

Economists on both sides of the aisle know it is the No. 1 threat to our country. I think for that reason, what we have been doing is saying we are not going to voice vote debt ceilings any more. I know we have a lot of people on Wall Street and other places who talk about how the credit rating of our country is so important. Believe me, I know that well. I could not agree more. So the last thing we need to do again is to get in a situation where we wait until the last minute and the whole world is wondering whether we are going to default on our debt and people are all shaken up about where America is.

I would say, since we know that if the President and the Speaker do not agree to a large deal, since we know the debt ceiling is likely to be the next event, if you will, the next forcing event that causes us to come to terms with the solvency of this Nation—the way I know the White House has said certain things about the debt ceiling, what we may want to do is make sure the CR and the debt ceiling stay tied together and working along together at the same time so we have both those forcing moments happening together.

But in order to make sure we do not threaten the credit of this great Nation, let's go ahead and work now. As a matter of fact, what I am going to do in the next couple days is I am going to offer a bill to raise the debt ceiling of our Nation. Think about that. A Republican, I am going to offer a bill to raise the debt ceiling of our Nation. I am going to offer a bill that is going to raise the debt ceiling by \$900 billion to \$1 trillion. I am going to offer that bill in December.

The debt ceiling is probably not coming until maybe February or March. In order to raise that debt ceiling by that amount, it is going to be accompanied by entitlement changes in equal amounts. It is the same precedent the President and the Speaker agreed to last year and this body agreed to. I think we are going to follow that formula likely into this next year, unless there is a large deal announced soon.

What I would say to other Members in the House: Look, I am just one Senator. I am just one Senator. There are other Senators here who certainly have as good or better ideas. So why do we not start the process of formally offering on the floor entitlement reforms. I would suggest that is the place we start. I mean, what we have done around here is we have done discretionary cuts. We created sequestration.

At the end of this year, in some form or fashion, whether we embarrass ourselves and wait and go over the cliff in the next year or before this year ends, we are going to offer revenues. I do not know how anybody can believe revenues are not coming. What I would say to everyone here: Let's move to entitlement reform. That is the only thing, candidly, that has not been talked about in this debate.

No one—no one—has offered publicly concrete entitlement reform in legisla-

tive language in the Senate. Nobody has done that in the House. That is what has been missing in this debate. In order to kick off this debate in what I consider to be an appropriate way, I am going to offer a debt ceiling increase bill. I am going to offer it in the next 24 to 48 hours. I may offer it today.

It is going to have dollar-for-dollar entitlement reforms. That will save this Nation from catastrophe and make sure seniors have these benefits down the road. What I would ask the leaders to do is to consider putting in place a process through regular order to consider these bills, to deal with the debt ceiling so we can do it way in advance and everybody can see the process and see the debate and watch our Nation function in an appropriate way so we get this done well in advance of the Treasury Secretary telling us the debt ceiling needs to be raised.

Let me close by saying, the best thing that can happen to this Nation, even though it is odd, I have to tell you it is odd, is we turn on the television at night or we read the paper in the morning, we see where the President called Speaker BOEHNER or maybe Speaker BOEHNER called the President, and there is drama. None of us knows what is said. I have a pretty good idea.

But our Nation is sitting here while this silly debate—here is the Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world. What are we doing? We are hearing about the discussions on the telephone. By the way, if that solves the problem, I am all for it. I am all for a solution that comes that way. Candidly, I hope it is a big solution. I hope it is a \$4½-trillion solution that they come to. But I am doubtful that is going to happen based on where we are today on December 12.

So I am going to offer a debt ceiling bill to move us on. It will move us toward fiscal solvency. It will keep us from jeopardizing the credit of this Nation. We can move those things through regular order. I ask the leadership of the Senate, Majority Leader REID, to hopefully set up a process soon. Because, candidly, we are probably going to need to drop debt ceiling bills soon, probably January 3, to make the dates that are necessary to actually raise our debt ceiling and not have the credit implications we had last August.

I have been a little bit despondent about this process because it just feels as though things are not moving ahead in a way that we are going to be able to put this in the rearview mirror and start this year—this next year with tremendous economic growth because people know we have solved this problem. I have been despondent about that.

