

to the next day; let's not take on the real, relevant issues of America; let's not deal with health care; let's not deal with a lot of things.

The right way to do this is to come out and debate it, whether it is campaign finance reform or whatever the issue is, debate it, open it up. If you lose, you lose; if you win, you win. That is what America wants. That is what they will demand, and that is what ultimately they will receive.

I am sorry I had to take the floor, as did my colleagues tonight, to talk about this. This is not a proud moment for me. It is not a proud moment for this institution. But if there is anything we have in this Nation that must be cherished and nourished and formed and shaped and protected and defended at all costs, it is the institution. It is the process and the institution that allows this self-governance and the freedom to stand on the floor of the Senate, stand anywhere in this Nation and express ourselves, the minority knowing they will be protected and the majority knowing they can count on a fair shake in that process.

That ultimately, as we define the process down, is the most important dynamic of who we are as a people and why this Republic has survived for over 200 years. When we discount that, when we discount that currency, when we abridge that responsibility, then we turn our backs on everyone who has sacrificed for the freedom that allows us to do this. We are a better country than that. We are a better people than that. We will rise to the occasion to turn this around and hold on to the one currency that counts in all of our lives, and that is trust. When we debase that trust, we debase the very currency of who we are.

I will always throw my confidence, the completeness of who I am and what I represent, behind the good common sense of the American people, and the faith I have in the American people will always dictate the outcome of these kinds of exercises, as it was written, as it was stated, and as it was the vision of the great men who formed this country and wrote this Constitution.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OSCEOLA McCARTY, A MISSISSIPPI PHILANTHROPIST

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today I rise to pay special tribute to the passing of a 91-year-old Mississippian whose gen-

erosity, hard work, and commitment to education touched the hearts and consciences of many all across this Nation. It is the story of a smalltown laundress, Osceola McCarty of Hattiesburg, MS, who lived a quiet life in the Pine Belt region of my State until her \$150,000 donation to the University of Southern Mississippi brought her national attention. McCarty's gift established a scholarship to be directed to African American students enrolling at the University of Southern Mississippi who clearly demonstrate financial need.

For a woman who rarely left her home, except for trips to the local market and, of course, church, the notoriety certainly brought a change to the lifestyle of Ms. McCarty. She was featured on a CBS television show as one of the "10 Most Fascinating people of 1995." She received a Presidential Citizens Medal, an honorary doctoral degree from Harvard University, as well as numerous other outstanding citizen awards. She was invited to cities throughout the country to share her story of thriftiness and generosity.

Ms. McCarty received a sixth grade education and worked her entire life in Hattiesburg, MS, washing and ironing clothes. She has made it possible for others to have the education that she never had. In her book, "Simple Wisdom for Rich Living," McCarty reflects on long, hard days of laboring over steaming kettles of clothes and standing that she loved her work and she only spent what she needed to. After all the years of hard work and dedication, Ms. McCarty managed to donate her significant gift to the University of Southern Mississippi. "A smart person plans for the future," is what she said when she received numerous bits of recognition. Then she said, "You never know what kind of emergency will come up, and you can't rely on the government to meet all of your needs. You have to take responsibility for yourself."

Osceola McCarty will be deeply missed. She was a humble, modest lady. I had the pleasure of bringing her into the majority leader's office. She never got over the fact that people were so surprised and impressed that she saved \$150,000 and she gave it to the University of Southern Mississippi. She thought she was just doing the right thing. Her life was an exemplary one that touched us all. We are very proud of her. God rest her soul.

I yield the floor.

THE GREATNESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for reminding us of the greatness of the American people. We think we debate great policies here, and we do; we have very seri-

ous discussions. But there is nothing more important than to remind ourselves that the greatness of America isn't really in Washington, DC, it is in the little towns, villages, and cities in States all across this country and individuals who can do more in dedicated lives to their fellow citizens than we could ever do in complicated statutes.

I thank the majority leader.

THE MILLENNIUM DIGITAL COMMERCE ACT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today the Senate was poised to take action on Senator ABRAHAM's Millennium Digital Commerce Act. This important measure is aimed at promoting the growth of the "E-conomy". Senator ABRAHAM has worked tirelessly over the last several months to get this bill through the Senate.

Unfortunately after gaining agreement to bring this bill to the floor today, our Democratic colleagues decided to muck up this legislation. They insisted on attaching non-germane amendments to this crucial "e-commerce" legislation. Measures that have absolutely nothing to do with Senator ABRAHAM's high-technology initiative. Once again, the "do nothing Democrats" are at work stopping at every point significant legislative momentum.

The Senate could easily pass Senator ABRAHAM's bill. It is simple and straight-forward. It promotes jobs, stimulates the economy, and creates savings and opportunities for America's consumers. Instead, in an effort to create yet another log-jam, the Minority Leader is looking for a vehicle to attach every Democratic proposal under the sun.

The other side of the aisle, which claims to promote electronic commerce, is doing everything it can to quash Senator ABRAHAM's electronic signatures bill—as well as other important legislation. It is a continuing pattern and practice of the Democrats to deny the American people any legislative progress. The Democrats claim that they want this bill and that they are pro-technology, yet they are doing everything they can to kill this bill.

Mr. President, S. 761 establishes the legal certainty of electronic signatures for interstate commercial transactions. It is an interim solution needed until states adopt the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA). UETA was recently adopted by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. Over the next several years, it will undergo state-by-state consideration—similar to the process followed in implementing the Uniform Commercial Code. The states, high technology and other commercial sectors support Senator ABRAHAM's common sense legislation because it validates the use of electronic authentication technology. A tool that will help