

I hope my colleagues in a very big bipartisan way will vote for this legislation, support it, and hopefully get it signed into law before this year is out.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN STROGER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, tomorrow, the city of Chicago and Cook County, IL, will say goodbye to a legend.

John Stroger was born into poverty in Arkansas at the start of the Great Depression. He lived to become the first African American ever elected president of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, IL. He lived to be one of the most powerful politicians in my home State.

He died at 8 o'clock last Friday morning from complications of a stroke he suffered almost 2 years ago and from which he never fully recovered.

John Stroger was 78 years old.

Mayor Daley confirmed the passing of John Stroger at a prayer breakfast on that day when we were honoring Dr. Martin Luther King. What a fitting coincidence. Dr. King had told us:

Everybody can be great, because everyone can serve.

John Stroger spent his life serving.

John Stroger was a grandson of former slaves who believed in the promise of America and believed that government can and should be a force for progress.

He was a man of compassion, integrity, great humor, and great political skill. He used all of those qualities to help others.

He spent his political life breaking down racial barriers and working to lift up those who were less fortunate. His lifelong commitment to serve those who struggle every day to find affordable, quality medical care will certainly be his legacy.

Many years ago, John Stroger befriended me when I was an unknown candidate from Springfield with a few friends in the Chicago political world. For me, John Stroger was more than an ally. He was a great friend.

He was also a man of strong opinions. Our mutual friend, Congressman DANNY DAVIS of Illinois, once joked that John Stroger "would argue with a signpost." But he never held grudges. He was a real gentleman.

He was also a champion for working families and the poor. As Cook County board president from 1994 to 2006, John Stroger opened doors of opportunity in government and business for women and minorities and improved the county's bond rating.

He made county government more responsive by changing the way commissioners are elected.

He created a special domestic violence court.

And then there is the achievement of which he was probably most proud: the construction in the year 2002 of a state-of-the-art hospital to serve the poor, the uninsured, and the underserved of Cook County and the Chicagoland area.

At a time when public hospitals across America are having to turn people away, John Stroger still believed that every person deserved the dignity and security of basic health care and lifesaving medicine.

The Chicago Sun Times noted:

John Stroger was so much larger than life they did not even wait until he was dead to put his name on the Cook County Hospital he defied the critics to build.

The John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County, IL, is just one way that the legacy of this remarkable man will continue to serve the people and city he loved for years to come.

Mr. President, I remember when John Stroger decided that this hospital was going to be built. There were scores of critics. Why in the world would we want to build a hospital for poor people? John Stroger knew the answer to that question. It was an answer from his heart: Because that is what America does. America cares for the poor. America provides the poor in Cook County and all across our Nation with the same kind of quality care that we all want for our families.

John Stroger knew that. His battle for that hospital ended up in one of the great success stories of public life in Illinois.

John Stroger was born in Helena, AR—the oldest of four kids. His father was a tailor, his mother worked as a maid. The family lived in a three-room shack with no electricity and no indoor plumbing.

John Stroger later described it for a Sun Times reporter when he said: "We didn't have any boots, and we didn't have any straps."

He graduated from Xavier College in New Orleans in 1952 with a degree in business administration. He was proud of Xavier for the last day I ever spoke to him. He always spoke with great pride about that college. He moved back to Arkansas and spent a year teaching high school math and coaching basketball. When he came home one day, his mom had packed a suitcase. She told him she had arranged for

him to move to Chicago because there would be more opportunities for a young black man.

John Stroger had caught the political bug years earlier. After hearing a speaker in Arkansas say that the election of President Harry Truman would lead to full rights for African Americans, he had organized voters and tried to persuade them to pay the poll tax so they could vote.

In Chicago, there was no poll tax, but there were other obstacles to full political participation for African Americans in the 1950s. Over the next four decades, John Stroger fought them all.

