

including brutalities inflicted on the Hmong, and deplored the measures taken by the Lao authorities to prevent any reporting of the situation of the Hmong;

Whereas in October 2003, Amnesty International issued a statement detailing its concern about the use of starvation by the Lao Government as a "weapon of war against civilians" in Laos and the deteriorating situation facing thousands of family members of ethnic minority groups;

Whereas the Department of State reported in its most recent Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Laos that the "Government's human rights record remained poor," and highlighted press reports that one group of Hmong in Xaisomboun Special Zone, mostly women and children, was being systematically hunted down and attacked by government air and ground forces and that it was at the point of starvation;

Whereas international organizations, the Department of State, and Members of Congress have received reports of mistreatment over the past 6 months of Hmong in Laos emerging from remote areas of Laos, including the Xaisomboun Special Zone, the Luang Prabang-Xiang Khouang border area;

Whereas the Lao Government has not allowed independent organizations to monitor the treatment of the Hmong emerging from remote areas of Laos;

Whereas in September 2004, Amnesty International issued a statement condemning recent reports that Lao soldiers murdered 5 Hmong children, raping 4 girls, who were foraging for food close to their camp, and called it a war crime; and

Whereas the Lao People's Democratic Republic has failed to substantially improve the status of human rights for its citizens: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) Condemns the consistent pattern of serious human rights abuses in the Lao People's Democratic Republic;

(2) Urges the Government of Laos to increase international access to vulnerable populations and to respect the basic human rights of all Laotians, including ethnic and religious minorities; and

(3) Hopes that the Lao government intensifies its efforts to make its economy and society more open and transparent in light of the congressional grant of normal trade relations to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Mr. COLEMAN. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, this is an issue in which I, Senators FEINGOLD, COLEMAN, and many others have taken a deep interest. I believe this resolution is an important statement. It makes very clear, when the Senate passes the miscellaneous tariff bill with Laos NTR, that we still condemn the consistent pattern of serious human rights abuses, and we will continue to press forward for increased access for the Hmong and other ethnic minorities in remote areas of Laos.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues Senator FEINGOLD and Senator COLEMAN for permitting me to have this time and also to commend them for their outstanding leadership regarding the violation of human rights in Laos. I join with them in opposing the granting of permanent trade relations for that country due to the

oppression of Hmong and other violations of human rights in Laos. I strongly support, proudly, and am a cosponsor of their resolution to express the strong opposition of the Senate to those continuing violations.

MISCELLANEOUS TRADE AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2004—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today I voted against invoking cloture and ending debate on the conference report accompanying the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, H.R. 1047. Normally, this is a non-controversial bill passed by unanimous consent. However, this year's bill is different. While it contains many provisions that I support and have worked with other Senators to someday enact, it also includes a specific provision to repeal the Antidumping Act of 1916. This bill would repeal the 1916 Act in response to an international ruling, which found that this U.S. trade law is WTO-violative even though no court ruling under this U.S. law has resulted in any need for the United States to compensate any of America's trading partners.

I disagree with repeal of the Antidumping Act of 1916, because I believe that this attempt by the WTO to force the United States to abolish this trade law, legitimately enacted at the start of the prior century, is misguided and unfair. Our trade foes have little reason to criticize this trade law; few cases have been brought under its provisions, and even fewer have resulted in judgements against any foreign firm. The WTO's attempt to abolish this law is simply one of a long line of decisions by this international body meant to open U.S. markets to cheap, unfairly traded imports, and to undermine the ability of the United States Congress to exercise its sovereign right to regulate domestic and foreign commerce.

Repealing this U.S. trade law would set a bad precedent and could only encourage other nations to seek similar, ill-informed "justice" at the WTO. That, in turn, will lead to disaster for the U.S. industrial base, where American producers will assuredly suffer the ill-effects of increased, dumped imports, which will drive down the prices of American-made goods and put more and more American manufacturers out of work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the conference report is adopted and the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The conference report was agreed to. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 20 minutes.

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

FAREWELL

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I rise with some sadness on my last time

to speak on the Senate floor. It is a very bittersweet occasion for me because I have loved every minute of the last 6 years, and I will miss this body greatly. I am sure I will think about it every remaining day in my life hence forward. The past 6 years have been amongst the most thrilling in my life, and it has been a privilege and honor to serve here.

I rise really to thank my colleagues for their kindness to me over the years and to thank my staff and my family and the entire Senate staff and everyone who is part of this institution for the wonderful 6 years I have had here.

