

under the laws of such state, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship.

In other words, we are going to go back on record in the sense of the Senate—as a precursor, hopefully, to a more full debate—that no State should be forced to adopt the marriage laws of another State such as Massachusetts. It should be, as this constitutional amendment which I will advocate will be, the people's decision. If the people decide, by constitutional amendment or otherwise, we are going to change what marriage is, I will fight against that, but I will respect that decision because that is the way we decide issues in America.

What I am concerned about is that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and their courts are going to create a new constitutional right; they are going to change the Constitution without going through the rigors of what the Constitution demands for change, and that is a constitutional amendment.

So we will take up that mantle. We will do it the right way. We will try to change the Constitution in the way the Framers intended, not the way it has been practiced recently with the courts taking on that mantle themselves and changing it without the benefit of having any public input on the process.

We will offer an amendment to get the constitutional majority that is necessary to pass it, which is two-thirds of the Members of this body and of the House, and then three-quarters of the States through their legislature, representing the people in those States, to ratify this amendment.

I believe this is a fundamentally important issue, one I guarantee we will be discussing at length next year, and I hope the American public will begin to engage in this debate, not as an attempt to stop anybody from doing anything but as an attempt to solidify what is the basic building block of our society.

This is not being done as against anybody. It is being done for something that we know has intrinsic value and good and is a stabilizing and important element of any successful society, and that is healthy stable families in which children can be raised in that environment, so we can raise the leaders of the next generation.

This is an important debate. I hope we will not be obstructed. I hope we will have an opportunity to have a full and fair debate on this issue, that the public will have an opportunity to see the Senate at its finest on an issue that I believe is at the core of who we are as Americans.

I thank the Senator from Idaho for his indulgence in listening to me go on for a while, as well as the Senator from Delaware, although he had to indulge less than the Senator from Idaho.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I was pleased to sit and wait and listen to

the Senator from Pennsylvania. I appreciate his leadership and the accomplishments he has helped guide us through this past year in the first session of the 108th Congress. They are many, and there are yet many to accomplish.

Yes, we have had substantial obstructionism on the part of our colleagues on the other side. Why? It is politics to them in many instances. They see those as defining lines between their party and ours. I do not think objecting to or obstructing judges is that. I think it is an act that is unconstitutional in its character. I think it is now broaching on a constitutional crisis in our country to suggest that it takes a supermajority when any one individual decides to confirm or at least bring to the floor the vote of a judge.

NOVEMBER, NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, the Senator from Pennsylvania was talking about marriage. I come to the floor to talk about families for just a moment, and I will be brief. The Senator from Delaware has been waiting patiently also.

This is November. This is the month of Thanksgiving. Hopefully, most of us are a few days away from the opportunity and the privilege to go home and sit down with our families and have a Thanksgiving dinner of some proportion; most importantly, to be with our families. That is what this country is all about and certainly that is what Thanksgiving is all about.

November is, in my opinion, another special month. For the last month, I have been wearing on my lapel—and I do not have it on today—a little gold word that says “adopt.” November is National Adoption Month. I am a proud parent of three adopted children. I am going home to be with them and our grandchildren for Thanksgiving. We have three children and seven grandchildren now. My wife Suzanne and I are tremendously proud of that.

I became a father through adoption. Well, this month of November is National Adoption Month. It is a time to celebrate special families, the families of more than 2 million children in America who are adopted, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In fact, it is estimated that more than half of the population of America has been personally touched by adoption, whether they are adopted or have adopted or have a close friend or family member who is adopted or has adopted. In other words, many of us have said adoption is a phenomenally viable option when it comes to forming a family.

Just this past week, we added to those numbers. November 22, this last Saturday, was the fourth annual National Adoption Day. On that day, the courtrooms of the Nation, where volunteers helped, over 3,000 children found permanent, loving homes and new par-

ents through the adoption system of our country. Think what this Thanksgiving is going to be to those 3,000 children who will now sit down at a table to have Thanksgiving dinner with new parents who are offering them permanent love and stability in their life.

While this is wonderful news, there are still far too many children waiting for permanent, safe, and loving homes. Our foster care system provides temporary care for more than 580,000 oftentimes abused and neglected children. Among those children, 126,000 of them are waiting for adoption. For anybody who reads this RECORD or might be watching at the moment, listen up. There are 126,000 kids in America who would love to have one of you as their parent, their mother or their father, who would love to have you offer them a permanent and loving home.

Sadly, every year 25,000 children age out of foster care. What does that mean? They become 18 years of age. They leave the foster care system, never having known a permanent, caring, loving home. Foster parents are caring, but it is not permanent and the child knows that. So they graduate out. They are out on the street at 18 years of age. They do not have the stability of the family unit. Seventy-plus percent of them get in trouble. Seventy-plus percent of them just cannot make it because they do not have a mom or a dad to refer back to, to help them, to give them advice. They are on their own at age 18.

I would not have wanted to be on my own at age 18. Now I might have thought I could have been. But how many times did I go home to mom and dad to ask for their advice, their help, or their counsel? Well, innumerable times.

So I hope Americans will consider opening their homes and their hearts to children through adoption. As an adoptive father, I can say this experience has changed my life, and this Thanksgiving I will be reminded of all of that when I hug those seven grandbabies and try to share a little turkey with them.

Last year, President Bush launched the first Federal adoption Website to help families connect while waiting children across America connect to them. The Web site is www.AdoptUSKids.org. Go online. Find out that you, too, can become an adoptive parent.

