick mathematical calculations and figured that a wall of water at least 40 feet