I was first elected to the Senate from Illinois in 1998. I was sworn in in 1999, and almost immediately thereafter, the first Presidential impeachment trial in 130 years began. For my first 35 days, I think it was, or 38 days, on the Senate floor, I was immersed in the impeachment trial of former President Clinton. Thereafter, we had times of war, war in Kosovo and Afghanistan and now Iraq. We had the events of 9/11. I have served in times of war and peace, in times of great prosperity, as well as in times of recession. I have seen a whole lot.

What I will remember most probably is the wonderful people who are part of the Senate. When I entered the Senate in 1999, I came in as the youngest Member. I was 38 at the time. I am older now, obviously, and have probably less hair and more gray hair. The oldest Member of the Senate at that time was Strom Thurmond. He was 96 years of age. I will never forget Strom Thurmond telling me, when he was 96, about how he used to work out 45 minutes every day, and I was thinking about whether I might be as active as Strom when I am 96, if I make it that long. Even at that age, I remember Strom giving me advice, telling me about how I could help the coal industry in southern Illinois. It was remarkable to meet someone like that.

There are many who have retired. There are others like Strom who have passed away. There are some giants who are still with us, such as Senator ROBERT BYRD. One of my first memories of meeting Senator BYRD is going in to talk to him after I first got elected and asking him to sign for me a copy of his book on the history of the Roman Republic. Early on in my term in the Senate, I actually read Senator BYRD's whole book on the history of the Roman Republic. I have to say it is a marvelous book, and any Member of the Senate who has not read that book should please go out and get it because it has bountiful lessons for every Member of the Senate. It traces the decline and fall of the Roman Republic. It traces the decline of the Republic to the Roman Senate giving up more and more of its powers to the Executive, finally to the point where the Senate became meaningless and Rome was just governed by Caesars, dictators, and kings. It is an outstanding book.

To meet the man who wrote this book and to realize that book was

taken from a series of speeches that he delivered on the Senate floor, without notes, as to the hundreds of thousands of names and dates in that book, is truly astonishing.

Senator BYRD has written a much larger four-volume history of the Senate, which when I retire from this body I hope to have time to tackle. But just to think of someone who could be so productive not only in the Senate for so long but accomplish so much in other areas writing such scholarly books, I will miss people like Senator BYRD and Senator Thurmond and all the others, the leaders with whom I have had the privilege to serve.

Senator TRENT LOTT was the majority leader when I entered. For a period of time, TOM DASCHLE was the majority leader. Now Senator FRIST is the majority leader, and soon Senator HARRY REID will be the minority leader. Each one of those individuals is remarkable, in my judgment. They have always been gentlemen of the highest order, and they work very hard. They are very good at what they do in representing their perspectives. They are good and honorable people whom our country is lucky to have.

Our whips on the Republican side, DON NICKLES and MITCH MCCONNELL, DON NICKLES has done such a good job for the taxpayers of this country. It has been an absolute pleasure to watch him fighting excessive spending and confiscatory taxation. I have been pleased to join him over and over again to hold the line on spending and to vote against tax increases and for tax relief, something that I view as very important.

I am retiring at the same time as Senator NICKLES. I will miss him greatly as part of this body, but I hope to see him often in life outside of the Senate.

Other colleagues of mine are so important to me for reasons one might not think of. I did not know what I might have in common with Senator BUNNING from Kentucky. He was elected at the same time I was in 1998. Senator BUNNING is always so kind in giving me advice, as I advise my own son how to practice his pitching for his Little League games.

The other night, I saw Senator BUNNING in his car, and I said: JIM, having been a Hall of Fame baseball pitcher—where else can you get that kind of advice for your son's pitching lessons—I am not going to be able to ask you for advice on how to coach my son on pitching.

He said: You know what. You can still call me afterwards. I will always be there.

It is comments like that and the friendships like that, where I have spent so much time with the other 99 Members of this body, so many late nights and long weekends and sometimes retreats together, all of us really have become almost kind of like a family. It is much more family like than I think the media in America recognizes

because so often the differences between the parties or the personalities get emphasized by the media. But I will miss them all.

JOHN MCCAIN, the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee on which I have been privileged to serve the last 4 of my 6 years, a man I admire greatly. Most Americans know about his heroism as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War, where he was in the Hanoi Hilton for 5 years and the enemy forces tortured him, crushed his bones and could never get him to buckle or back down. Few men have the kind of courage that JOHN MCCAIN has. It is not just physical courage but the courage he has had to always fight for what he believes is right. Sometimes I have not agreed with him, but when he believes he is right he is willing to stand up to some very powerful forces that often threaten him politically, but nothing scares this American hero, JOHN MCCAIN. I am so thankful to him for the opportunity he gave me to chair the Consumer Affairs Subcommittee on the Senate Commerce Committee where I have been able to work on child safety and booster seat safety and automobiles and also to play a very critical role in the corporate governance hearings that we had a few years back first with Enron, Adelphia, WorldCom and those other corporate scandals.

