

middle class, if you are a working person, the likelihood is you work longer hours for lower wages.

We need a change in economic policy. We need an OMB Director who can advise the President about the reality of the vast majority of the people, and not just the very wealthiest people in our country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. Does the Senator from New Hampshire ask to speak for an additional 30 seconds?

Mr. GREGG. I thought I had some time reserved. I don't. I ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds.

Mr. CONRAD. Without objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I simply wish to note we are about to vote on the nomination for the Director of OMB, who is a man of high integrity and high quality, and who has the expertise to do this job well. I think we should presume that the President should have the right to appoint the person of his choosing to this office which is so uniquely part of the White House to begin with.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me end where I began. This is not about a personality; this is about policy. The fiscal policy of this administration has exploded the debt of our country at the worst possible time—right before the baby boom generation retires. Here is the record. It is undisputed. It is uncontradicted. It is a simple fact. The debt of this country under this policy—and Mr. Nussle is one of the architects of this policy—has skyrocketed from \$5.8 trillion at the end of the President's first year to \$8.9 trillion at the end of this year. So much of that debt is now held abroad. When this President came into office, there was \$1 trillion of U.S. debt held by foreign interests. That has now reached over \$2.1 trillion, a more than doubling of U.S. debt held abroad. That puts this country at risk.

We saw during the last few weeks the Chinese Minister indicate they might start to diversify out of dollar-denominated securities. Economists said if they chose to do that, they would push the United States into recession. In many ways, our economic future is now less in our hands and more in the hands of the people who hold our debt.

I ask my colleagues on the basis of policy to reject this nomination.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Jim Nussle, of Iowa, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 311 Ex.]

YEAS—69

Akaka	Dole	Lugar
Alexander	Domenici	Martinez
Allard	Durbin	McCaskill
Barrasso	Ensign	McConnell
Baucus	Enzi	Murray
Bayh	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Feinstein	Pryor
Bond	Graham	Roberts
Bunning	Grassley	Salazar
Burr	Gregg	Sessions
Cantwell	Hagel	Shelby
Cardin	Harkin	Smith
Carper	Hatch	Snowe
Casey	Hutchison	Specter
Chambliss	Inhofe	Stevens
Coburn	Isakson	Sununu
Cochran	Kohl	Tester
Coleman	Kyl	Thune
Collins	Landrieu	Vitter
Corker	Levin	Voinovich
Cornyn	Lieberman	Warner
Crapo	Lincoln	Webb
DeMint	Lott	Wyden

NAYS—24

Biden	Inouye	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reed
Boxer	Kerry	Reid
Brown	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Byrd	Lautenberg	Sanders
Clinton	Leahy	Schumer
Conrad	Menendez	Stabenow
Dorgan	Mikulski	Whitehouse

NOT VOTING—7

Brownback	Johnson	Obama
Craig	McCain	
Dodd	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

The majority leader.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY ON CASTING HIS 15,000TH VOTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, earlier this morning, I made a very brief statement indicating that in the rush of business

when we went home for the summer work period, the last vote cast that day was Senator KENNEDY's 15,000th vote. There was a lot going on here at that time, and no one said anything. But I think it certainly is noteworthy—and that is an understatement—to recognize that this good man has passed everyone, except Senator BYRD, in the number of votes cast. Senator BYRD has cast over 18,000 votes, but there is no close second other than Senator KENNEDY.

We all recognize the tremendous work this man has done. As I said this morning, what a family. They have done so much for our country. Two of his brothers were assassinated. One of his other brothers was killed in the line of duty during World War II. Senator KENNEDY has done so much to leave a legacy in the Kennedy name that is remarkable.

We all admire the work he has done. As I said this morning, one of my pleasures in life is being able to come to the Senate and work with this great man. Working with him is such a pleasure because he can get on this floor and speak very loudly, and we all listen. But when you are working with him on legislation, he has so much humility, never wanting to take the limelight, always willing to step back and let those who are his junior move forward, and I include myself in that lot.

So congratulations to Senator KENNEDY.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, more than half a century ago, a right end—this is in the days before a tight end was invented—on the Harvard football team caught the eye of the head coach of the Green Bay Packers. The coach wrote the young man to ask if he might consider a pro career. But EDWARD MOORE KENNEDY had other ideas. He responded that he was flattered by the attention, but that he had already decided to go to law school and then go into another contact sport—politics.