But I woke this morning with almost a eureka moment thinking that, you know what, if they are not going to deal with this issue, we know we have to deal with the debt ceiling, we know we have to deal with the CR, there is

great opportunity for all of us to put out entitlement reforms on the floor, for all of us to debate in committee and to pass legislation so, dollar for dollar, we can raise the debt ceiling way in advance of any time to cause any kind of credit problems for our country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

OLYMPIA SNOWE AND KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise during this morning business hour to speak—particularly during this time of tension as we are looking at the fiscal cliff—to really use a few minutes to pay a tribute to two wonderful, outstanding Senators with whom I have served and who will be leaving us at the end of this term. They are wonderful women named Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE of Maine and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas, dear friends across the aisle. Although they were on the other side of the aisle, there was no great divide between us. We have known each other for many years.

I would like to say a few words about my very dear friend, Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE. I served with Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE in the U.S. House of Representatives and then in the U.S. Senate. Wow. What an outstanding Senator and Congressperson she has been, and I know we will continue to see Senator SNOWE in some type of role in public service because that is just the kind of person she is. She is deeply, in her DNA, a public servant.

Senator SNOWE has served her State of Maine and our Nation so well. She is one of our most respected Members of Congress, known for her civility, her sensibility, and her mastery of the issues. I might add that she brings that New England sense of a more frugal government but at the same time shows that you can do it in a compassionate, smart way.

I know her as a cherished friend, a dear colleague, and a crucial partner on so many issues. As I said, we served in the House and the Senate together. We worked on those issues I talk about, the macro issues and the macaroni-and-cheese issues. We fought for a better economy, particularly in the area of small business; a safer country, as we worked on the Intelligence Committee together; and a more efficient government. Also, we worked together on many issues pertaining to women. In the area of small business, she is

currently the ranking member on the Small Business Committee, with our other colleague, Senator MARY LANDRIEU. She knows the backbone of Maine's economy is small business, and she also knows it is the backbone of the American economy.

I have watched her day in and day out being concerned about her fishermen who were out there working in the cold waters off of Georges Bank for lobsters and the small shop owner on Main Street. From the potato fields and lumber yards to L.L. Bean, OLYMPIA SNOWE has stood for them but also for the big issues in terms of jobs in the Bath shipyards.

In national security, we have worked together to look out for our troops over there and to protect our communities from predators back here. She has been steadfast and true. It is a committee that meets often behind closed doors, but I will tell you, this is a Senator who continually looks after the safety of the American people.

One of the areas in which I have worked the closest with her is the area of women's health. You might be interested to know that Senator SNOWE and I received the Good Housekeeping Outstanding Achievement Award for what we did to advance the cause of finding a cure for breast cancer. Now, when I called my sister and told her I was getting a Good Housekeeping award, she thought it was the funniest thing she had ever heard. When I told her I was getting it with OLYMPIA SNOWE, she knew it had credibility. I say that because what we did in working together was in medical research and in clinical trials.

You might be interested to know that when I came to the Senate, the only other woman Senator was Nancy Kassebaum—another wonderful person across the aisle. Women were not included in the protocols at NIH. Can you believe that? That famous study—take an aspirin a day, keep a heart attack away—was done with 10,000 male medical students. Not one woman was there. They regarded including women in research as presenting deviant results. We were known as the deviant results. Well, Pat Schroeder; OLYMPIA SNOWE; another Republican Congresswoman, Connie Morella from Maryland—we said this couldn't continue. So we organized across the dome, across the aisle, and we went across the beltway to NIH. We pulled up and we demanded answers, scientific answers, on why we weren't included.

The day we pulled up in our cars on a bipartisan basis, George Bush the elder appointed Bernadine Healey to head NIH. Then, again working together across the aisle and across the dome, working with Senators Kennedy and HARKIN, we established the Office of Research on Women's Health at NIH. The famous hormonal replacement therapy study was done. It resulted in massive change in the way doctors treated women, and it has reduced breast cancer rates 15 percent.

So I say to all, when you ask, what did OLYMPIA SNOWE do, she would say: I worked on a bipartisan basis. And because of what she did, we did, we all did working together, men and women, House and Senate, we have saved the lives of women 1 million at a time. I think that is a terrific accomplishment. And no matter what Senator SNOWE does, she can cherish in her heart that she did that.