We have also worked on aviation and transportation, the Internet, telecommunications. There is never a dull moment with Senator MCCAIN chairing the committee, and for the seven new Senators who are coming in who are thinking of what committees they might want to serve on, that is one I have always loved. With Senator MCCAIN, there is never a dull moment.

SUSAN COLLINS, the chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee—what a great American, what a hard-working American. We all saw that recently with her hard work on putting together the Intelligence bill under very difficult circumstances with a very short time to work. I thank her for giving me the opportunity to chair the Financial Management, the Budget, and International Security Subcommittee of the Governmental Affairs Committee, together with my friend and colleague DANNY AKAKA, from Hawaii, who has been my ranking member on that subcommittee. DANNY is such a gentleman. I tell you, I am going to miss him personally, and I am also going to miss the macadamia nuts that he regularly sent over to me. But I may have time to visit him on a beach in Hawaii, now that I think about it. Maybe that is where I will see him and Senator INOUE next.

But Senator AKAKA and I were able to wake up what might normally be thought of as a very sleepy subcommittee of the Governmental Affairs Committee, where we dealt with improving accountability of Government financial reporting. We increased audit requirements on Federal agencies, we

extended the Chief Financial Officers Act to the Homeland Security Department, and we put it in to apply to the new Intelligence Directorate. But, also, we have worked very hard in that subcommittee to spotlight some of the great challenges our country confronts.

I think in that regard, with the staff on that committee on both sides of the aisle being so able, we have been able to put together some of the best hearings the Senate has had on issues such as our defined benefit pension problem in this country. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation has a massive deficit with no end to increasing deficits on the horizon.

We have had hearings on the Government-sponsored entities such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the Homeowner Bank Boards and other entities that are privately owned but have Government charters, and what risk they may or may not pose to the system.

We had a series of hearings on huge funds and the problem of high fees. Mr. President, I was honored to have your cosponsorship on a landmark bill to reform the mutual fund industry. While we were not successful in passing that legislation this year, the Securities and Exchange Commission has adopted many of the items in that bill, including requiring independent chairmen of the boards of mutual funds in America.

Just this week we did a hearing on the problems that we have seen in the insurance brokerage industry in which we heard from experts on all sides and got Washington's first perspective on the indictments that have come out of Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office in New York. We had a hearing on the issue of the expensing for stock option compensation, which has been so actively debated amongst accountants in our country.

Finally, the Accounting Financial Standards Board is going to require publicly traded corporations to expense stock option compensation on their earnings statements.

On the Agriculture Committee, if I think of the word "gentleman," I would think of Senator LUGAR, who was the chairman of the Agriculture Committee when I first came in, and Senator COCHRAN, from Mississippi, who is the current chairman of the Agriculture Committee. It is regretful I will not be here a second term because I now have enough seniority on the Agriculture Committee to chair it in the second term, believe it or not.

But Senators LUGAR and COCHRAN have been a pleasure to work with. We passed a number of measures to make life better for our Nation's farmers, some very simple but important allowing farmers to file all their USDA paperwork on the Internet.

We improved child nutrition and passed legislation to make it easier for people who depend on Government assistance for their nutrition and food needs, that those people through the Food Stamp Program can now get their benefits across State lines—somebody

who may live in St. Louis and goes back and forth to Illinois, or somebody living in northwest Indiana and goes back and forth to Chicago.

Also, a very important industry in my State, Mr. President, and in your State as well, is the commodity futures industry. In Chicago, we have the Board of Trade and the Chicago Merchantile Exchange. We also have the Chicago Board Options Exchange. I am told, directly and indirectly, in Chicago we employ some 200,000 people in the futures industry.

The Agriculture Committee has given me the opportunity to work on the rewrite of our commodity trading laws. I was pleased to be an active participant in the Commodity Futures Modernization Act, where we first allowed the trading of futures on individual stocks in this country. That market is now developing. I hope to see it come back.

I want to say some words of thanks to the senior Senator from Illinois, Mr. DICK DURBIN. He referred to us as the political odd couple—one conservative Republican, one liberal Democrat, from the land of Lincoln.

More often than not, we probably disagreed from a policy perspective on some of the key issues confronting our Nation, but it never prevented us from working well together. In fact, we jointly held 163 breakfasts, constituent breakfasts together. Every Thursday morning at 8:30 when the Senate was in session, Senator DURBIN and I would host a breakfast, allow constituents who were visiting Washington from Illinois to ask us any question that was on their mind, whether it was political or policy related, and we paid for the breakfast. My understanding is, there are not many other examples of bipartisan breakfasts where you have one Republican and one Democrat who have such a weekly gathering for their constituents.