I rise this afternoon in tribute to a man who is known to most people for his famous name but who is famous among his colleagues in the Senate for his warmth, good humor, and his simply astonishing ability and will to get things done.

Senator KENNEDY, as the majority leader just indicated, cast his 15,000th vote just before we broke for recess, solidifying his place as the third most prolific voter in the history of this body.

It was just the latest milestone in a storied 45-year career marked by countless others. And it surprised no one who has ever witnessed him speaking on the floor or off on the issues he cares about. The Senate has been his arena for more than four decades, and in the course of pushing thousands of pieces of legislation, he has worn out hundreds of staffers, committee members, and stenographers. He ignites

every debate and issue he ever decided to touch. Let no one ever accuse this man of simply punching the clock.

Thousands of visitors to the Capitol have instantly known that this is a place of momentous deeds when they have seen Senator KENNEDY jabbing the air or wheeling around, voice rising, even in an empty Chamber, to make a point. He is not a man who ever depended on a microphone to get his point across.

His reputation as an aisle-crosser is also well known. Less well known is his graciousness off the floor, as when he accepted an invitation of mine to speak to the students at the McConnell Center at the University of Louisville last year, or when he insisted that Senator MCCAIN accept an award in Boston despite the fact it was his son's 11th birthday, assuring him he would make that day special for him and for his son, which he did, with a personal Coast Guard tour around Boston Harbor and, according to Senator MCCAIN, at least two birthday cakes.

Senator KENNEDY is one of the most visible men of our time. He has every reason to let people come to him. Yet when we had a reception earlier this year for our most recent Republican member, Senator BARRASSO, it was Senator KENNEDY who approached Senator BARRASSO and sat with him and his family, talking, sharing stories, and welcoming them with all the warmth and affection of a grandfather long after the other Senators had cleared the room.

Senator KENNEDY, as we all know, is a famous story teller. But one of the greatest stories in American politics is his own. We honor him today for reaching yet another milestone along the way, and we wish him many more.

One of my own personal political heroes, Ronald Reagan, was for 8 years a great political nemesis of Senator KENNEDY's. Yet Senator KENNEDY said he always admired our 40th President because, as he once put it, "Ronald Reagan stood for a set of ideas, and he had something to communicate."

Senator KENNEDY's friends on the other side admire the same quality in him. We may disagree with his policies, and we do, but we respect him for his remarkable commitment and persistence in pursuit of those ideas, those principles. And we honor him today for this particularly impressive achievement. Congratulations.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, it is my privilege to join in saying a few words about my senior colleague, the Senator from Massachusetts. The special words that have been spoken about TED KENNEDY are obviously more than appropriate. But let me say, if I may, it is interesting that when we take a measure of TED KENNEDY's work here, which is an unparalleled record of achievement, and we look at the public record, that public record is actually full of

comparisons to the greatest Senators who have ever served in the United States Senate or even some of the greatest who have served in Washington.

The Boston Globe wrote of our senior Senator:

In actual measurable impact on the lives of tens of millions of working families, the elderly, the needy, TED belongs in the same sentence with Franklin Roosevelt.

Time magazine said:

TED KENNEDY has amassed a titanic record of legislation affecting the lives of virtually every man, woman, and child in the country.

And in his comprehensive book just a couple of years ago, Adam Clymer wrote that TED KENNEDY is a lawmaker of skill, experience, and purpose rarely surpassed since 1789. He has been compared to Henry Clay for his skill as a legislator and to Lyndon Johnson for his efforts in creating a more egalitarian, more inclusive America that leaves no one behind.

Mr. President, 15,000 votes is a remarkable number. No one knows that more than the Senator sitting in front of me, the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, who is the only other member of that exclusive club. He knows, as we all know, that 15,000 is not just a statistic representing those votes. It represents and encapsulates countless legislative battles in the trenches, in the committee rooms, in offices, tough negotiations, thankless committee hearings, inspired ideas, setbacks and, to a greater degree than almost any other lawmaker alive, laws that improve the lives of everyday Americans.

From his maiden speech in the Senate demanding an end to the filibuster of the original Civil Rights Act, there has not been a significant policy accomplishment in Washington over four decades that has not borne his fingerprints and benefited from his legislative skill and leadership. His is the record of progressive politics in our era.