But while we were busy doing the big picture, she helped me with an individual picture. We went to the refugee camps of Cambodia together, along with the Congresswomen. It was when the killing fields were at that time the highest. We saw the horrible consequences of war. We worked together to feed the children. We worked together to feed the children and care for the children.

I met a young girl in a refugee camp, in the Catholic Relief feeding camp. Working with Senator SNOWE, we brought that little girl to the United States of America. She is alive here today, married and living as an American citizen.

So what did OLYMPIA SNOWE do? She saved jobs and she saved lives. I am proud to work with her, and we are going to miss her.

Then there is my good friend KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who has just come to the floor. I am glad she is going to be here to hear what I am going to say about her. I hold her in such enormously high esteem.

Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON is known for her competence, her strong character, and being an outstanding champion for Texas, an advocate for women, and a real patriot dedicated to serving our Nation. I too know her as a dear friend, someone deeply committed to creating that zone of civility among the women in the Senate.

When Senator HUTCHISON arrived in the Senate in 1983, there were prickly politics beginning to emerge. She came from the Texas Legislature and knew the dynamics of a rough-and-tumble legislative body. But as we worked together on something called the homemaker IRA, we said: Why don't we just get together to see if we can create a zone of civility? That was when we brought the women together for those monthly dinners. The rules were no staff, no leaks, and no memos. We talked about everything from hairdos to the hair-raising and how we could stop the global war on terror and fight the deadly scourge against breast cancer. We worked together, again across the aisle.

In 1992 we also worked to hold these power workshops to make sure every woman would know how to get started in the Senate, and we worked together on that.

The other thing Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON and I helped establish was that we could disagree without being disagreeable. We, the women of the Senate, do not have a caucus because we represent States. That is what the

Constitution says is our job—we are here to represent States. We also have different philosophies and viewpoints on governance. But we also know we can disagree without being disagreeable.

A story I like to tell is that during debate on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, Senator HUTCHISON and I agreed on absolutely the same goal: equal pay for equal or comparable work for women. However, we disagreed on the means. Senator HUTCHISON had about nine amendments, and we duked it out here. We went earring-to-earring in terms of our debate, and the Senate commented on what intellectual rigor it had, what a sense of comity and exchanging of ideas. At the end of the day, we not only passed the legislation, but we did it in a way where everybody could feel proud of the process. Why can't we do that every day? Gee, I wish we could.

Then working with Senator HUTCHISON—and this is how we got started, was on the homemaker IRA. This was Senator HUTCHISON's idea. She came to me and she said: You know, Senator BARB, they are stay-at-home moms, and they are limited to only \$500 that they can contribute to an IRA. If they have the money and if they have the will and the wallet, we should give them the same tax opportunities as if they were working in the marketplace because their work at home should be valued as well.

Absolutely. We changed that legislation. I have pending here legislation to permanently change the name of that homemaker IRA to the Hutchison IRA because she really did lead the way. I was an able ally, and we made a difference.

So I could go through item after item—the way we have worked on breast cancer together, the way we have worked on appropriations. She was my ranking member on Commerce-Justice-Science. We have worked together on the space program. We have worked together to keep our areas safe. From the start, we shared a personal commitment that technology and space could help America remain exceptional, a belief in supporting research and science, leading to new ideas that would be not only new areas that we would explore but new technologies for new products and new jobs. Yes, I visited her down at mission control, and I have been there during the great research we were able to see being done in that area.

Remember, the home of the Komen foundation is in Texas. Senator HUTCHISON was very clear that she wanted to be sure that she too was an advocate for women's health. We worked together on mammogram quality standards. Were you aware that in the early days—and I know that sometimes we sound like we built the Pyramids together when I tell these stories; it is both ancient history and a recent reality. If you went into a doctor's office 10, 12 years ago for a mammogram,

you might have gotten a chest X ray and they would have called it a mammogram. It was often given by untrained technicians. There were no standards for the equipment that it would really work the way it was supposed to work, and it was often uncalibrated and ineffectual.

