

our witnesses, and to develop common approaches to problems.

His impact was especially profound as chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee from 2003 until 2006. He traveled frequently to Latin America and quickly developed an expertise in the region. He was an effective advocate for Plan Colombia, and he was one of our first leaders to recognize how important it was to ensure that Colombians had alternatives to economic and energy dependence on Venezuela. He performed important oversight of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, the Peace Corps, and U.S. policy toward Haiti. Senator Coleman was the lead organizer of the U.S.-Chile Caucus, a group that allowed Senators to engage with Chileans to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Senator Coleman developed expertise that went well beyond Latin America. In April 2004, I chaired the Senate's first hearing that looked into the troubled Iraq Oil for Food Program. Senator Coleman took the lead from there, and as chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, he conducted an extensive, 2-year investigation into corruption and mismanagement related to the Oil for Food Program. Many of his conclusions were the basis of legislation that he and I introduced in 2005—the United Nations Management, Personnel, and Policy Reform Act. Senator Coleman also was a passionate and informed advocate for U.S. programs to combat HIV/AIDS and a careful student of Middle East politics.

I know how much Norm was stimulated by the daily opportunities of the Senate Foreign Relation Committee, and he made the most of them. Had he prevailed in his 2008 reelection bid, he would have been the second ranking Republican on the committee.

Senator Coleman leaves the Senate after 6 years, having established lifetime friendships. It was a special pleasure for Char and me to spend time with Norm and his wife Laurie at Aspen Institute events, giving us the opportunity to know much more about their family and life outside the Senate.

I will miss his good humor, his hard work, and his personal friendship. I have no doubts that he will continue to serve the United States and his fellow Americans in new ways, and I look forward to witnessing all that he will achieve in the future. I join the Senate in wishing him the best as he and his family move on to new adventures.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I don't know much about the State of New

York or the city of New York. I do know there is a high school there called James Madison High School, which has some pretty prominent graduates: Senator BERNIE SANDERS from Vermont, Senator CHUCK SCHUMER of New York, and Senator NORM COLEMAN from Minnesota was a graduate of that school. I believe Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a member of the Supreme Court, also graduated from that high school. I am sure there are others.

My message to Norm Coleman is that I have been involved in close elections. I lost an election for the Senate many years ago by 524 votes. I won one not too many years ago by 428 votes. So I have some appreciation for what Norm Coleman and his opponent, AL FRANKEN, went through.

My thoughts during the past 8 months have been directly toward the difficulty they have had in their lives as a result of that close election. One of my elections—the one I won by 428 votes—took 6 weeks. I cannot imagine one taking 8 months. It was a hard-fought campaign. Almost 3 million people voted, and it was decided by 312 votes.

I appreciate, as I think do the people of Minnesota, the Senate, and the country, Norm Coleman not taking this to the Supreme Court or a higher court. He could have done that. That speaks well of him.

Norm has a lot of fans, of course, in the State of Minnesota, but he is also a friend of a close personal friend of mine from the State of Nevada, Sig Rogich. Sig Rogich and I have been very close personal friends for a long time. He is a man of accomplishment. Having been born in Iceland, he came to America and was raised in Henderson, where I was raised. Actually, he is a wealthy man now, a very prominent businessman. One of Norm's biggest supporters around the country is Sig Rogich; he has a great pedigree. He was part of the Tuesday team of famous media developed for Ronald Reagan. He worked in the White House for the first President Bush. He is a very personal friend of the first President Bush and also is well known and was part of the second Bush team and knows him very well. My understanding of Sig Rogich's relationship with Norm Coleman is that they are friends. That speaks well of both of them, that they have such high-quality friends.