In 1968, he was named Democratic committeeman for South Side's Eighth ward—the first African-American committeeman for that famous ward. Two years later, John was elected to the Cook County Board. In 1994, he became board president. He was running for his fourth term in 2006 when he suffered a stroke a week before the primary.

John was my friend. The last picture we had taken together was at the St. Patrick's Day march, a legendary march in Chicago. There was John, with his big smile and big green sash, standing next to me and Mayor Daley. I am going to treasure that photo. I think it was one of the last taken of John as a candidate.

After he suffered a stroke, the Chicago Tribune ran an editorial that read, in part:

If John Stroger ever anticipated a career farewell, he surely saw himself shaking hands with everyone—his allies, his adversaries, the bypassers captivated if only for a moment by one of the more genuine personalities in Chicago politics.

The Tribune went on to write:

But he likely didn't anticipate a farewell. He wouldn't have enjoyed those elaborate exercises in staged finality. Politics and governance were his life; an intimate says the prospect of retirement unnerved him. Even in this awkward moment, we know he leaves public office just as he occupied it: Without a grudge, without a complaint, and with precious few regrets.

Those were the words of the Chicago Tribune, not always John Stroger's political friend.

The mayor and Members of Congress and the city council and even a former President of the United States have praised John Stroger's life and legacy these past days—and rightly so. But I think the eulogy John Stroger would have liked best wasn't offered by a politician.

Clyde Black runs a shoeshine operation in the City Hall-County Building complex in Chicago. Years ago, John Stroger gave him a helping hand to start his little business. As word of President Stroger's death spread last Friday, Clyde Black told a reporter:

He changed my life—made me a better person. He's someone we all dearly miss a lot.

It is a sentiment I and many others share.

I offer my deep condolences to President Stroger's family, especially his wife Yonnie. What a wonderful woman, by his side throughout his political life

and by his bedside as his illness lingered on for years; their daughter Yonnie Clark; their son and my friend Cook County Board President Todd Stroger, his family; and their two grandchildren. America and the State of Illinois have lost a great leader and I have lost a great friend.

I yield the floor.

UNION LEAGUE CLUB OF CHICAGO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the Union League Club of Chicago and its Boys and Girls Clubs. This month they celebrate an important milestone.

The Union League Club of Chicago was founded in 1879, adopting the motto "commitment to country and community." Throughout its long and distinguished history, the Union League Club of Chicago has maintained a strong tradition of civic involvement. Over the years, Club members have been a part of politics and society, advocating on issues ranging from election reform to the death penalty. The Union League Club of Chicago also helped develop community support for cultural institutions as they were coming into the community, including Orchestra Hall, the Field Museum, and the Harold Washington Library Center.

In 1920, recognizing a critical need in the community, the Union League Club of Chicago established the Union League Boys Club, a club designed to serve the large population of underprivileged children in Chicago.

Today, the club opens the doors of its four Chicago area facilities to disadvantaged youth who are in communities with some Chicago's the lowest educational attainment levels and highest dropout and poverty rates. In addition to providing wholesome social and recreational opportunities, the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs offer a wide variety of structured programs that emphasize character building and empowerment.

The clubs provide a safe and inviting refuge for young Chicagoans, free from the negative influences of drugs, gangs, and violence. Studies have shown that afterschool programs, like those offered by the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs, can reduce urban crime rates by keeping teens off the streets and providing positive alternatives.

At each club, members are served balanced snacks and meals and given nutritional guidance they can use when not at the club. The clubs also provide an environment in which students can tackle their homework, with assistance when they need it and access to personal computers. Not surprisingly, club members average significantly higher grade point averages than their peers.

A full-time professional staff, assisted by part-time workers and volunteers, provides high school students with career guidance and job training to help young club members become responsible citizens. Each year, the clubs award scholarships to help members pay for college or trade school.

In the summer, members take advantage of the 250-acre summer camp owned by the clubs. Located a short distance north of the Illinois-Wisconsin border, the camp gives Chicago youth an opportunity to experience and enjoy the outdoors.