MARY LANDRIEU, the Senator from Louisiana, and I have cochaired the adoption caucus on the Senate side for a good number of years. We have passed a lot of laws to make adoption easier, we have provided tax credits, we have created incentives, because we want Americans to go after those 126,000 children who are not yet in permanent, loving homes.

We have also created the Congressional Coalition on Adoption. I have just stepped down as its chairman. MARY LANDRIEU has become its chairman. It is now a freestanding 501(c)(3)

institute. We have had tremendous success with people coming in to help us, to advance the cause of adoption. We hope Americans might look at us also because we are willing to help them break down the barriers so that they can build their family through adoption, if that is what they choose.

Later this week, a lot of Americans, as I have said, will be sitting down at that Thanksgiving table. It is a moment to be thankful for so much, but it is a moment also to recognize that you could give a little more. If it is at that time in your life or at that moment when you and your spouse have decided you want a family, here is one way to do it. There are 126,000 children waiting for you to select them and bring them into your heart and your home for a loving, permanent relationship that in every way will be positive.

So November is National Adoption Month. Choose adoption as an option. If I can be of help, call me, or go online and go to www.AdoptUSKids.org. You will have a happier Thanksgiving.

PROVIDING FOR SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 339, the adjournment resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 339) providing for the sine die adjournment of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. CRAIG. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment at the desk be agreed to, the concurrent resolution, as amended, be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2217) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 1, line 2 strike "That" and all that follows through page 3, line 3, and insert:

"That when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Tuesday, November 25, 2003, through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned sine die, or until such day and time as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; that when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on any day from Monday, November 24, 2003, through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress, on a motion offered by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned sine die, or stand recessed or adjourned until such day and time as may be

specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first".

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 339), as amended, was agreed to, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 339

Resolved, That the resolution from the House of Representatives (H. Con. Res. 339) entitled "Concurrent resolution providing for the sine die adjournment of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress," do pass with the following amendment:

Page 1, line 2, strike out all after "concurring)" over to and including line 3 on page 3 and insert: *That when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Tuesday, November 25, 2003, through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned sine die, or until such day and time as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; that when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on any day from Monday, November 24, 2003, through the remainder of the first session of the One Hundred Eighth Congress, on a motion offered by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned sine die, or stand recessed or adjourned until such day and time as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.*

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, before my friend and colleague from Idaho leaves the floor, I want to express my thanks on behalf of those 100,000-plus kids who are looking for a home of their own with loving, adoptive parents. Thank you, and my friend Senator LANDRIEU, from Louisiana, for the wonderful leadership you have shown. Not just talking the talk but, in the case of your family, very much walking the walk. Happy Thanksgiving to you.

I certainly express that same sentiment to our colleagues here. As we approach Thanksgiving in 2 days, in spite of our problems in this country, we have much for which to be grateful. I very much appreciate the chance to work here with our colleagues, and am grateful for the staffs who help us serve our constituents back home in Delaware and Alabama and Idaho and Rhode Island and other places. We are thankful for the opportunity our constituents have given us this Thanksgiving and every Thanksgiving and throughout the year to serve them.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank my colleague.

MEDICARE DEBATE

Mr. CARPER. I don't know that Winston Churchill, one of the great leaders of Britain, ever said anything about Thanksgiving or turkeys. He is somebody we like to quote a lot. He used to say there are two things people should not see made: One of them is sausages and the other is laws.

That could be said of the process we have gone through to modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. It has been a difficult debate and a difficult process.

Churchill also said democracy is the worst form of government devised by wit of man, except for all the rest. That is also something I would have us keep in mind today as we reflect on this bill.

Mr. President, 38 years ago a Democratic President, Lyndon Johnson, signed into law legislation creating Medicare. At the time it was hailed as a milestone. It was hailed as a landmark in providing a benefit to millions of our senior citizens who did not have access to health care, did not have access to hospitals, did not have access to doctors and nursing care. With the signing of that bill by then-President Johnson, the whole world changed for millions of Americans. Today it continues to change for tens of millions more.

Initially, Medicare, when it was fashioned, was designed to provide access to hospitals for people who needed to get hospitalized to get well. They would have that under Medicare if they were old enough. Similarly, if folks were in need of access to a doctor's care or nurse's care, they would have it under that legislation he signed 38 years ago.

There are a number of things that bill did not provide. It did not provide for home health care. It did not provide for outpatient care. It did not provide for access to prescription medicines or enable senior citizens, those Medicare eligible, to obtain help buying prescription medicine. Over time Medicare has evolved, as we know. Over time we have learned. Today we are a lot smarter. We can keep people out of hospitals and treat them on an outpatient basis. We are far wiser about keeping elderly people out of hospitals and, where it makes sense, treating them in their homes.

We also know today, in 2003, we can prevent a lot of illnesses and we can cure a lot of illnesses. We can enhance the quality of life for senior citizens by making sure they have access to prescription medicines we did not have in 1965, and frankly we did not dream about in 1965.

If we were creating Medicare anew today, this week or this month, it would be a no-brainer. We would have home health care. They would provide for outpatient services and care. It would also include a prescription medicine component.

When I was Governor of Delaware and running for the Senate in 2000, I talked a fair amount about prescription drug programs that were proposed in the Congress, principally one proposed by Senator GRAHAM of Florida. I thought and still think it is a better alternative than what we have adopted here today. Adopting this legislation today is an example of not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good.