Norm Coleman's relationship with me—myself being a Democrat and he being a Republican—was always very good. We spoke to each other often. He was always very courteous and always a gentleman with me. I never heard him say a negative word about me. I cannot ever recall saying anything negative about him. To show that he did do some legislation that I watched very closely, one piece of legislation he did was one that would allow people, when filing their income tax return, to designate part of their return to go to the National Guardsmen or Reservists, those who lose their jobs as a result of

going into combat and their families are having trouble making the grade. The few dollars they get from the military doesn't make up for what their house payment is and everything. This would allow money to be put into a fund to be administered and allow this money to go toward the families of these people fighting overseas. I thought so much of that legislation that I have sponsored it. It is working its way through the Senate, and it is a fine piece of legislation. I acknowledge that I plagiarized this from Norm Coleman. It came from his friend and my friend, Sig Rogich.

I wish Norm and his family the very best. Recognizing that these campaigns come to an end, he is a relatively young man, and I am sure with his educational background and his notoriety in Minnesota, he will have a bright future.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMENDING NORM COLEMAN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I am here today to speak about Senator Coleman, who was my colleague for my first 2 years in the Senate. As everyone knows, last week the Minnesota Supreme Court issued its ruling on the outcome of last November's Senate election. As I did this week, I congratulate AL FRANKEN for his hard-earned and long-awaited election victory. He has had a good first week in the Senate, and we all welcome him. But I do wish to take this time to talk about Norm Coleman.

First of all, after 6 months without having a second Senator, Senator Coleman made a very difficult decision, and he did it with such grace. He could have appealed that decision. He could have gone to Federal court. It was his right. But he made a decision which he felt was best for the State of Minnesota, and the State.

I wish to talk a little bit about what Norm Coleman meant to me to have him as a colleague in the Senate.

When I first came to the Senate, Norm had been a Senator for many years, and he was very gracious to me. He reached out with his staff. We basically got along from the moment I started to the end of his term as a Senator. We worked very hard at that. When we had disagreements, we talked them out and our staffs would talk them out because we felt the most important thing was that we represent the State of Minnesota.

Each one of us knows Norm in our own way, but I think all of us agree this is someone who cares so much

about his family, his wife Laurie, and their two children, Jacob and Sarah. There is a family that has known tremendous tragedy. Two of their children died in early infancy from a rare genetic disease. While Norm doesn't talk about this much, his reverence to life and his devotion to family are very clear.

Second only to his family has been his dedication to public service. It has literally defined his adult life. Maybe it was sheer destiny that he found his way to the Senate. After all, he is a graduate of James Madison High School in Brooklyn, which is also the alma mater of two of our Senate colleagues—CHUCK SCHUMER and BERNIE SANDERS.

Norm hit the ground running in politics, and he has not stopped. In college, he was a student activist, and in law school, he served as the president of his class. Immediately after getting his law degree, he joined the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, recruited by my good friend, legendary attorney general Warren Spannaus. Norm was in the Attorney General's Office 17 years, most of that time doing criminal prosecutions, ultimately rising to the position of solicitor general for the State of Minnesota.

In 1993, Norm was elected the mayor of St. Paul at a time when the city, especially its downtown, was suffering economically. During his 8 years as mayor, he worked to turn St. Paul around. Building public-private partnerships, he redeveloped the industrial riverfront into a recreational greenspace. A new Minnesota science museum was built overlooking the Mississippi River. Most famously, he brought hockey back to Minnesota, securing a new National Hockey League franchise that moved into the new arena. Hockey is very important in Minnesota.

In 1998, Norm was narrowly defeated in a three-way race for Minnesota Governor. The winner, of course, was Jesse Ventura—something not many people across the United States expected to happen. I think Norm once said that not everyone can say they lost to a candidate whose previous career highlight was being killed by an alien creature in the movie "Predator." But he took it in stride.

In 2002, Norm was elected to the Senate under tragic circumstances. Just days before the election, my good friends Paul Wellstone and his wife Sheila and their daughter Marcia and members of their staff were killed in a tragic plane crash in northern Minnesota. Norm became the Senator. Like Paul, Norm took his duties very seriously, and I could see that in my 2 years in the Senate. He cared deeply about the work he did in foreign relations, some of which people never really talked about, never made the front page of the newspaper, but it was something he cared deeply about.