This month, the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs realize a remarkable achievement. For the first time in its 87-year history, the Clubs will enroll the 10,000th member in a single program year.

Mr. President, I join the Chicago community in commending the Union League Club of Chicago and its Boys and Girls Clubs for outstanding commitment to the welfare of the community and for enriching thousands of young lives—in the past, today, and for decades to come.

RETIREMENT OF GREG HARNESS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on January 31, 2008, the Senate Librarian, Mr. Greg Harness, will retire. With his departure, we will lose a dedicated, loyal, and very important member of the Senate family.

The Senate Library is a fundamental part of the U.S. Senate. Operating under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate, the Senate Library serves as both a legislative and general reference library, and provides a wide variety of information services to Senators and our staffs in a prompt and timely fashion. It maintains a comprehensive collection of congressional and governmental publications and of materials relating to the specialized needs of the Senate.

The origins of this unique and important institution date back to 1792, when the Senate directed the Secretary "to procure and deposit in his office, the laws of the states, for the use of the Senate." The first Senate Librarian to be appointed was George S. Wagner, who officially commenced his duties on July 1, 1871.

In 1997, Greg Harness became the 17th Senate Librarian. A native of North Dakota, Mr. Harness began work in the Senate Library on October 20, 1975, as a reference librarian. He planned to work only a few years in Washington and then return to North Dakota to attend law school. Fortunately, his plans changed.

Mr. Harness continued his employment in the Senate Library for the next 32 years. As a reference librarian, Mr. Harness was a wonderful and pleasant person with whom to work. He undertook every request, no matter how large or small, how urgent or demanding, whether from the majority or the minority, and answered it effectively, professionally, and promptly. He always took that extra step to ensure that the Senator or his staff member received the best, the most accurate, and the most recent information.

As the Senate Librarian, Mr. Harness directed the administrative and professional operations of the Senate Li-

brary. He oversaw the movement of the Library from the Capitol to the Russell Building in 1999 and oversaw the design of the new Senate Library. More important, he continued that same cooperative, helpful attitude that he had always displayed as a reference librarian. As a result, he set a model of superior service for his entire staff.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Harness for his years of loyalty to the Senate, as well as his dedicated and distinguished service. And, I want him to know that my staff and I will certainly miss him. I wish him happiness and success as he enters the next phase of his life.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL DONALD C. STORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to honor a respected Kentuckian, MG Donald C. Storm, who has nobly served the United States and Kentucky for 37 years.

In 1970, General Storm enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving with Military Assistance Command Vietnam. After 2 years of Active Duty, he continued to serve his country in the Kentucky National Guard. Years of accomplishment and experience earned General Storm the appointment to Adjutant General of the Kentucky National Guard by Governor Ernie Fletcher in 2003. Regretfully, after 37 years of service and 4 years in that post, General Storm has decided to retire. Because of his dignified and unwavering commitment to the citizens of this country and the Commonwealth of Kentucky, I stand to honor him today.

General Storm has served the Commonwealth and its citizens in superb ways. He was an advocate for the destruction of marijuana, supporting the Marijuana Eradication Program; he oversaw a recruitment program that exceeded its goals; and finally, he was a true leader and supporter of his troops. General Storm was known for his dedication to the care of his soldiers and their families, celebrating with them in times of victory and mourning with them in times of loss.

Storm has clearly proved himself a man of honor and dignity who represents not only his country proudly but his State proudly. I wish General Storm and his family much happiness after retirement, and I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring General Storm for his dedication, patriotism, and willingness to give so much of himself for the good of his country and his fellow Kentuckians.

Mr. President, recently the Lexington Herald-Leader published a story about Major General Storm, "Generally Speaking; Retiring Guard chief's mission: 'Take care of the troops.'" I ask unanimous consent to have the full article printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: