

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a brief comment? Because I know the Senator from West Virginia wishes to speak on this.

I want to be clear. I think the recommendation and the suggestion of the Senator from Alaska, which is consistent with what the Senator from West Virginia and he both said today to the President, is a good idea. I personally am prepared to accept that.

I just add one caveat. I need another 3 or 4 minutes to run the traps. I want to make it clear, I accept this. I accept this personally. I think it makes sense. But I have calls in to several of our colleagues as to whether or not, since they were part of this on our side, they will go with this. I am confident. I believe they will. But I just want to be absolutely clear, and I think we should proceed. But I see the Senator from West Virginia who wishes to speak. I think it is a great and significant commitment that he has made with regard to the nonpermissive piece of this. I think it makes sense.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I withhold my request to cosponsor until I know the section 2 is in the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia holds the floor.

Mr. WARNER. I yield the floor.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, may I inquire of the Senator how long he thinks it might be before we may be voting?

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Senator has inquired of me, and I am pleased to say by previous order we shall vote at 6:45 on a motion to table the Murkowski amendment. Following that, we hope to get back to the two other amendments. One is the amendment of the Senator from Texas on Kosovo, and the other one is the distinguished majority leader's amendment. I think we will dispose of them rather quickly and vote on the bill.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as if in morning business until the time of the vote.

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that Brendan O'Donnell of my staff be permitted the privilege of the floor.

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

"STORM IN MY MIND"

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I want to speak for a few minutes today about a very special young man who has been working in my office as an intern over the last months and someone who has

shared endless enthusiasm with me personally and with my staff, and who has taught a great many of us in my office in the extended Kerry political family a very important lesson about the ability of individuals to overcome learning disabilities and about the power of the human spirit.

Brendan O'Donnell has a terrific story to tell. He comes from a wonderful and loving family that has always encouraged him to set his goals high, to pursue his aspirations to the very best of his ability, and to refuse to allow any label or characterization of his potential to stop him. He is a young man who literally does not give up. Brendan's character, his determination, his terrific attitude and positive energy that drive his efforts are really something to behold, Mr. President. They are, in so many ways, the lasting imprint of his father, my friend and the friend of many of us on this side of the aisle, the late Kirk O'Donnell, and of his mother, Kathy Holland O'Donnell.

Kirk O'Donnell, many people may recall, was taken from us far too young, last year. I think all of us would agree that he left a lasting legacy, an imprint on all of our lives. Brendan, of course, will also tell you that one of the people who encourages him and gives him such a huge amount of confidence is his sister, Holly O'Donnell.

We have been very lucky to have Brendan on our team these past months, and I look forward to continuing for a long time to get to know this young man even better.

Brendan has written a speech for me about a subject that he believes is very important, and I agree with him it is. He thinks it is important that here in the Senate, and all across the country, in our homes, in our schools, that we start talking about the efforts we can make together, in partnership with one another, to help those with learning disabilities make the most of their own lives.

Brendan's remarkable achievements are testimony enough to what individuals with learning disabilities can achieve. His words on this subject, though, are really something special. I would like to share with you what Brendan wrote. He said:

This is an important topic for kids today, kids like me. We should try to talk about learning disabilities and really get the point across—we can all be teachers about this subject. And we should all try to make a difference.

I think that there should be a different name for learning disabilities. My Mom and I have thought a lot about this, and to me it's not a disability—it's just that I have something which causes a storm in my mind. When I look at something—I have to take my time and take it all in. People need to be understanding and make things clear to me. To do that, though, people need to know more about learning disabilities, whether they're kids or adults.

People need to know that they should not look down at us. They should try extra hard

to be nice to us and not make fun of us. We are the same as everyone else—and if someone takes the time to teach us, to work with us to help us understand, we can do whatever we want.

Right now I don't think we do enough to help kids with learning disabilities. You don't see enough people with learning disabilities in the best jobs—even though they are bright enough, even though they are talented enough. This needs to change.

It can happen, I think, if we have really good schools. I went to a high school called RiverView School. When you had a problem, when you needed special attention, they were willing to help.

Our school did not believe in the kind of tests you put on paper—they thought it was best for us to push and test ourselves. That's what I do every day. I test myself.

That's why I love to play sports. At our school anyone could play a sport. We had a cross country team, and a basketball team and swimming team and tennis team. And I learned a lot about swimming and trying my best when I played basketball and football.

And now I want to push myself again. I want to go to cooking school, and learn to be a chef so that some day I can have a restaurant of my own in Massachusetts, in Scituate. It'll be hard to do—but I'll do it.

I think there needs to be a program where kids with learning disabilities can learn how to do jobs in the real world, like cooking programs and art programs—programs so more kids can be like me. We can all try our best—and we can all do our best—if we help each other and if we care about each other. That's something I think we also need to take about in this country.

Those are Brendan's words, but I think he speaks for a lot of Americans, Americans who don't let anyone put limits on their potential, Americans who have dreams and do not give up. I agree with Brendan—each of us, in our own personal way, should do all we can to help those Americans who get up every day and do their best to overcome learning disabilities. And I thank Brendan for making that case better than any scientific study ever could.

I have been lucky to know Brendan O'Donnell, to be inspired by his strong will, his good nature, and his work ethic. I am proud of the work he has done in my office. I want to offer him my warmest wishes as he leaves us to pursue his ambitions. I am looking forward to the day when I can go to a restaurant in Scituate and know that Brendan O'Donnell is at once the owner and the chef, cooking up lobster and oyster for everyone. And I know that day will come because Brendan O'Donnell never gives up.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask consent for 30 seconds?

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I commend my friend and colleague for sharing with all of the Senate the really enormously sensitive, informed, and wonderful comments of Brendan. I, too, have known this young, extraordinary man, and know what a difference he has made in so many different lives. He really ought to be commended.