

We, also, have National Guard, Reserve and Active-Duty veterans coming back in droves to America without sufficient help for their health care and certainly not their education.

If we want real security, we must rebuild the U.S. military and ensure it remains the best fighting force in the world. S. 8 is at the desk.

S. 9 will secure America by undertaking comprehensive immigration reform. I had friends and colleagues, staff, ask: Why are you bringing up this controversial subject on the first day of Congress? It has to be brought up. Immigration is a problem that affects this Nation. Last year, we passed a solid immigration bill in the Senate. There are parts of that bill I didn't like, but we passed a bill. Unfortunately, it fell victim to politics, again in the other body. Immigration reform is too vital to our security and our economy to fall by the wayside, so we must deal with it again this year. Our immigration system is broken. Does anyone dispute this? Our borders remain unsecured. Does anyone dispute that? Our laws remain underenforced. Does anyone dispute that? Does anyone dispute the fact that we have 11 million people with bad papers who are here illegally? Does anyone dispute that? No. So our bill will take a comprehensive approach to repairing this broken system. With tough and smart reforms, it will secure our borders, crack down on enforcement, and lay down a path to earned legalization for undocumented immigrants already living here. There is no amnesty. If there were ever an example of the need for bipartisanship, it is on immigration because it is going to be hard, but it is something that we have to do. S. 9 is at the desk.

Finally, S. 10 will reinstate pay-as-you-go rules to the budget process. This does not sound very politically sexy, to talk about pay as you go. But as most know, the Senate used to operate under a rule called pay as you go. This simple proposition demanded that when we increased spending or cut taxes we had to pay for it. It is a commonsense principle families all across America practice when they balance their checkbooks. Pay-go was in place in the Senate in the 1990s, when our country experienced unprecedented levels of economic growth and vitality. Remember, it can be done. In the last years of the Clinton administration, we paid down the national debt by almost a half trillion dollars. Unfortunately, the rule disappeared in recent years and the results have been disastrous: \$9 trillion in debt; the largest deficits, of course, in our history; foreign debt that has more than doubled, giving unprecedented control to countries such as Saudi Arabia and China. We are even borrowing money from Mexico. These countries should not have the unprecedented control of our economic destiny. We are facing a fiscal nightmare that will not go away this Congress, and it will handicap our ability in all we need to do in so many different

areas. With pay-go in place, we will begin to set America on the right track.

I have been in Congress going on 25 years. In my 25 years, I witnessed many fine moments in our Senate's history. But I believe in my State, in the Senate, and in the House, the days following 9/11 are what America is all about. It was a national tragedy, but it brought out the best in us, the best in Members of Congress, the best in the American people. Democrats and Republicans from all over America put aside our differences and worked with the administration to protect our country. That day showed the Government working as the Founders intended. This year we must work on the same bipartisan basis, the same fashion.

It should not take a national tragedy for us to work together. We should be equally united by our ability to make a positive difference in the lives of the people who sent us here. Today is that beginning. This year let us work side by side and succeed together.

The future lies with those wise political leaders who realize the great public is interested more in government than politics.

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1940.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Republican leader.

THE 110TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have heard my good friend, the majority leader, describe the first 10 bills of the majority in the new Congress. I would say for the information of all of our colleagues, the procedure in the Senate Republican conference is for the conference itself to designate our first 10 bills. We will be doing that at a meeting to occur in the next few weeks. We have essentially reserved the numbers S. 11 through S. 20 which will reflect our priorities for this Congress.

Let me say at the outset, before giving my opening remarks, how much I value the friendship and relationship I have with the distinguished majority leader. I believe we had an excellent session this morning in the old Senate Chamber, and we look forward to getting off to a good start.

Today is the 110th time in our Nation's history that we begin a new session of Congress. This is a day to renew our purpose, to set a sturdy course for the important work ahead, and to ask ourselves: What will future generations say of the 110th Congress? This is the first day of that Congress. What will they say of us on the last day?

The Senate has a unique role in our Government. It always has. It is a place where the two great political parties must work together if a common goal is to be reached. It is the legisla-

tive embodiment of individual and minority rights, a place where the careful design, crafted by our Founding Fathers, pretty much operates today the way they planned it 220 years ago.

We saw this 43 years ago with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, when the two parties forged a difficult alliance to reach a great goal. Segregated buses and lunch counters are difficult to fathom now, but their end only came about through the kind of cooperative resolution that has marked this body from the start.

