

to give some remarks at a later time today, and I would notify all Senators we are going to be in a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. I welcome my distinguished colleague back publicly, as I have privately, and congratulate him on his election. He ran a very spirited, strong election, and I look forward to—and I will address this in my remarks—our work during this next Congress.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed now to a period of morning business.

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

#### APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to S. Res. 1, the Chair appoints the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, and the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. McCONNELL, as a committee to join the committee on the part of the House of Representatives to wait upon the President of the United States and inform him that a quorum is assembled and that the Congress is ready to receive any communication he may be pleased to make.

The Chair appoints the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and the Senator from Utah, Mr. BENNETT, as tellers on the part of the Senate to count electoral votes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we now in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, we are.

#### WELCOMING THE 111TH CONGRESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the Fourth of July of the year 1851, the legendary statesman Daniel Webster, himself a former Senator, laid the cornerstone for the Senate Chamber where we now gather. He said:

Be it known that on this day the Union of the United States of America stands firm.

Today marks the 150th year that this Chamber has housed the Senate of the United States.

When Vice President John Breckinridge gave the 34th Congress open in this Chamber in 1859, our Republic had a population of one-tenth what it is today. There were just 64 Senators. Each Senator enjoyed a little more leg room, and that is an understatement. Many of these desks we see behind me, and behind the Republican leader, are from the original Senators of this country. They are real old. This Chamber, for 150 years, has served as the primary working space for most Members. The first session held here 150 years ago began as it did today, with the Vice President of the United States administering the oath of office to new Members.

Today, nine new Senators joined what many have said, and I agree, is

the greatest deliberative body the world has ever known—certainly the greatest legislative body. So I extend my warmest welcome and congratulations to Senator MARK UDALL of Colorado, Senator TOM UDALL of New Mexico, Senator MIKE JOHANNIS of Nebraska, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire, Senator MARK WARNER of Virginia, Senator JIM RISCH of Idaho, Senator KAY HAGAN of North Carolina, Senator JEFF MERKLEY of Oregon, and Senator MARK BEGICH of Alaska.

To the profound challenges we face, these nine men and women bring vast judgment and experience at all levels of Government and public service. I am confident every one of them will serve their States and our Nation with distinction and pride.

It was just 2 years ago this inaugural day of Congress that we heralded a new majority for Democrats in both the Senate and House of Representatives, but in the Senate that was a very tenuous majority. We began with 51, but TIM JOHNSON became very ill and the crowded Democratic primary field left us oftentimes short of an outright majority and far short of the 60 votes needed to prevent filibusters and pass legislation. Although we made substantial progress in the 110th Congress, partisanship with divided Government too often ruled the day.

I have said from the day the election was over, we are looking forward. We are not going to be concerned about the previous 8 years, we are concerned about the next 8 years. Since 2006, we Democrats have received a net gain of 14 Senate seats, 45 to 59. Just 2 weeks from today, Barack Obama will become the 44th President of the United States. We are ready to answer the call of the American people by putting the past 8 years behind us and delivering the change our country desperately needs.

We are grateful to begin anew with a far more robust Democratic majority. But both parties learned an important lesson over the past 2 years: When we allow ourselves to retreat into the tired, well-worn trenches of partisanship, when we fail to reach for common ground, when we are unable, in the words of President-elect Obama, to disagree without being disagreeable, we diminish our ability to accomplish real change.

To my Republican counterpart, Senator McCONNELL, and all Republican colleagues, a number of whom I have called and personally visited with, I say to them: With American troops fighting two wars overseas, we are together in all of this. With the American people suffering a staggering economic crisis here at home, we are in this together. With the middle class struggling to make one paycheck last until the next one, we are in the middle of this together. With health care, college tuition, and retirement more expensive and harder to reach than ever, we are in this together. With our cli-

mate in crisis and energy prices rising and falling unpredictably, we are in this together.

Some may fear the depth of the challenges we face, but I remind them that adversity is no stranger to this Chamber or to our country. In America and in this Chamber, we have never failed to persevere and ultimately to prosper. In this Chamber, our Union came unraveled and was mended, great wars were declared and peace has been celebrated. Here, our most fundamental freedoms were challenged, upheld, and expanded. In this Chamber for 150 years we have watched things happen.

In more recent years, we watched the passing of the New Deal by Roosevelt, Truman's Fair Deal, Kennedy's Great Frontier, and Johnson's Great Society. Over these many years, we have outlawed child labor, brought electricity to the western frontier, and ensured a college education for those who serve in uniform.

I had the opportunity yesterday to go to the funeral of Claiborne Pell, a man of wealth, a patrician, a man who went to the finest schools in America but dedicated his life to public service so that other people who were not in his situation could be educated. That is where the Pell grants came from—Claiborne Pell, a very aristocratic man who devoted his life to public service.

We have done those things right here in this Chamber. Of course, we passed, after long, hard struggles and much anxiety, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts.

There is no question that the challenges ahead of us are staggering. I do not think anyone would disagree. But I am confident that if we renew, in this body, our commitment to bipartisanship, the 111th Congress will be a tremendous success.

Just a short way from here yesterday afternoon—and I don't remember the exact time, 3 o'clock or something like that, or 3:30—we had a bipartisan meeting of the leadership of the House and Senate. It was a wonderful meeting, with an exchange of ideas. The President-elect was here. I was very impressed. I heard Senator McCONNELL say to him: There are some things I need to talk to you about. Senator Obama said to him, when the meeting broke up: Let's talk now. I assume they talked sometime in the next little bit. But that is what we need: the ability to talk to each other.

There is no script that can be written where Senator McCONNELL and I will agree on everything that happens here. But there is a script being written today that says that even though we disagree on things that take place in this body, we can do it in a way that is constructive and works toward the good of our country. The State of Kentucky is much different from the State of Nevada—they are two different States. That was the genius of our Founding Fathers, that this Senate, which came about by reason of the