Together, we worked on several issues in our State which were of key

importance, legislation to benefit our State. The most dramatic example of this spirit of cooperation was our response to the sudden collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge into the Mississippi River on August 1, 2007. Thirteen people were killed and 150 were injured, many with severe and permanent injuries. Literally our cities came to a stop. For our State, out of this unprecedented disaster, this public trauma was something to which they immediately responded.

I still remember when Senator Coleman and I came in the very next morning—we flew in with the Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters—and there were already billboards up, literally 12 hours later, directing people where to go with the traffic and how to get buses to get to where they had to go. As I said that day, a bridge in America should not just fall down, but when one does fall down, we rebuild it. In the 72 hours immediately following the bridge collapse, Norm and I worked together to secure \$250 million in emergency bridge construction funding. Representative JIM OBERSTAR led the way in the House. Approval of this funding came with remarkable speed and bipartisanship. Capitol Hill veterans tell me it was a rare feat, aided by unity among Minnesota's elected leaders across the aisle, across the political spectrum. I am pleased to report that just 13 months after that collapse, Minnesota drivers were able to drive over a safe new 35W bridge and eight-lane highway. That is just 13 months after the collapse.

While the bridge is the most visible example, Norm and I had many other opportunities to work together on issues that mattered to the people in our State.

There was another Minnesota disaster in August 2007 when severe flooding hit the southeastern corner of our State. We worked on this together, along with Congressman WALZ, to ensure a rapid, effective response by Federal agencies to help communities, businesses, and families in need.

We worked together on the Agriculture Committee. We both served on that committee. We succeeded in passing a new farm bill that was very important to our State.

We worked together with a bipartisan group of Senators on energy legislation, to move forward in unity.

We worked together in securing Federal funds for the security costs of the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, along with our colleagues in Colorado. I still remember standing before this Chamber saying that I stood tall to obtain the funding to protect the security of the Republican leadership from across this country. We did that together.

We joined to secure educational benefits owed to our National Guard and Reserve troops returning from Active Duty overseas. We are so proud of our National Guard in Minnesota. The Red Bulls have served longer in Iraq than

any other National Guard unit in the country. And Norm and I worked together to make sure we expanded the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program to help those Guard and Reserve who really have no base to go home to but go home to little towns across our State. We worked on that together.

Our State has a proud tradition of electing both Democrats and Republicans to office. They expect us to work together. From the very beginning, Norm and I knew that was part of our duty to the people of our State, that was part of our obligation, no matter if we disagreed on issues, that we were going to work together.

So today I acknowledge my former colleague, Norm Coleman, for the strength he has shown during this long campaign, for the grace he showed last week when he made that difficult decision, and for the fine work he did for the people of Minnesota.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM REFORM

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I am here to talk briefly today about food safety, something about which I care deeply. As you probably know, the last few food epidemics, from the jalapeno peppers to peanut butter, would not have been solved except for the hard work of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health, which is a model for how we can solve these epidemics. Thirteen people died with the last peanut butter one. It was only when someone died and was sick in Minnesota that it got solved.

Clearly, while we are proud of the work we do, we have to bring out this model nationally. I am proud to be doing a bill with Senator CHAMBLISS to try to bring out this model for the rest of the country.

I do note today that the Washington Post has a strong editorial recommending we do something to improve the food safety of this Nation. I think it is worth reading that editorial. They are talking about the need to get something done. Just this week, the White House came out with its food safety recommendations which include, as I said, building a new national traceback and response system, including clear industry guidance, a new unified incidence command system, and improved use of technology to deliver individual food safety alerts to consumers. We can truly do better.

There is also a bill—the bill Senator CHAMBLISS and I have sponsored focuses on the end of this problem when