We worked well together on the selection of judges. We almost never had an open vacancy that we couldn't resolve on the district courts in the northern, central, or southern Illinois districts.

Senator DURBIN was terrific in supporting me in my effort to clean up corruption in Illinois. One of the most important things I did in that regard was to bring in independent U.S. attorneys to the State of Illinois who were not beholden to the political class in the State. That was something new. When I went to appoint U.S. attorneys, I found everybody and their brother, particularly all the local politicians on both sides of the aisle, trying to influence the selection of my U.S. attorney.

I didn't want to lay awake at night wondering who was trying to influence my U.S. attorney, either to go after someone unjustly or to protect someone wrongly from prosecution. I, ultimately, decided for that reason to do a nationwide search for our U.S. attorneys, which yielded, I think, amongst the best U.S. attorneys anywhere in

the country: Patrick Fitzgerald in the Northern District of Illinois, Jan Paul Miller in the Central District of Illinois, and Ron Tempas, in the Southern District of Illinois. They are doing a tremendous job and no one is asking whether they are influenced politically or what their motivation would be. I thank Senator DURBIN for supporting that effort to bring independent U.S. attorneys to Illinois.

Senator DURBIN is a man whose stamina, hard work, and intelligence I greatly admire. He is very devoted and hard working. He travels back to his hometown of Springfield every weekend. That is a harder commute than my commute. I travel back to Palatine, IL, which is only about 12 miles northwest of O'Hare. So I had a fairly easy commute; I just had an hour and a half plane flight and then a short drive and I was at my house. But Senator DURBIN would go back to O'Hare every weekend and then catch another flight down to Springfield and he does that every weekend. He is constantly back in the State of Illinois.

I think we worked well on just about everything, except aviation. We had a disagreement over O'Hare Airport. I think I am right. He thinks he is right. But aside from that difference of opinion, it has been a pleasure to work with him.

I am sure Senator DURBIN will be an effective spokesman for his side of the aisle as the whip for the incoming Democratic caucus in the 109th Congress. I do not necessarily wish Senator DURBIN success in that role, but I do wish him well.

Barack Obama, my successor, I wish him well. It was a privilege to have lunch with him yesterday in the Senate dining room. I served with Barack Obama in the State senate for 2 years. He was coming in, in the legislature in Springfield, in my last 2 years of service there. He is an uncommonly bright and talented young man. He is 1 year younger than I. He is the first African-American president of the Harvard Law School. He is almost unequaled in his potential and promise. I am confident he will be a credit to the State of Illinois. I think he may surprise the political pundits by voting, crossing party lines at times that you don't expect him to. It may be a challenge for him with Senator DURBIN as his whip. But I see Barack Obama as possibly being a fairly moderate voice, more moderate than many people suspect.

To my staff, many of whom are gathered in the Senate Chamber, I could not have been blessed with a more wonderful staff to have gotten me through the last 6 years. I first need to start by thanking former Senator Bob Dole and the current Senator ELIZABETH DOLE for recommending to me the man who is my chief of staff, Gregory Gross. Greg worked for Senator Bob Dole when he was the leader in the Senate and during his Presidential campaign in 1996. He worked for Mrs. DOLE when she was at the American Red Cross. He

is extremely bright, as Bob Dole told me when I first called for a reference on Greg Gross.

Bob Dole said to me: Greg is what you call a genius. And I thought, that is the kind of person I want, a genius on my staff. But he is more than just a brilliant and talented and knowledgeable chief of staff.

He is also incredibly devoted and incredibly loyal, and I thank him for that.

For the first 3 years, my chief of staff was Richard Hertling. He is now at the Justice Department. Richard did an outstanding job in getting us up and running. It is very hard when a new Senator is coming in and assembling a new staff, as some of the new Senators are finding out.

I have been blessed to have had an outstanding legislative director, Terry Van Doren from Macoupin County, IL, whose father owns a cattle operation in Macoupin County. Terry started out doing agriculture policy for me. Terry was just what the doctor ordered. He had straight A's from the University of Illinois in agriculture sciences. Then he got a master's in agriculture policy from Colorado State University. He had a 4.0 there. I was called by the dean of the University of Illinois Agriculture School. He told me what an outstanding young man Terry is. Terry has been instrumental in agricultural policy. He has been my legislative director.

Before him, Joe Watson was my legislative director, a brilliant young Harvard Law School graduate whom I pocketed out of the Sutter and Hopkins law firm. He is now at the Commerce Department serving under Secretary Evans.

My office manager, Sherri Hupart, has done such an outstanding job; always pleasant and kind and willing to help, and calm under pressure.

Her predecessor, Tina Tyrer, came to me from Senator Fred Thompson's office. She had some 20 years of experience in Washington running Senate offices.

