

GEORGE has been a remarkable public servant, and he has served at many different levels of government throughout his career. I know he would be the first to say he wouldn't have been able to do all that without the person he calls the greatest blessing he has received in life by his side. That person is his wife Janet, who has been his greatest source of support and guidance for 48 years. Together they have made a difference wherever they have been.

In the years to come, I will always remember and admire all you did as Governor of Ohio with such a perfect First Lady by your side. I have a hunch you were such a great vote-getter because you had an advantage—a lot of people voted for you because they were also voting for her.

Looking back, we both served as mayors in our home States. When we did we had to find a way to pay for everything. That is why I always had an appreciation for the way you examined every detail of each issue through the lens of your background and how the people back home would feel about it.

Diana joins in sending our best wishes to you both and our thanks and appreciation for all you have done for Ohio and the Nation during your many years of public service. Good luck in all your future endeavors. Keep in touch. You'll be missed. It just won't be the same around here without you.

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#### CHRIS DODD

At the end of each session of Congress it has long been a tradition in the Senate to take a moment to express our appreciation and say goodbye to those who will not be returning in January for the beginning of the next Congress. One of those I know I will miss who will be stepping down to spend more time with his family is CHRIS DODD of Connecticut.

If I could sum up CHRIS's career in the Senate and the way he lives his life every day with one word, I think that word would be "passion." Simply put, CHRIS is the most passionate Senator I have ever known or had the opportunity to work with and observe.

Coming from a well known political family, CHRIS must have learned at an early age the difference that it can make. I have always believed it is the key ingredient to any effort and it often means the difference between success and failure. Looking back, the enthusiasm and spirited focus that CHRIS so clearly brings to every discussion or debate on the Senate floor and in committee has helped him to create alliances and forge agreements that have led to the passage of legislation that might not have crossed the finish line and made it into law if not for him.

CHRIS has now served for 30 years in the Senate and he has a great deal to show for his efforts. His style of leadership, the relationships he has developed with his colleagues, and his pursuit of his legislative priorities have enabled

him to make a difference in many, many ways and have an impact not only in Connecticut but all across the Nation.

One of the greatest achievements of his career has to be the Family and Medical Leave Act that CHRIS authored and helped to shepherd through the Senate into law. Thanks to him, whenever it is needed, employees are now able to take some time off to care for their children or ensure that an elderly family member receives some attention and support.

One more moment that is familiar to us all, was CHRIS's willingness to step in for our good friend, Senator Ted Kennedy, when Ted was in poor health, to help direct the disposition of the health care bill. I am sure it meant a great deal to Ted to know that the effort he was such a vital part of was in such good and capable hands.

Looking ahead, CHRIS isn't really going into retirement. He is taking on another challenge full time—raising his family. He started a family later than some, but the passion he has brought to everything in life has clearly been brought to bear on the care and nurturing of his two daughters. As every father knows, it is always the little ladies who have their dads wrapped around their fingers. As they grow up, each new day is another chapter of their lives that is waiting to be written as Mom and Dad share in the wonder and magic their children experience as they discover the world around them.

Looking back, ever since the day when CHRIS first arrived in the Senate, he has always loved being around good friends, enjoying a good joke, and sharing a good word or two. That is why it came as no surprise when, during a recent interview he said, "I don't know of a single colleague that I have served with in thirty years that I couldn't work with."

That is why CHRIS has been such an effective Senator over the years and why, when the day comes when he casts his last vote and heads home to be with his family, we will all miss him.

CHRIS, I hope you will keep in touch with us. You and your wife Jackie have a great future in store and I am sure you will enjoy every day together. As I have learned with the birth of each child and grandchild—with another just born—each day you spend with your children is more proof of the wisdom of the old Irish saying—bricks and mortar may make a house but it is the laughter of our children that makes it a home.

Good luck. God bless.

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#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last night, as snow fell in Washington, DC, the Senate freeze on confirming judges began to thaw a bit. I thank the leaders for clearing 4 of the 38 judicial nominations awaiting final action by the Senate. These nominations will fill

a few of the historically high number of Federal judicial vacancies around the country, including in the Eastern District of California, one of the districts with the highest workloads in the country. All the nominations confirmed last night were reported by the Judiciary Committee without objection way back in May and early June. I hope this is an indication that the other 34 judicial nominees pending in the Senate will receive consideration and a vote by the Senate before the Senate adjourns.

Senate consideration of the four nominations we confirmed last night was long overdue. In fact, these are the first judicial confirmations the Senate has considered since September 13, more than 3 months ago. For months, these nominations and many others have languished before the Senate, without explanation and for no reason. As a result of these needless delays, of the 80 judicial nominations reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee, only 45 have been considered by the Senate. Even with yesterday's confirmations, that remains a historically low number and percentage. Meanwhile, 34 judicial nominees with well-established qualifications and the support of their home State Senators from both parties are still waiting for Senate consideration. Some were sent to the Senate for final action as long ago as last January after being reported unanimously by all Republicans and Democrats on the Judiciary Committee.

Last night, we unanimously confirmed Catherine Eagles to the Middle District of North Carolina, Kimberly Mueller to the Eastern District of California, John Gibney to the Eastern District of Virginia, and James Bredar to the District of Maryland. Judge Eagles and Judge Mueller were reported unanimously by the Judiciary Committee on May 6; Mr. Gibney's nomination was reported unanimously on May 27; and Judge Bredar's nomination was reported unanimously on June 10. Judge Mueller's confirmation is particularly welcome news for the Eastern District of California, which maintains the highest weighted caseload among all Federal judicial districts across the country. There is no reason and still no explanation for these delays.

Since last year, I have been urging all Senators, Democrats and Republicans, to join together to take action to end the crisis of skyrocketing judicial vacancies. That has not happened. I have asked that we return to the longstanding practices that the Senate used to follow when considering nominations from Presidents of both parties. This has not happened. As a result, 34 judicial nominations that have been favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee continue to be stalled on the Senate's Executive Calendar awaiting final consideration and their confirmation.

I hope that our action yesterday in considering a handful of nominations