Senator HUTCHISON and I worked using sound science, thorough hearings, working with the Institute of Medicine, FDA, and the National Institute of Standards. Now if you go into your doctor's office for that mammogram, you will see a certificate from your government that says this is a place where you know the technology will work and the people who will be giving it will be trained. You know, once again, this is early detection and screening, saving lives a million at a time. Isn't that fantastic? Again, across the aisle, we were able to do that.

We also did a book together. She was the leader in helping us publish our famous book, "Nine and Counting." Maybe there will be time for another book, but when the chapter of the history of the Senate is written, we want to be sure that the chapter really includes a big statement to the work of Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON.

Again, in this institution it is the personal relationships built often on policy. I went to Texas to tour the space program with Senator HUTCHISON. That is where we heard about the National Space Biomedical Research Institute at Baylor. When I was there, I met Senator HUTCHISON's brother, who faced the same blood cancer disease Geraldine Ferraro faced. Gerry and her brother became fast friends, so KAY and BARB teamed up. Again we pushed research at NIH. You know, cancer knows no party. It knows no ZIP Code. It knows no ideology. But it knows that we need to work together to be able to do it. On that wonderful day of friendship, where we learned the best ideas that will come out of our work in the space program to deal with the dread cancer word, the kinds of things that we study in space will help us be more effective here on Earth.

KAY invited me to the Houston livestock show and rodeo. Now, I grew up in Baltimore, and you have been there many times yourself. You know it is a city known for its row houses, not for its rodeos.

KAY invited me to come to the rodeo in the Astrodome. Well, I showed up, to her surprise. I had little boots, a cowboy hat, and a vest. She put me in a buckboard, and, to "Deep in the Heart of Texas," we circled the Astrodome together. I was in a buckboard, and she was on a palomino next to me. The American flags were waving, and so was I, yelling "giddy up, little doggie." At the end of the evening, I was there munching on barbecue, affectionately called Buckboard BARB—and I have the pictures to show it. They are locked up. I don't widely distribute them. But it was a heck of an evening.

I say that because, again, out of that comes great friendships that also lead to paving the way to where we put our heads together to solve our national problems and to do it in a way where we get the best ideas from a variety of government approaches. And at the end of the day, we feel better, but America is better off.

I am pretty emotional, actually, when I think about OLYMPIA and KAY. We have been together a long time. We welcome the Acting President pro tempore and your generation, but for those of us who maybe didn't build the pyramids—and I hope Senator HUTCHISON can say the same—there is a lot of meaning in a Latin phrase I learned in Catholic girls school many years ago: Exegi aere perennius: We will build a monument more lasting than bronze.

When Senator HUTCHISON returns to Texas again to find a new way to serve the people of this country, she will know that here in this institution, along with Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, they built monuments to last far longer than any statues made of bronze. They made a difference in the lives of people, and they have done it in a way they can be proud of and for which we can all be grateful.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I am so touched by the comments of my colleague Senator MIKULSKI about myself and OLYMPIA. I appreciate so much that she has singled us out because Senator MIKULSKI is a pioneer. She didn't build the pyramids, I might say, but it was close. She was in the House first and then came to the Senate. She is our longest serving woman Senator and she will probably be dean of all the Senate at some point because she is a legend. She is a legend in the Senate, she is a legend in Maryland, and she is a legend in our country.

I think back now on the things we have been able to accomplish—and it was not just because we were women—here in this deliberative body where we have 100 people representing 50 very different States. It is not that the men were against anything we have teamed up to do, but it is because of our experiences that we brought to the table. Sometimes it wasn't thought of before, before Senator MIKULSKI and other women came.

I will point out a couple of things and embellish a little on what the Senator said. When we wrote the book "Nine and Counting," there were nine women in the Senate at the time. But it came from something much bigger. It came from a meeting Senator MIKULSKI pulled together of the women of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It was the Catholics and the Protestants who were trying to probe the women Senators, the nine of us who were here, about how they could be effective in making peace in Northern Ireland.

When we started telling our stories to them, to encourage them that they

could make a difference in Northern Ireland, BARBARA MIKULSKI and I looked at each other and we said: You know, there is a book here. There is a book about the obstacles women have faced getting to the U.S. Senate and a book that can encourage our girls and young women to play a part in settling the major issues of our country.