At its best, the Senate is a workshop where difficult challenges, such as civil rights, are faced squarely—and addressed—with good will and careful, principled agreement. At a time such as our own, when so many issues of consequence press upon us, it must be nothing less.

Yet the challenges ahead will not be met if we do nothing to overcome the partisanship that has come to characterize this body over the past several years. A culture of partisanship over principle represents a grave threat to the Senate's best tradition as a place of constructive cooperation. It undermines the spirit and the purpose of this institution, and we must do something to reverse its course.

The Senate can accomplish great things over the next 2 years, but this opportunity will surely slip from our grasp if we do not commit ourselves to a restoration of civility and common purpose. So as we open this session, I stake my party to a pledge: When faced with an urgent issue, we will act; when faced with a problem, we will seek solutions, not mere political advantage.

The Framers thought a lot about the kind of people who would sit behind these desks on the floor and they set down some simple rules. Senators should be older than their House colleagues. They should serve longer terms, and proportional representation ensures that all States have an equal say, regardless of size. The Senate was also conceived to be a place of civil debate and good will.

Mike Mansfield showed grace and humility in his efforts to expand civil rights. Working with Republicans to offset resistance in his own party, he guided passage of the great Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s and even let a Republican take the credit. In fact, today the name Everett Dirksen may actually be better known, but historians know better.

Mansfield's collegial spirit didn't just surface when it served his purposes. Historians tell us his first appointment each day was breakfast with Senator George Aiken, a Republican from Vermont. The two men met when one of Aiken's aides spotted Mansfield alone, pushing a tray down the cafeteria line in the Capitol. She asked the new Senator if he wanted to join her and her boss for lunch, and he did. The two men remained close friends for 25 years. A small act of kindness set the tone.

Cooperation among parties is not so distant a memory that some of us can't recall Democrats and Republicans working together to pass President Reagan's tax cuts in the early 1980s. That common effort led to the greatest economic expansion of our history—the American miracle, they called it.

We saw the spirit of cooperation again in the 1990s, when a Republican-led Senate worked with the Democrats, including President Clinton, to reform welfare. And we have seen it in recent years, though less frequently, on issues such as tort reform and the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

We used to say that Senators were friends after 5 o'clock. We need more of that if we are going to restore this body to its high purpose. The Senate is not a club nor a clique. It is a group of men and women charged with the solemn duty to support and defend the Constitution against its enemies. George Mitchell once called the Senate a single body made up of 100 independent contractors. Yet he earned the respect of his colleagues by his willingness to listen, to work together, to take risks. He knew when to put self-interest aside. He knew the role of the Senate.

The risks we face today are grave, and facing them will require greater unity and civility than we have been used to around here lately. But drawing on the examples of the past and conscious of this body's historic role, we can again rise out of our party trenches and work together for the good of all.

This morning the Democrats and Republicans got together in the old Senate Chamber, an ornate, rather small room compared to this one, that always reminds me of the promise of this Nation in its early days. I would like to see, in this small act of bipartisanship, a sign of restoration to come.

The work of restoration should start with the things that are easiest to do because a victory in small things now will lead to big victories later. The Senate has not approved a minimum wage increase in more than a decade, but we are willing to work together toward that end. We believe that an increase needs to help both the workers who earn it and the small businesses that pay it.

It just makes sense to pair the increased wage with tax and regulatory relief, so the small businesses that create most of the new jobs in this country can remain competitive and employ even more people. We can get this done.

The voters told us in November that they expect more from us. One concrete thing we can do to restore their trust is common sense lobbying reform. The first bill I will sponsor as the Republican leader, in cooperation with the majority leader, is aimed at precisely that. The voters want honest government. We can get this done too.

Two issues. Two issues we can move on carefully but quickly. Let's get them done.

After that, I challenge this body to be daring. The Senate has no claim on greatness unless its power is put to great ends. Divided government demands that we must work together. So let us do so not only for ends that are easily within our grasp, but for those worthy things that have just eluded us in the past.

Social Security is an issue on which Americans demand action—yet many fear what action might mean.

Our job is not to play into those fears but to erase them. To show voters that the greatest cause for fear is the system in its current, unsustainable form. Everyone in this Chamber knows the facts. So let's be honest brokers—and strengthen Social Security before this Congress ends.

Today, the 110th Congress begins. But before it ends, the first great wave of babyboomers will retire. Over the next two decades, more than 77 million people will leave the workforce even as fewer new workers join it. And by the time they all leave, there will be only two American workers supporting each retiree.

This is clearly unsustainable. Unless we reform the system, we have a choice: Either our children work longer and harder or our parents live with less.