My Chicago chief of staff, Maggie Hickey, is a one-woman army, entirely devoted, very hard working. I want to thank her.

My staff director for my Financial Management and Budget and International Security Subcommittee, Mike Russell, and the team he has put together, which I think enabled us to do the best hearings on some of the key issues confronting our financial markets in this country, I can't thank them enough.

I thank my schedulers and executive assistants, Lanae Denney, Julie Cate, Julie Crisolano, and Doris Gummino. Scheduler has to be the toughest job on Capitol Hill because you know how busy Senators' schedules get and how it is for them to hear when a Senator is tired, or frustrated, or thinks he is overscheduled. Senators hear about it. There is no question about that. I thank my schedulers for being there,

staying here working late into the evening. They have to be here even when the rest of the staff has gone home.

My campaign manager and first communications director, Mike Cys, is now in the private sector. He is brilliant and energetic and enthusiastic. I thank him for all his support.

I thank my communications, legislative assistants, legislative correspondents, receptionists, front office and back office, duty entry personnel, the interns, the kids we have had serve over the years.

My staff handled 6,000 to 10,000 letters a week for the past 6 years. The first year we came in, we were getting some 22,000 e-mails a day on the impeachment. My State office has handled over 22,000 individual constituent cases. They conducted traveling office hours all over the State, 1,574 traveling office hours in 675 towns. My State staff met individually with 831 mayors and village clerks telling them how to apply for Federal grants for sewer and water.

I thank the staff on the floor of the Senate: Dave Schiappa, the floor staff; Myron Fleming, the chief doorkeeper, the cloakroom staff, the Parliamentarians, leadership and Sergeant at Arms staff, and the pages who come and go every semester. I always look at them. They have to get up at 5 in the morning to do school work before they can come here. But they work so hard. I hope their experience has been as wonderful as we want it to be for them.

And, finally, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the most important people in my life, my family, my mother and father, who always supported me through my 12 years in public service, but through all the years of my life. It was always clear they would have been there to lay their lives down for their son.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I would like to thank him for his kind words and wish him very well. We have served together for 6 years. Every Thursday morning when we were in session we had free coffee and doughnuts, a tradition that was started by Senator Paul Simon. I believe we were the only two Senators, being Democrat and Republican Senators, offering this opportunity for the visitors who come to Washington to ask a few questions and take a few photographs. But it worked very well. It became a very interesting experience for Illinoisans and others coming to Washington. We did it many times. It reached the point where I would give his answers to the questions and he would give my answers to the questions. We distinguished ourselves as being the only two Senators offering free coffee and doughnuts, which may account for the crowds that showed. But we did that for 6 years. We have worked closely together and effectively and successfully together on the appointment of judges, U.S. attorneys, and many projects that were local to Illinois. We disagreed on some issues

but managed to maintain our friendship and warm relationship throughout.

Senator FITZGERALD announced his retirement for the right reasons. He said he wanted to spend more time with his family. That is something which we all admire very much.

I have enjoyed serving with Senator FITZGERALD, and I wish him the very best, whatever the next venture might be, and I hope we will continue to work together.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I thank Senator DURBIN for the kind words. I hope to come back to his breakfasts and get some of those free doughnuts myself. I might not have to pay for them. But I will miss it.

I thank Senator DURBIN.

Finally, I thank my brothers and sisters, Gerry, my older brother, Jim, Tom, my sister Julie. A lot of people in public office worry that their siblings might embarrass them. I have never had to worry because they are wonderful, upstanding people, all of whom I think are probably worried about what I might do that they might worry about. They are wonderful people.

I thank my wife Nina. We met together in D.C. when we were interns back when we were 19 years old, and after college and law school we got married. I moved her, plucked her from her home State of Colorado. She came to Illinois. I want to thank her for her steadfast support through all my years in public office.

Finally, last but not least, I thank my 12-year-old son Jake. Jake missed his father at baseball and basketball games. I have been in public office for his entire 12 years. I am going to make it up to Jake now. I am pleased that he is doing so well as a baseball pitcher. I thank JIM BUNNING and others for their advice.

And finally, the people of Illinois from one end of the State to the other, to the south, from Rockport to Freeport in the north, thank you for your kindness to me. I have loved every minute of it. You gave me your trust, and I worked hard every day to keep it safe.

Thank you all. God bless. I will miss you all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, like the distinguished Senator from Illinois, I take a couple of minutes this afternoon to come to the floor to express in the most heartfelt way, as he just has, my profound thanks for the opportunity I have had to serve in the Senate.

I congratulate him on his successful career and wish him well in all of his endeavors.