From that background, we contacted Bob Barnett, who was an agent of Senators and House Members who write books, and also Cabinet members and Presidents, and we said we would like to get together and write a book. He immediately got to work. It was Claire Wachtel at HarperCollins who said: "Oh, I love this. I love it." She got a writer who went to each of us and interviewed us and then wrote our stories, which were in our own words.

Afterward, we got together and decided to give all of the proceeds to the Girl Scouts of America, which was a common organization that had affected almost every one of the women at the time. The Girl Scouts were giving leadership capabilities to the girls in our country. I had been a Girl Scout and so had BARBARA. Our book is still in print and it has raised tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars for the Girl Scouts to continue their leadership programs. And it all came from something we learned about each other.

I think the multiple myeloma disease, which my brother has, and which Geraldine Ferraro had, was another area where BARBARA and I bonded. I bonded with Geraldine Ferraro too, who was a champion for women up and coming in our political system. She encouraged me a lot.

But together with BARBARA MIKULSKI, who was a dear friend of Geraldine Ferraro's, and who spoke at her funeral—we both went to that funeral—we were able to pass legislation that provided funding for research and education for multiple myeloma. We named it the Geraldine Ferraro Multiple Myeloma Education Program so that more could be learned about this very rare disease.

Gerri was a fighter and she only died a year and a half ago. My brother is a fighter and he is still doing great. And now, because of our research, we are maintaining and we are letting people live a quality life because we teamed up.

BARBARA told the story, but I will tell the other side—the rest of the story—about the Houston rodeo, because they still talk about Buckboard BARB. She came to the rodeo from her ethnic background in Baltimore, and she was such a great sport. I was riding my horse in the grand entry and BARB was in the buckboard. She was waving and having the best time, and of course all of us were in our rodeo attire, which was sort of foreign to BARB, I have to say. But she was right in there with her boots and her big cowgirl hairdo. And BARBARA leaned over to me at one of the rodeo events and she said: OK,

KAY, if we were here Monday morning and we went to a chamber of commerce meeting, would these people look like this?

I still tell that story in Houston, TX, which they love, and, of course, I said: Oh, yeah. Which wasn't true. But I loved it. She was the best sport, and they still talk about her. They did give her a cowboy hat that was to die for.

Let me mention one other thing. I know Senator AKAKA is here, so I won't take up much more time. We teamed up on the issue of single-sex schools. The Senator from Maryland mentioned her Catholic girls school upbringing. Well, Hillary Clinton, BARBARA MIKULSKI, SUSAN COLLINS, and myself teamed up to ensure that every girl in this country has the opportunity, if their school board decides to offer it as an option, to go to a girls school. And likewise for every boy whose school board decides that it would be better for boys—in middle school especially and high school. We teamed up after about 15 years of trying, starting with Jack Danforth from Missouri. He started the effort to allow single-sex schools in our public entities in America. When I came here in 1993, we finally passed it with our coalition saying: We know this can be better for some girls and some boys. Not all.

I will say to the distinguished Acting President pro tempore that it was the Young Women's Leadership Academy in Harlem, NY, that gave us the courage to say this can be done, because they fought all the efforts to not allow it; all the lawsuits. They stood up. Hillary Clinton went to visit the Young Women's Leadership Academy, and I took Rod Paige, the Secretary of Education, right there to New York and I said: Secretary Paige, we can do this for all Americans. We can. Hillary and I and BARBARA and SUSAN said: We are going to do it. We did, and it was a great accomplishment.

I just want to end by saying that I so appreciate BARBARA MIKULSKI and JOHN CORNYN introducing the bill to name the Homemaker IRA for me. It means so much to me, because I experienced as a young single woman starting an IRA, getting married, and being told I couldn't provide any more for my own retirement security. And I knew there were so many women who, through divorce or the death of a husband, had gone in and out of the workforce or never been in the outside workforce, couldn't save for their own retirement security. When I went to BARBARA, I said: BARBARA, it is a Democratic Senate, so I will make this bill the Mikulski-Hutchison bill to get it passed. Senator MIKULSKI said: Not on your life, it will be Hutchison-Mikulski because it is your idea. And she worked just as hard as if it were the reverse. That says more about the Senator from Maryland than anything I could say. So thank you, BARBARA, for introducing the bill that would name it for me because I know it will help women long after I leave.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my colleague, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who will be leaving the Senate at the end of this term. Senator HUTCHISON has represented the State of Texas in the Senate since her election in 1993.

