

Let me also thank the distinguished Senator from Oregon, Mr. SMITH, and the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI, for all of their help and effort in getting us to this point.

It would not have happened without them as well.

This is a great day for my State. It is a great day for those in other States.

I, again, congratulate especially Senator JOHNSON for his leadership and his effort in getting us to this point.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

SENATOR HOLLINGS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on occasion I have noted the birthdays of some of my colleagues by sharing a few observations about them. But, like those poor schoolchildren whose birthdays fall in the middle of the summer vacation, thus denying them the pleasure of a day of special recognition at school, one of my colleague's birthday falls on a day when the Senate can be virtually guaranteed not to be in session. I do not wish to let the whim of the calendar prevent me from honoring a man whose many sterling qualities compare to his more natively auspicious brethren.

Senator ERNEST F. "FRITZ" HOLLINGS was born on January 1, 1922, denying by just a few hours an extra year's tax deduction to his hardworking parents. That may have been the only disappointment caused by their over-achieving son, however. Young ERNEST went on to do his parents proud by graduating as a member of the highest honor society at The Citadel in 1942, then serving proudly for thirty-three months in World War II, attaining the rank of captain. Upon returning home, he again took up the scholar's mantle, earning his law degree at the University of South Carolina in 1947, followed by his doctorate of law from The Citadel in 1959. He excelled as a lawyer, being admitted to practice before the South Carolina Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. Tax Court, U.S. Customs Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court. He was first elected to public office at the tender age of 26, in 1948, to the South Carolina General Assembly, and subsequently served with distinction as lieutenant governor, South Carolina's youngest Governor in this century, and as Senator. I feel sure his parents must have been proud of him. I know that I am proud to have served with him in the United States Senate for the last thirty-two, almost thirty-three, years.

The rolling, sonorous cadences of this rich Carolina drawl soften the edges of Senator HOLLINGS's sometimes acerbic observations and acid analysis of bills and treaties. I know of few Members who can so decisively carve up sloppy

legislation with so few trenchant observations, so mellifluously delivered, that one still feels that the afternoon is going smoothly and pleasantly. With his background in tax and customs law, Senator HOLLINGS has long been a force on the Commerce Committee, and his energy is felt on the Senate Floor any time trade legislation or treaties are considered. As a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, he is well versed in the intricacies of fiscal policy-making. And on telecommunications matters few would dare tangle with him without first arming themselves with unassailable arguments at one's trigger finger, for fear of being completely done in by his quick-draw ripostes!

We have been on opposite ends of main street legislative shoot-outs over the years regarding the Balanced Budget Amendment and the nefarious Line Item Veto, but never has courtesy or friendship fallen victim to our philosophical disagreements. To the contrary, we have found common ground in our opposition to unfair trade practices and unequal trade agreements that hurt Americans. On the whole, I must admit I prefer to have Senator HOLLINGS on my side, rather than against, as he is such a formidable foe.

I have highlighted a few of my distinguished colleague's many honors, but there is one that still eludes him. For though he continues to make his parents proud in heaven, and his family and constituents proud here on Earth, he remains the most senior junior Senator in our nation's history. At 32 years and 10 months, Senator HOLLINGS has surpassed even the legendary Senator John C. Stennis, who served 31 years and 2 months of his impressive 42 years of service as a Senator from Mississippi in the shadow of the equally legendary Senator James O. Eastland. This record is a testament to both the performance and the endurance of Senator HOLLINGS and his distinguished senior Senator, STROM THURMOND. I know that Senator HOLLINGS wears his title with pride and good humor, and his home state of South Carolina is all the better for it.

As these last weeks of this congressional session come to a clattering and confusing end amid legislation, floor debates, and appropriations conferences, I am proud to keep a resolution I made last New Year's day to remember and pay tribute to a good friend and a remarkable, well talented Senator. I hope during his next birthday, come January 1, the year 2000, hidden among the hoopla and hyperbole surrounding the year 2000, that Senator HOLLINGS and his lovely wife, Peatsy, can celebrate his birthday knowing that it does not pass unnoticed or unacknowledged by his friends here in the Senate.

So, on behalf of my wife Erma, I say to Senator HOLLINGS these words:

Count your garden by the flowers
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days by the sunny hours,
Not remembering clouds at all;
Count your nights by stars, not shadows,
Count your life by smiles, not tears,
And on that beautiful January day,
Count your age by friends, not years.

SENATE FAMILY APPRECIATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I also want to thank the members of staffs of Senators, and the Members, the Senate family who sit here before us every day, who work so assiduously and in such a dedicated fashion. They make our lives easier than they would otherwise be, and they make it possible, whereas it would be otherwise impossible, for us to do the work of serving our constituents. I hope that they will all have a very happy Thanksgiving and very pleasant Christmas.

Let me also thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. The lovely lady from Maine sits in the majority leader's chair at this moment; she does the work of the Senate in such a beautiful manner, and who does so with such skill and dignity as rare as the day in June.

I want to thank everyone. I want to thank my own colleague, JAY ROCKEFELLER, for being my colleague, and I want to thank the official reporters for doing their difficult work and doing it so well and so promptly and always so courteously.