The Senate cannot sit idly by as this demographic reality takes shape. Rather, we must do the hard work we were elected to do. We must make our money work harder for our parents and our children, and so we need to reform Social Security now.

The Framers knew we would have to make tough decisions. That's why they didn't want Senators to be elected by popular vote. The system they devised had its own problems, so we changed it.

But the principle was sound: the right decision is not always the easiest one. We have an obligation to address the important issues of the day, in a spirit of cooperation and courage, and with a goal of accomplishment for all Americans.

Immigration is one of the most pressing issues of our day. We should be daring about immigration reform—and act on it soon. The voters demand it. We have a duty to deliver.

Americans are generous, eager to welcome strangers and happy when they prosper. Yet we know that the blessings of liberty depend on respect for the law and a common national culture. We can ensure both even as we welcome those who come here looking for a better life.

Laws that are generous need not be lax. And a country that is not secure at its borders is not secure in its laws. Border security and other law enforcement professionals must have the tools they need to keep our borders—and our laws—strong.

America has not seen a domestic terrorist attack since we committed ourselves to the global war on terror. That is not an accident, some quirk of fate. Rather, it is due to the hard work of

spotting and disrupting threats before they strike.

The indisputable success of these efforts is the greatest argument we have to continue to support them—and to make sure those who secure the homeland are fully equipped to continue the outstanding work they have done.

One of the principles that has guided our efforts in the war on terror is that terrorism must be fought at a distance or it will be fought in our streets.

This policy has worked—and we must ensure that it continues to work by giving the men and women who carry out that mission every day all the tools they need.

One of those tools is the terrorist surveillance program. If terrorists are calling the United States, we should know what they're talking about. This program has saved lives. And we would endanger others by ending it.

Al-Qaida is not a threat to Republicans; it's not a threat to Democrats—it is a threat to America. And the Senate must work together as we prepare for the long struggle ahead.

We must use all the tools we have: diplomacy, intelligence, economic and military might. The men and women of the Armed Forces have sacrificed much in battle. Their families have made great quiet sacrifices at home. We will honor both by pledging that the American Armed Forces will remain the best equipped, best trained, and best prepared in the world.

And very soon, we will return to the issue of Iraq. It is my hope, and my challenge to this body, that the debate will be based on what's best for the future of our Nation and for Iraq—not what's best for the Republican party or the Democratic party.

The Senate must be bold in preparing Americans for the struggle ahead. Our Nation's security depends on secure borders and a strong fighting force. It also depends on energy independence. So we must continue to work hard to decrease our reliance on foreign sources of energy.

We laid a solid foundation during the last Congress, with passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and, just last month, with the enactment of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. Both measures were passed with bipartisan support, and both will decrease our dangerous dependence on foreign oil and gas.

There is more that we can do both to increase domestic supply and decrease our demand for foreign energy. The United States has an abundance of coal and remains a leader in nuclear technology. We should focus attention on using these natural resources safely, cleanly, and efficiently.

We cannot go back on the gains we made in the last Congress. And I will work with my colleagues to continue this vital work.

If the restoration of our purpose does not lead those of us in the Senate to be daring, then our prosperity should.

Republicans presided over 4 years of economic growth; the biggest housing

boom since World War II; and an unemployment rate that has stayed at or below 5 percent for more than 15 months. The current rate of 4.5 percent is just remarkable.

The crash of 2000 yielded to gains that have sent the Dow Jones Industrial average to an all-time high. We have created more than 7 million jobs since August 2003. These gains are no accident. They are the result of the stimulative tax relief we passed. These policies clearly worked, and they should be kept in place.

Republicans used the strong economic climate to cut the deficit. We cut it in half even more quickly than anyone thought we would. And working together, across the aisle, we must continue that trend and balance the budget within 5 years.

Another focus of this Congress is the overwhelmingly popular and effective prescription drug relief for seniors. President Bush and the Republican Congress gave seniors the Medicare prescription drug care benefit they had waited on for decades. We cannot "scrap" this program, as some would like. And we will oppose any effort to do so.

A spirit of cooperation will lead to a heightened respect for fairness—and ensure that the same number of judicial nominees that were confirmed in the final years of the last three administrations are confirmed in the last 2 years of this one.

Americans want judges to uphold the original intent of the Constitution, not rewrite it. Judicial activism has divided the courts, the Congress, and the Nation for too long. If our work of restoration and a new civility is to take hold, we must recommit ourselves to the ideal of judicial restraint.