I would like to begin where he ended—by thanking my family: my wife Linda, my mother, my daughter Kelly, Eric, our son Nathan, and Jill, and our daughter Lindsey.

I thank my staff. I actually believe—and I am sure each of our colleagues

shares this view—that I have the finest staff the Senate has ever assembled. They have served me, they have served this institution, they have served the people of my State, and they have served this country with remarkable professionalism, dedication, loyalty, patriotism, and commitment in ways that nobody could possibly register.

I thank the people of South Dakota, most importantly, for the opportunities they have given me to live my passion for these past 26 years. No Senator has ever been more grateful, more fortunate than I.

I thank my colleagues for their friendship and their loyalty, their support, and the remarkable strength they have given me each and every day.

I congratulate the man on my left, HARRY REID. No Senate leader has ever had the good fortune I have had to have an assistant like the man from Searchlight. He is a profoundly decent man who loves his State, this institution, and his country. If friends are relatives that you make for yourself, then he is my brother.

I thank DICK DURBIN and congratulate him and DEBBIE STABENOW and BYRON DORGAN and HILLARY CLINTON for their willingness to take on the leadership roles in the 109th Congress. I will say that this Senate and the caucus could not be served better.

I congratulate especially CHUCK SCHUMER for taking on what may be one of the most challenging of all leadership positions. I know that he will serve us well.

I can remember so vividly 10 years ago when I was elected by one vote. I came to the Senate very nervous and filled with trepidation, but I recognized that we had a job to do. I wanted to use the power I had been given wisely, recognizing that it was entrusted to me so we might make the lives of all people better.

Shortly after I was elected leader, I was asked to come to dinner with a good friend of mine, a man in his eighties, whose name was Reiners, from Worthing, South Dakota. Dick was a farmer, had been one of my strongest supporters, most loyal and dedicated friends, one of those people we can all identify with. He asked me to come to dinner that night and I went out to his farmhouse. We had dinner. I asked him for advice. He paused and he looked at me and he said, "There are two things I will hope for you. One is that you never forget where you came from. Come home. Remember us."

And then he pointed to some pictures on the wall that I recognized very readily. They were pictures of his grandchildren. He said, "You have held each one of those grandkids, as have I. Give them hope. Every day you walk onto the Senate floor, give them hope."

We hugged each other and I left. Later on that night, I got a call in the middle of the night that Dick Reiners had passed away. I never, ever, have been given better advice in all the

years before or since and I remember it now.

We come to this body with great goals, and our challenge is to stay focused on those goals, to never lose sight of them in the daily challenges and the battles we take on as we come to these desks.

Two touchstones, in particular, have helped me remember my goals.

The first touchstone is this desk, the leader's desk. You pull open this drawer and you see the names of all the leaders carved in it. It is a constant reminder that we are part of a continuum, a continuum that makes us the heirs and the guardians of a miracle. That miracle is democracy—a government founded on the ideal of freedom.

We have sworn to protect that ideal. We have a challenge, as we sit at these desks, to do what soldiers have done for 200 years. We either have to fight for this freedom or work at it. In more than 30 wars, 1 million men and women have given their lives for that freedom, and our job is to work at it as if we have given our lives, too—every day. We have to protect and defend that freedom and we must pass it on to future generations undiminished.

My second touchstone is a practice I acquired many years ago, making it a habit to get into my car and drive without a schedule to all the counties of South Dakota. There are 66 of them. I do it to be energized, to refresh, to touch the land, to watch the sunsets and the sunrises, the majestic beauty of my State. But more than anything else I do it to be inspired, and to remember how what we do here touches the lives of those I represent.

It is an amazing feeling to drive from one county to the other and to see the results of our work in this body. I am honored and very grateful that there is not one county in the State of South Dakota that has not been touched by our work and our efforts these years I have been here, touched in ways large and small.

We now are an energy-producing State, which means a lot to me. People said that would never be possible. We have little oil, very little natural gas, no coal—but we now produce 400,000 gallons of fuel a year that otherwise might be imported. We passed farm legislation that is truly giving our farmers and ranchers hope for a better future.

My State suffers from poorly distributed water. Our challenge has always been to find a way to take the good water and get it to those locations where they have none. One of the most emotional experiences I have ever had was to watch a family turn on a tap for the first time and cry and embrace each other and pass around a glass and look at it and say "thank you."

I am honored to have been a part of creating a new future for Indian students who had long ago given up any hope of graduating in a traditional way, but who now can walk through

the doors of tribal colleges with a true sense of fulfillment and optimism that they only dreamed of just a few years ago.

The joy of walking into a town and talking to people and being embraced by total strangers who tell you that saved their lives because of something your staff did, recognizing that if it had not been for you, perhaps there would be no life to save. What an honor. What a sense of gratitude.