So I thank, in closing, the two leaders who make it possible for all of us to get our work done. They are courteous; they are very helpful. I particularly thank the distinguished majority leader for his assistance in regard to the amendment I offered yesterday and which was cosponsored by my senior colleague and by the senior Senator from Kentucky and the junior Senator from Kentucky, MITCH MCCONNELL, and Mr. BUNNING, and all of the other Senators on both sides of the aisle who worked with me on behalf of that amendment. I thank my own leader for also helping to pave the way for us to have a vote, have the Senate vote on that amendment.

When Thanksgiving Day comes and the turkey is being carved and my dear wife of 62, almost 62½ years, and my lovely daughters, their husbands, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren are all around me, we will think of the blessings of the good Lord, and one of those blessings is that of being in the company of and associated with so many wonderful people who are part of the Senate family every day.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SENATOR BYRD

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his very kind comments. I also want to bring to my colleagues' attention the fact that the

senior Senator from West Virginia, too, is celebrating a birthday very soon; I believe tomorrow is the day. On behalf of the entire Senate family, I wish him a very happy birthday and many more. He sets a standard of public service to which we all aspire. I am delighted to give him the greetings of the Senate this evening in the hope that he will enjoy a very happy birthday with his family.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if the distinguished Senator will yield?

Ms. COLLINS. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mr. BYRD. I am very grateful for her overly generous and charitable remarks. May I say in kind to her:

The hours are like a string of pearls,
The days like diamonds rare,
The moments are the threads of gold,
That bind them for our wear,
So may the years that come to you
Such health and good contain
That every moment, hour, and day
Be like a golden chain.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Ms. COLLINS. I thank the Senator for his beautiful poetry and his kind wishes.

DUGGER MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS ACT OF 1999

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2632, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2632) to designate certain Federal lands in the Talladega National Forest in the State of Alabama as the Dugger Mountain Wilderness.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2632) was read the third time and passed.

FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1802, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1802) to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide the States with more funding and greater flexibility in carrying out programs designed to

help children make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2797

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I offer a substitute amendment on behalf of myself, Senator ROTH, and Senator MOYNIHAN. It is at the desk. I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS], for herself, Mr. ROTH, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. L. CHAFEE, and Mr. REED, proposes an amendment numbered 2797.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the amendment be agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2797) was agreed to.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am delighted to offer the substitute amendment on this legislation on behalf of myself, Senator ROBB, and Senator MOYNIHAN. This amendment is also cosponsored by Senators CHAFEE, BREAUX, JEFFORDS, KENNEDY, REED, GRAHAM, SNOWE, GORTON, FEINSTEIN, GREGG, LANDRIEU, BOND, LEVIN, and KERRY. It is a revised version of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, which our beloved friend and late colleague, Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island, first introduced with Senator ROCKEFELLER earlier this year.

I particularly commend the chairman and the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator ROTH and Senator MOYNIHAN, for their leadership in negotiating and clearing this important bill so it could be sent to the President this year. Both have been long-time advocates for the well-being of foster children.

I also know Senator John Chafee would be so pleased that his son, LINC, is carrying on his efforts to help the well-being of foster children.

I thank the majority leader and the assistant majority leader for all of their work in helping us to bring this very important legislation to the Senate floor before we adjourn.

This legislation was very dear to the heart of Senator John Chafee. He recognized it as a rare opportunity to provide needed assistance to one of our Nation's most vulnerable groups, children in foster care programs. Senator Chafee was well known as a guardian of the rights of children, and he had a particular soft spot in his heart for children in foster care programs. He was a fierce advocate on their behalf.

It was tremendously important to Senator Chafee that we complete consideration of this legislation this year. This is why I am so proud this evening to be able to offer the substitute

amendment as a tribute to Senator Chafee and to this commitment to help teenagers who are "aging out" of foster care.

Let me explain exactly what that means. Although practices vary from State to State, many foster children find themselves at risk of homelessness and being uninsured when they reach their 18th birthday. The families caring for them lose their financial assistance and the children themselves lose their health insurance coverage under the Medicaid program.

This can occur, even if the child is still in high school, even if the child has not yet graduated but has turned 18. Each year about 20,000 teenagers are forced to leave the foster care system simply because they have reached the age of 18. The legislation we are considering this evening will help remedy this very serious problem. It is similar to legislation that has already overwhelming passed the House of Representatives.

Among other things, the legislation renames the independent living programs for older foster children to be John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The legislation doubles the funding for States to assist young people in making the transition from foster care to independent living. It will double the funding from \$70 million to \$140 million a year.

The bill also provides access to needed health and mental health services for the teenagers who are "aging out" of foster care by encouraging States to extend Medicaid coverage to these young people until they reach the age of 21. Moreover, the legislation recognizes our moral obligation to provide special help for young people, age 18 to 21, who have left the foster care program.

The last hearing that Senator Chafee chaired was on the issue of foster care teenagers. I remember his discussing with me how deeply moved he was by a teenage girl who had to finish high school while living in a homeless shelter.

This legislation will help prevent these kinds of tragedies by requiring States to use some portion of their funds under the new John Chafee Independent Program for room and board for 18- to 21-year-olds who have left foster care. At the same time, the legislation also gives States greater flexibility in designing their independent living programs.

Senator Chafee and Senator ROCKEFELLER brought together a lot of these older foster children to meet with a number of us who were interested in hearing their stories. We heard incredible hardships of teenagers who were trying to finish high school while coping with medical problems and the loss of their foster homes. One of them was living in laundromats, was brushing her teeth at a McDonald's, was trying