Senator HUTCHISON has deep Texas roots, with her great-great-grandfather signing Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836. Growing up in La Marque, TX, Senator HUTCHISON has represented her State as only a true Texan could. Senator HUTCHISON attended the University of Texas at Austin, graduating with bachelor of arts degree. She then went on to earn her J. D. from the University of Texas Law School in 1967. Senator HUTCHISON began her career as a political and legal reporter for KPRC in Houston.

In 1972, Senator HUTCHISON began her long career of public service by twice being elected to represent Houston in the Texas House of Representatives. In 1990, Senator HUTCHISON was elected Texas State treasurer. In 1993, Senator HUTCHISON won a special election, becoming the first and only woman to date to represent Texas in the U.S. Senate. She has continued to represent Texas for almost 20 years in the Senate, repeatedly winning her seat by overwhelming margins, including her reelection in 2000 with more votes than any statewide candidate in Texas history.

Throughout her Senate career, Senator HUTCHISON has been known as a strong leader on defense issues. In 1993, Senator HUTCHISON became the first woman to serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee since 1974. In 2003, Senator HUTCHISON introduced the legislation creating an overseas basing commission, which ensured our forces were capable of meeting the threats we face in the 21st century. Following the September 11 attacks, Senator HUTCHISON was instrumental in securing provisions to increase air cargo screening as part of the National Intelligence Reform Act.

Senator HUTCHISON has also been a champion of education during her time in the Senate. She has used her firm belief that every child is deserving of a quality education to advocate for increased investments in science, technology, and education.

Senator HUTCHISON has served the people of the State of Texas with integrity. I wish her success in whatever she chooses to do in the next chapter of her life.

DAN AKAKA

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, today I would like to honor the legacy and service of my colleague and dear friend, Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA.

My brother, Senator DANIEL AKAKA, has been my friend and partner in Washington for 36 years.

During that time, he has fought hard for Native Hawaiians, veterans, and the needs of Hawaii.

I am sad at the thought of the Senate without him and I am sorry I am unable to join him on the floor today.

DAN AKAKA is the spirit of Aloha.

I have always relied on his even keel and hard work to help me represent the people of Hawaii. And I have never, ever heard him utter a harsh word or do anything to harm another person.

There are few words to describe a kind man of his stature, but I assure you, Hawaii and this Nation are better because of his work.

On behalf of the people of Hawaii, thank you DANNY. There will never be another like you.●

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and recognize the accomplishments of a colleague and dear friend who will be retiring from the U.S. Senate at the end of the term. Senator AKAKA has represented the State of Hawaii with distinction for 36 years. He has been a firm advocate for his constituents, especially for Native Hawaiians.

I have had the honor and privilege to work alongside Senator AKAKA on the Indian Affairs Committee. During this time and throughout his tenure as chairman, I have witnessed his commitment to improving the overall well-being of Native Hawaiians as well as all indigenous people. He has been a tireless advocate for their rights, and, with his leadership and bipartisan dedication, he has brought many issues they confront to the forefront. For more than a decade, Senator AKAKA has championed the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act, which establishes a process for Native Hawaiians to gain Federal recognition. He has also been the driving force in advancing the Native Hawaiian language movement. His dedication and leadership has ensured survival of the language.

As part of the greatest generation and a veteran, Senator AKAKA also used his time as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to champion laws to improve health care and benefits for countless veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Known for breaking down barriers and building relationships, Senator AKAKA has served the people of Hawaii with integrity and humility. He is a true statesman, gentleman, and patriot, and our country is better for his service. He leaves a distinguished legacy and will be greatly missed by us all. I thank Senator AKAKA for his friendship and service to our Nation, and I wish him and his wife Millie all the best for the future.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I rise to give my remarks and my aloha to the U.S. Senate.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to wish my good friend, my colleague of 36 years, my brother, DAN