As leader, I have been privileged to meet some of the greatest leaders of our time. I believe that Nelson Mandela would probably rank in a class by himself. Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, Mother Teresa, Rosa Parks, Presidents and kings: I have been inspired by them—but not as inspired as I have been by people who are not well known:

Carolyn Downs, who runs the Banquet in Sioux Falls, SD, touching lives every day and giving them hope.

Louie and Melvina Winters on the Pine Ridge Reservation, who had absolutely nothing to their name and took a burned out trailer house, rebuilt it, and have literally saved the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of children who had no other place to go, whom they found on their doorstep when the word got out that somehow they were the ones to whom children could turn.

Chick Big Crow, who witnessed the death of her daughter, only to make the lives of young people on Pine Ridge richer with her steadfast determination to build a Boys and Girls Club.

And there are those like Elaine, who gets up at 4:30 in the morning to go to work. She's 77 years old, with \$900 a month in Social Security and \$900 a month in drug bills. She works at McDonald's to be able to pay for the rest of her living expenses, and says she is proud to do so.

And Mary Ann, who works three jobs, has a blood disease and no health insurance. She says: "I want you to know something, Senator DASCHLE. I'm going to make it. I'm going to make it, but I would like a little help along the way, if you can find a way to remember me."

They are the heart and soul of America, and they need us now maybe more than ever before.

We are each given a number when we come to the Senate. I think it is a wonderful tradition. And I have always been so proud of my number. My number is 1776, the year of our Revolution.

I think of that number not just because of its unique nature, but it reminds me every day that we are still part of an American revolution.

As a nation, we are making monumental decisions about what kind of country this will be.

Will we use our powerful might as a force just for vengeance and protection against those who would destroy us, or will we use it for progress the world around?

Will we recognize that power is not just our arms, but our wisdom, our compassion, our tolerance, our willing-

ness to cooperate not just with ourselves but with the whole world?

Will we honor the uniquely American ideal that we are responsible for passing onto our children a future that is better, or will we forfeit the promise of the future for the reward of the moment?

These are questions that we will continue to face.

Several months ago, I came to the floor and gave a speech at this desk expressing the hope that regardless of how the election turned out, we could continue mightily to search for the politics of common ground.

I am proud of those times in this body when we showed our very best.

I am proud of that moment on the Capitol steps when we joined hands and sang.

I am proud of the effort we made after 9/11 to come together to pass legislation that our country so desperately needed, not just for what it said, but for the message it sent.

I am proud of that moment, on October 15, when we were the target of the greatest biological attack in our Nation's history and again we came together.

I am proud of those moments when we found common ground on campaign finance reform and the farm bill and Patients' Bill of Rights, highways, measures that in some cases have not yet become law but demonstrated that here, collectively, with common will, there is common good.

I know we can continue to find common ground because we have found it in the past, as those instances have demonstrated.

If I could leave this body with one wish, it would be that we never give up that search for common ground.

The politics of common ground will not be found on the far right or on the far left. That is not where most Americans live. We will only find it in the firm middle ground of common sense and shared values.

Ten years ago, my wise friend pointed to his grandchildren and asked me to give them hope. Linda and I now have two beautiful grandchildren. I implore my colleagues to give my grandchildren, Henry and Ava, hope; give all the children and grandchildren of this Nation hope.

Let us treasure and protect the great freedoms that we have inherited, and let us always promise and commit that we will pass them on undiminished.

I said a moment ago that one of my touchstones is my unscheduled driving. I make notes constantly on these trips. A couple of days ago I was telling my colleagues about how I had been looking through the notes of a trip I made a few years back. I noted I had met with some tribal leaders, and met with a businessman who was trying to find a way to provide childcare for his family as well as his employees. I met a couple who wanted to tour the White House. At the end of all my notes, I made the comment: "Everything was worth doing."

The same could be said for my service here. It has had its challenges, its triumphs, its disappointments, but everything was worth doing. And I am grateful for every moment.

I love history, and there is wonderful history about the relationship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. They were rivals, but they respected each other. And that respect grew as they left office and began correspondence that today is some of our most treasured writing.

In one letter to John Adams, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I like the dream of the future better than I like the history of the past." So it is with me. I have loved these years in the Senate, but I like the dream of the future.

It is with heartfelt gratitude to the people of South Dakota, with great respect and admiration for my colleagues, and with love for this institution and the power it has to make this Nation even greater that I say farewell and look to the future with great optimism, with hope and anticipation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:10 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:16 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

TOM DASCHLE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, what we just heard on the floor of the Senate captures the essence of this remarkable, remarkable body, the leadership, which dictates the character, which dictates the fabric of the body that all of us have the real privilege of participating in.

