

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I note the presence on the floor of the distinguished Senator from Connecticut who just came off a major campaign. We welcome him back to the Senate. He has never stopped being a Senator, but he has been very busy doing other things.

I yield so he can speak. I will speak following his remarks. So I ask unanimous consent that Senator LIEBERMAN be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes, and then I ask consent Senator DOMENICI be permitted to speak for 15 minutes thereafter.

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

THE ELECTION

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from New Mexico. I thank him for his customary graciousness. As I think about this year and look across the map of the United States and look at the results in the various States, I have even greater love and affection for New Mexico than I did before the year began.

Mr. President, have you noticed that many things in politics and government seem to be taking longer than usual this year? It is December 14 and the 106th Congress is surprisingly still in session. But happily that allows me to come to the Senate chamber—this great American forum, which I love and respect so much—and reflect on the extraordinary opportunity Vice President AL GORE gave me to be his running mate this year.

When I accepted the Vice-Presidential nomination at the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles in August, I began by asking: "Is America a great country or what?"

Last night, we ended that remarkable journey in a disappointing way. Nevertheless, I want to answer my question this morning by declaring: "Yes, America is a great country!"

Let me offer to my colleagues a few reasons why I feel this way today. In selecting me, a Jewish American, to be his running mate, Vice President GORE did what no presidential candidate before him had done. That required personal courage and confidence in the American people. Today we can look back and say that the Vice President's confidence was totally justified.

The fact is that while my faith was the focus of the earliest reactions to my candidacy, it was not even mentioned at the end of the campaign. That is the way we all hoped it would be. And that is good news for all Americans—a fulfillment of the promise that America makes to its citizens that in this country no matter who you

are or where you start, you should be able to go as far as your God-given talents and individual determination will take you.

The absence of bigotry in this campaign and the fact that the Vice President and I received the second highest number of votes in history of American national elections should encourage every parent in this country to dream the biggest dreams for each and every one of their children.

Anything is possible for anyone in America.

In the five weeks since election day—because this turned out to be the closest election in American history—our nation's greatness was tested in a different way. But I am confident that in the end our election process can only be made stronger by this experience.

For one thing, it opened our eyes to some long-overlooked problems with our system of voting, to the disparities in technologies and practices that may be stopping large numbers of voters from having their votes counted and that in particular may be undermining the electoral rights of many poor and minority citizens. These problems call out for investigation and reform.

Whether you are happy or sad with the results of the 2000 election, I do think every one of us should be grateful this morning that here in America, we work out our differences not with civil wars but with spirited elections. We resolve our disputes not through acts of violence but through the rule of law. And we preserve and protect our system of justice best when we accept its judgments that we disagree with most.

This election is over. I congratulate Governor Bush and Secretary Cheney and wish them well. Mr. President, I had the opportunity to do that personally in a very cordial conversation this morning with the Vice President-elect, Secretary Dick Cheney.

As Vice President GORE said eloquently last night, it is time now for all of us to come together in support of these United States and the shared values that have long sustained us. Governor Bush and Secretary Cheney are in my prayers, and I know they are in the prayers of all Americans, as they begin now to assume the awesome responsibilities that go with leadership of this great country.

In the strong words and soft voices they both used last night, Vice President GORE and Governor Bush raised us all up and pointed America toward the reconciliation that our history expects and that our national interests now require.

As they both noted last night, this was the closest election we have ever experienced, with the vote for President essentially ending in a tie, the Senate split 50-50 and the House nearly even as well. That puts a special burden, not just on Governor Bush but on

all of us in Congress to work on a bipartisan basis and in a cooperative spirit. As I have in the past, I fully intend to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and with President-elect Bush to find that constructive consensus without which we will not help the American people realize their potential.

For my family and me, this campaign has been a thrilling and joyful experience. It has deepened the appreciation we have for the goodness of the American people and the love and loyalty we feel for this country. We could not have asked for a more warm, open, and accepting reception as we traveled around this blessed land. We could not have been more impressed with the common sense and strong values that unite our very diverse citizenry. From their Government, it became clear to me over and over again, most of them, most of the American people, want only a little help every now and then as they work so hard to make their lives better. That is exactly what we, together, should do for them.

The most powerful emotion that I feel on this morning after is gratitude. I am grateful to be an American, proud to be an American; grateful to my wife Hadassah—my love and my partner—for the devoted support she gave me and the extraordinary way she reached out to everyone she met in this campaign; grateful to our dear children and mothers and sisters and brothers and relatives and friends whose help and love sustained us; grateful to Tipper and the Gore children for being such genuine and such generous friends, and for the skill and grace with which they conducted themselves in this campaign; grateful to the Gore-Lieberman campaign staff, whose idealism, ability, and hard work make me optimistic about America's future; grateful to my Senate staff here in Washington and back home in Hartford—they have served with me on behalf of the people of Connecticut for so many years, and continue to do so with such commitment during this eventful and unusual year—grateful to the people of Connecticut whose support over the past 30 years has put me in a position where AL GORE could give me the extraordinary opportunity he did this year; and grateful to the people of Connecticut without whose backing this year I would not now have the privilege of looking forward to 6 more years of service to them and with you, my colleagues, as a United States Senator.

My greatest gratitude is to Vice President GORE himself. He has been my friend and colleague for 15 years now, but I have never been prouder of him than I was this year, and than I was last night. He conducted the campaign with dignity. He presented his policies and programs with conviction. He spoke with a precision that showed respect for the American people. He