Like the three Presidents before him, President Bush will spend his last 2 years in office with the opposition party in control of the Senate. Like them, he has a right to expect that his nominees will receive an up-or-down vote.

The voters recently sent us a message. They told us to solve the problems that face this Nation. They expect us to win the wars we wage. And they expect us to be men and women of principle.

The people of Kentucky gave me the great honor of my life when they first elected me to the Senate. And I have gone about my work here with them foremost in my mind.

I have fought hard to advance and protect the values that matter most to the people of my State.

It is because of another election that I stand here today. I am honored that my colleagues chose me to lead them at this important moment in our history. I take my duty seriously.

I am filled today with a sense of purpose—for party, yes, but for this institution and for our Nation first, for their renewal.

Elections are about ideas, and here are some I hold most dear.

I believe the state exists to serve individuals and families, not the other way around.

I believe everyone fortunate enough to call himself or herself an American should be able to pursue their dreams freely.

I believe God has blessed this country richly, and that the proper response to the gift of freedom is to defend it.

And I believe that the first duty of Government is the defense and protection of its citizens.

So I am eager to work with my colleagues to find bold solutions to big problems. Yet on some things I will not yield.

I will never agree to proposals that weaken the security of our citizens at home or the capabilities of our Armed Forces abroad.

I will never agree to a tax increase on working families or small businesses. Our economy is strong because of the hard work and enterprise of Americans. We will not undermine that spirit by taxing it.

I will never agree to retreat from our responsibility to confirm qualified judicial nominees.

Bipartisanship, cooperation and accomplishment; yes. Civility; yes. But we will remain true to our principles.

Henry Clay was a great Kentuckian. He spent the last 2 years of his life using the tools of the Senate to save his country. His devotion to the cause of national unity was so great that one rival called it "a crowning grace" to Clay's public life.

Clay shows us that divided government need not be divisive. Indeed, it often leads to historic agreements that unity governments have little incentive to achieve.

And so, working together, forgetting past grievances, forging new alliances, we can solve the difficult issues of the day. This is the purpose of the Senate and the privilege of its Members.

If our steps are guided by this simple principle, then this 110th Congress will have met its responsibility on behalf of all Americans, and strengthened this institution for the unseen challenges that will always lie ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the next 2 hours of morning business be controlled as follows: the first 60 minutes under the control of the majority, the second 60 minutes under the control of the minority, with Senators therein limited to 10 minutes each.

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

The assistant majority leader.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my honor to follow the speeches that have been given by my new majority leader,

Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, and my new Republican leader, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky. It is a great honor for me to stand this day in the Senate as the assistant Democratic leader. I cannot express my gratitude to my colleagues for entrusting me with this responsibility.

I come to this moment with a sense of amazement. Some 40 years ago, as a college student in this town, I first set foot in the old Senate office building as an intern, never dreaming that 40 years later I would be standing on the floor of the Senate in this capacity. It is indeed a great honor.

I do not know how many men and women have lived in the United States of America in our history—hundreds of millions, for sure. Today there are some 300 million who count America as their home. In the entire history of the United States of America, from its creation, as of today, as of this moment in our history, 1,895 men and women have had this high honor of serving in the Senate. Today, we were joined by 10 more.

Their life stories, like the stories of many of us, are the stories of America: stories of immigrant families, stories of struggle, stories of dreams that finally resulted in an election to this great body in the Senate.

I imagine if you called on some of the experts in U.S. history—even those who served for quite a few years in the Senate—and asked them how many of the 1,895 Senators who have served here they could remember, they would be hard pressed to come up with a long list. As it happens in most walks of life, a few people stand out in history. But most are part of a parade, a parade that passes by many times anonymously.

In the desk drawers of each of our desks here there is a quaint little Senate custom. I was talking to Senator John Glenn of Ohio about it today. Senators who have served here, despite what they were told by their teachers in grade school, are encouraged to scratch their names in the bottom of the desk drawer. I happen to be sitting at the desk of former Senator John Glenn of Ohio, and my former mentor and inspiration, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois. I would imagine if you look in these desk drawers, there will be many names you do not recognize. The point I am trying to get to is this: Members of the Senate, men and women, come and go, but, thank God, this Nation endures. And it endures because of the sacrifice each makes for the common good of this Nation.

We have weathered so many storms—9/11 the most recent but, of course, the Civil War, which almost tore us apart—and time and again throughout our history men and women in this body, in the Senate, have decided the good of this Nation was more important than their individual personal ambition.

We have another similar moment in history. It is interesting how critical Americans are of their politicians; and