I know several Members want to speak, so I will be very brief. I take a moment to pay tribute to a truly exceptional leader with whom I have had the honor to serve alongside, and whom I have had the opportunity to serve with over the last year. We first began working together 2 years ago, when I suddenly became majority leader of the Senate. Oftentimes, we have been on the opposite side of issues. But I want to say how much I deeply respect his abilities and his judgment as a Senator, as Democratic leader, and as a person.

This environment is fiercely competitive, and as leaders, both he and I are thrust into that competitive environment. Yet Senator DASCHLE has always, always, without exception, handled each and every situation in that

competition with class and with honesty, with integrity, with forthrightness, and with true grace.

Clearly, I have had the opportunity to learn from him much more than I could have ever possibly given him in any way. I was the beneficiary of that each and every day. From that very first day that I became majority leader, he has treated me in that position with respect and with that very same grace. For that, I will forever be grateful.

I wanted to pay tribute to Senator DASCHLE and close with one reference. The great Daniel Webster once remarked that the Senate is a community of equals, of men of individual honor and personal character. Indeed, Senator TOM DASCHLE is no exception. He is the epitome of that and a great credit to this venerable institution. On behalf of all of our colleagues, I wish all the best for TOM and Linda and their entire family in the years ahead.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, all of us in the Senate have just had an opportunity to hear an extraordinary speech by the outgoing Democratic leader. We are indeed in a very tough and competitive business. On the other hand, when we enter this Chamber, we take on public responsibility and have the obligation to deal with each other in a civil and forthright manner. I think Senator DASCHLE has always met that standard. We all admire his work here. He is one of the longest serving leaders in the history of the Senate. We wish him well in the coming years. He can look back on his extraordinary career here with great pride.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, you can learn a lot about a person by the way he handles winning, and you can learn even more about someone by the way he handles and accepts defeat. TOM DASCHLE does not know that I know this, but I saw an e-mail he sent recently to someone on his staff.

TOM DASCHLE was concerned about a man with whom he talked one day late in the campaign when he was calling undecided voters in his home State of South Dakota. The man was not rich or powerful. He was just an average South Dakota citizen.

This man used to work for the Government. He received many awards at his work. This is what TOM DASCHLE wrote in that e-mail:

One day, the man started to suffer extreme stress and even depression. The psychiatrist told him he had to retire from his work . . . under a medical discharge. Afterwards, (the government) denied him a medical retirement. They said it can only be for physical reasons.

He was denied medical access and retirement pay. He has since also had a heart attack. He asked me for help in getting a medical retirement. I told him we would be happy to try and would follow up.

TOM DASCHLE in his e-mail went on to say:

Could you have someone contact him and look into this? It just doesn't seem right.

The date on that e-mail was November 8, 6 days after the election, 6 days after what had to be one of the most heartbreaking losses in his life.

The reason TOM DASCHLE got into politics in the first place, the reason he ran for leadership positions in the Senate, and the reason he worked his heart out for this job was never to get rich or to get attention. He tried to bring power to help the powerless, the average person, the people to whom life had given some unfair breaks.

Even now, until the minute he has to relinquish his power, TOM DASCHLE is using his power to help people who still look to him as their last best hope.

Golda Meir once famously told a political rival:

Don't be humble. You're not that great.

But TOM DASCHLE is great enough and good enough to be truly humble. He will never talk about all the people he helped, all the people to whom he has given hope, but I can tell you there are people all across South Dakota and all across America whose lives are better because TOM DASCHLE was in the Senate.

"It just doesn't seem right"—that is what TOM DASCHLE wrote in that e-mail, and it just doesn't seem right that we are going to have a Senate without TOM DASCHLE to keep fighting for what is all good and decent about America.

My consolation is that I know TOM and Linda and their family will find another noble way to continue serving this Nation, defending the values we cherish and making life better for people who need a champion.

Someone noted that this is a cruel business, and it is. There are three ways to leave the Senate. Two of them are not very good. In this situation, we have seen a man who has given 26 years of his personal life to South Dakota and to the Nation, and he made a decision a year ago to retire. In the past year, I am sure there would have been a succession of tributes, dinners, schools, and highways and bridges being named after him and maybe statues and plaques commissioned. But instead, he stood for election. He had the courage to stand again. Although he did not succeed, I hope the people of South Dakota realize that he was a man who loved them throughout his political life and those of us who were honored to call him a friend and a colleague love him and will miss him.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, when the 109th Congress convenes this coming January, the Senate will be a poorer place for not having TOM DASCHLE among its Members.

By nature, TOM DASCHLE is a South Dakotan to the core, born and raised and regularly returning to his hometown of Aberdeen, with a population today of not quite 25,000. He was the