his, "Mr. Attorney General, tell me again how the Department of Justice works. Are you free of political influence from the White House?" I remember him saying, and I can see his eyes today as he looked me straight in the eye and said, "I have told the President that nothing from the White House can interfere with prosccutions. We will make those determinations here in the Department of Justice based on the facts and the law." I remember even at that time I thought of the Department of Justice as the kind of place that is the kind of prosecutor I would want to be. And this Attorney General whom I talked with did exactly that. When a person who was key to the election of the President of the United States had committed a crime, this Attorney General prosecuted that person. This was particularly significant because that Attorney General was Robert F. Kennedy. The President of the United States was his brother, John F. Kennedy. But he said: We will protect the integrity of the Department of Justice.

I want to see that again. I had that in my mind when I was a prosecutor. I believe strongly that we need to enforce the law with neither fear nor favor when. There is no question in my mind that Eric Holder would do that.

I think of the thousands of men and women who work for the Department of Justice, some of the finest people you will ever see anywhere, many I have known for decades. For most of them, I have no idea what their political allegiances are, whether they are Republicans or Democrats or Independents. But I know one thing about every single one of them: they are the best of the best. They deserve, as an Attorney General, the best of the best.

I commend President-elect Obama for considering Eric Holder for this position. He is a public servant who has broad support within the law enforcement community and within both parties. I am pleased to see that the initial reactions of Senator HATCH, Senator SESSIONS, and Senator COBURN—all Republican members of the Senate Judiciary Committee—and many others, were to acknowledge his integrity, his ability, and good qualities. Mr. Holder should have the support of Senators from both sides of the aisle if the President-elect chooses to nominate him. I can assure you if he is nominated that the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold prompt and fair nomination hearings.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS—JOHN SUNUNU

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, a large number of very special and extraordinary individuals will be leaving the Senate at the end of this session, many friends and many people I have admired for a number of years and had the privilege to work with. I wished to speak specifically to one, and that is my colleague from New Hampshire, JOHN SUNUNU.

John is the youngest Member of the Senate. He is an accomplished and young Member, and he is still the youngest Member after 6 years, but he is one of the most accomplished and capable people in the Senate, one of the brightest, as we all know, and also one of the people who brings the most common sense to issues. Time and time again, I would come to the floor, and this was throughout his term but especially during the last few months when he was in a very challenging election, and there were going to be difficult votes, votes which, when you cast these votes, most people knew they were not going to be understood and, in many instances, they were going to be misinterpreted or misrepresented but votes which were necessary to cast in order to preserve especially the fiscal responsibility of this Government. JOHN SUNUNU never backed away from any of those votes. He always cast the difficult vote, knowing in many instances that politically it was going to be characterized in a way which might hurt him; votes, the basic purpose of which, in most instances, were to protect the taxpayer, keep the size of Government under control, and be a force for a better country and for more individual rights. He understands as well as anyone in this body the basic values of making Government live within its means, of having a government which the people can still commensurate and accomplish the goals of delivering adequate services. He has worked very hard in order to pursue those goals.

He also brought to the body a unique sense of humor. New Hampshire humor, quiet, witty, and comfortable with himself but also willing to make fun of himself, and an essential common sense, which I like to think is characteristic of New Hampshire, and also an intellect and capability, intelligence, drive, the personality to pretty much do whatever he wants as he moves forward.

He also has one other resource which is very special and that is his wife and family. Kathy is an exceptional individual. Kathy and I have come to enjoy not only working with JOHN and Kathy but getting to know them as friends, as fellow travelers. Kate has been through many years being a political wife, and she has put up with a lot of ups and downs. She and Kathy naturally bonded, as they understood the importance of what we do. Kitty is an individual who brings a smile whenever you see her because she is a person filled with good will to everyone. Their children, Grace and Charlie, John Hayes, great kids, very enthusiastic people, a wonderful family. That family is a tremendous support to JOHN, and he is a tremendous support to them. That unit, as it moves forward, will always be successful.

It is obviously with great regret that I look on JOHN’s leaving the Senate. His intelligence and his talent will still be strong. It will be a loss to the body. He is a special individual who had a special group of skills that uniquely worked for the benefit of New Hampshire and the people of New Hampshire. I hope he will stay engaged.

Kathy and I wish him and Kitty and their children the best of luck as they go forward and that the road always rises to meet them.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for morning business be extended to 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, we do not intend to wait until the new Congress convenes in January to begin work on health care reform legislation. The fact is, health care reform was one of the signature changes promised by President-elect Barack Obama during the campaign. This legislation is too important and too urgent to put off until tomorrow, to wait until the new President and the new Congress are sworn in.

I appeal both Senator BAUCUS, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Senator KENNEDY, Chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, for plunging right into the ambitious and historic task of creating a comprehensive health care reform bill.