

and live up to our promises to our men and women in uniform as to what we should be doing.

I am hopeful this situation will resolve itself to the benefit of veterans. I, for one, am prepared to stay here and work toward that end.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to address a subject on which there is no disagreement. The President would agree, as would Senate Democrats and Republicans and many Members of Congress; that is, to congratulate the senior Senator from Louisiana, JOHN BREAUX, on 30 years of service in the Congress.

We celebrated that momentous anniversary this past Saturday. He received, of course, many well wishes from his many friends and supporters in Louisiana and around the Nation.

I know his family is very proud. I want to say for a minute how proud I am of his service to our State of Louisiana. Thirty years ago, Senator JOHN BREAUX, then a Congressman, came to Washington as a young lawyer from a small town, the city of Crowley. He was elected to the House of Representatives at a very young age. In fact, when he got here, he was the youngest Member of Congress. He has served our State admirably ever since. Now he is in his third term in the U.S. Senate, and I have every hope he will run again and have no doubt he will be reelected.

JOHN likes to say he started campaigning in nursery school. Those of us who know him well would almost believe that. That is probably no stretch. He said he was going to city council meetings with his grandfather when he was 7 years old. In high school he was a popular athlete who played hard but was always fair to his teammates as well as his opponents. He learned the lessons on those athletic fields of hard work, teamwork, and leadership, which serve him well. Frankly, it is so obvious to all of us who know him and his affable manner, his very approachable way, always with a kind word to say, always a joke, and always something to lighten up a discussion at the appropriate time. Those traits have served him well as an outstanding Congressman and Senator.

In addition, because none of us come here on our own, he has come here as a husband, a father, and now as a grandfather. His wife, Lois, has truly been a tremendous partner, at great sacrifice to herself and her family. JOHN and Lois brought their Cajun roots to our Nation's capital, and we are proud of that. He has never lost sight of who he is or where he has come from. We know him at home in many ways, but in Washington he is known as a strong, vocal, and effective advocate for agriculture. His hometown sits right in the heart of rice country, in Crowley, LA, and in the heart of, in many ways, sugarcane country in south Louisiana; and

he is familiar with all of our row crops, cattle, and other aquaculture and agricultural commodities.

He is a strong and effective advocate of energy policy for the Nation, and his voice has been one that has brought us to the center, with a balanced approach on our energy policy. In addition, on our health care industry and issues, he has been particularly noted as a leader. As a member of the Finance Committee, there is not an important compromise that is developed on that committee—or outside of that Committee, for that matter—that he is not part and parcel of, which is a great strength as a Senator, particularly in these times when our parties seem to have a hard time coming together and finding middle ground and working out a compromise. Senator BREAUX brings so much effort in that regard and so much help.

To mention a few things—and after his 30 years, I could stay here all night and I could talk for hours. I will highlight a few of the things that would not have passed without his able help and assistance: the Welfare Reform Act, many health insurance reform bills, the balanced budget amendment, and tax cut packages that have passed here. He chaired the Special Committee on Aging and to that committee has brought a tremendous amount of passion on the issues of Social Security and Medicare, which have served this Nation well.

I will conclude by saying we have all been blessed by his leadership and his talent. He has used it to help Louisiana to grow and expand economically. Mr. President, he has had a tremendous impact on the Nation at large. He has fought for businesses, schools, workers, students, and opportunities for all. He is a founder of the DLC, of the new Democratic Network.

I could not have a better partner in the U.S. Senate than JOHN BREAUX. He is a mentor, a friend, and a partner in helping to strengthen our State. I wanted to spend a few moments to acknowledge the 30th anniversary and wish him 30 more years. He is in great health. He plays tennis regularly, with Democrats and Republicans alike, and beats us all on the court. He wins many of his battles on the Senate floor as well.

Again, I congratulate Senator JOHN BREAUX.

RESERVISTS AND GUARD PAID PROTECTION ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I will now address the Reservists and Guard Paid Protection Act, which I introduced last week. I'm looking forward to working diligently in the months and years ahead—hopefully, it won't take years—to pass this bill. I think it is a bill we probably should have addressed some years ago. I will speak to what the bill does.

The Reservists and Guard Paid Protection Act attempts to put into law a

tax credit for employers who voluntarily—because it is not mandatory—pay their reservists and maintain their salary level when they are called up to represent us, to fight for us, to stand in harm's way, to preserve our freedom, whether it be in Afghanistan, Bosnia, or Iraq, or anyplace our flag needs to continue to wave.

Mr. President, as you might know—and I am certain most people in America don't realize—when our reservists are called up, their salary is cut. When our reservists are called up to defend us—because the President, our Commander in Chief, and this Congress have authorized us to call on them, to call on their lives, their health, and strength to defend us—they, in most instances, take a pay cut. Why? Because their salaries are generally higher in the civilian sector than we are able to compensate them.

No soldier works for a paycheck, I realize that. If they did, we would not have any soldiers, because their paychecks are not what they need to be. They are patriotic and they believe in our Nation and they want to do their part. For that, they should be commended.

This Reservists and Guard Protection Act gives their employers, if they voluntarily keep their salaries at the level they were before they were called up to serve, a 50 percent tax credit. So it helps the employer, who also is making a sacrifice, might I say, in the new system we have on relying more on reservists and guardsmen. The employers themselves are, of course, by law mandated to keep that job open so when the Reservists come back, they have a job. They are not mandated—and should not be—to pick up the tab for their salary, but we can help, and the cost is really minimal compared to the benefits that would result.

In addition, this bill also would mandate the Federal Government would maintain, for those reservists who are Federal employees—and we have a good percentage—not a majority, but a number of our Federal employees who might work at Treasury during the day, but are weekend warriors, and now they are full-time warriors because they have been called up—this bill would mandate the Federal Government simply maintain their pay at their regular level. Instead of taking the paycheck and sending part of it back to the Treasury while they defend us, they would be allowed to keep that paycheck, which would make a tremendous amount of sense. I know it would mean a tremendous amount to the spouses and family members at home, who have to keep the lights on, pay the mortgage, pay the rent, or pay the car payment monthly, food bills, et cetera. Just because one person in the family—one of the breadwinners, and in some cases it may be the sole breadwinner—has been called up to go to war, the family bills don't stop coming. They need to be paid.

So anything we can do to keep our reservists' and our guardsmen's pay