In all of the great fights that call us to stand up and be counted, from the minimum wage year in and year out, to Robert Bork and Sam Alito, TED Kennedy did not just hear the call, he led the charge. You can run down the list. The rights of the disabled who for far too long were left in the shadows or left to fend for themselves, TED KENNEDY wrote every single landmark piece of legislation that today prohibits discrimination against those with a disability.

AIDS—when a whole lot of politicians were even afraid to say the word, TED KENNEDY passed a bill providing emergency relief to the 13 cities hardest hit by the AIDS epidemic.

Mr. President, 300,000 young people today have jobs every single summer because of TED KENNEDY. Guaranteed access to health coverage for 25 million Americans who move from one job to another or who have a preexisting medical condition—they wouldn't have gotten that coverage without TED KENNEDY.

Without TED KENNEDY, there wouldn't have been bilingual education in the United States for the 5 million students who today have a brighter future because they are learning English in our schools.

Without TED KENNEDY, we wouldn't have lowered the voting age to 18 and ended the hypocrisy that 18-year-olds were old enough to die for our country in Vietnam but not old enough to vote for the leadership.

Without TED KENNEDY, we wouldn't be the world's leader in cancer research and prevention.

Without TED KENNEDY, we wouldn't have had title IX, which opened the doors of competition and opportunity for a generation of women athletes all across our country.

The list goes on, and I am not going to go through the whole list. But ever since he entered this body at the age of 30, he has stood up again and again to be counted in support of his beliefs. He stood up to be counted. He stood up to lead again and again. He has already secured his place as one of the great legislators in the history of our country.

And then after casting that 15,000th vote before we went away, he celebrated by doing the same thing that made him a legend in the first place. He rolled up his sleeves and he went back to work. That is why a lot of us look forward to seeing these next years with him and watch as he continues to help write the history of the Senate and the history of our progressive politics and the history of our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am happy to join in this chorus of praise for the senior Senator from Massachusetts on the occasion of the 15,000th vote he has cast—a historic milestone in this historic body and a milestone reached by only two other Senators, only one of whom continues to serve with great distinction, the man from West Virginia, SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD. Senator EDWARD MOORE KENNEDY has now added his name to this roster of distinction.

He is the ninth child of Joseph and Rose Kennedy, born on February 22, 1932—200 years to the day after George Washington. In a family such as the Kennedys, I am sure that coincidence did not go unnoticed. Years ago, TED KENNEDY made the Senate the focus of his public life. Some say that decision has helped him to become one of the best Senators ever to serve this body. His dedication to principle and his willingness to delve deeply into tough issues really have been the hallmarks of his public service.

In his biography of Senator TED KENNEDY, former New York Times reporter Adam Clymer recalls a hearing in the 1960s in the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee on which both TED and his brother, Bobby Kennedy, then Senator from New York, served. Clymer describes how the two Kennedys had to wait 2 hours to question a

witness because they were both junior members of the Senate at the time. Bobby Kennedy seemed almost pained by the tedium of sitting there hour after hour waiting his turn. TED was more patient.

Exasperated, Bobby Kennedy leaned over and asked his brother: Is this the way I become a good Senator, sitting here and waiting my turn?

TED KENNEDY replied to his brother: Yes.

Bobby shot back: How many hours do I have to sit here to be a good Senator?

And TEDDY said: As long as necessary.

Well, when it comes to 15,000 votes, I am sure that will be a record which will be hard to match. But when it comes down to it, it is not about the quantity of TED KENNEDY's votes, it is about the quality of his politics. He really cares. He cares about people. He cares about the people who can't afford a lobbyist to stand out in the hallway and beg for a vote. He cares about the people who get up every morning and worry that nobody has noticed their lives, lives of sacrifice and lives of difficulty. He cares about those people. They won't be holding big fundraisers with political action committees, but they are the people who have energized him in his public career.

He also cares about the people with whom he works. I can't think of another colleague with whom I have ever served in the House or Senate who really reaches out in so many different ways to each of us on a personal level to show that he cares. If you have a child in the hospital, an illness in the family, the loss of a loved one, you can count on a telephone call from Ted Kennedy. If no one else remembers, he will.

He also works every single day. I think that is the thing which surprised me my 10 years in the Senate, was just the energy level of Senator TED KENNEDY. He never stops. And now, in his majority position as chairman of the HELP Committee, he has an agenda he has been waiting on for way too long, an agenda which included increasing the minimum wage in America for the first time in 10 years, an agenda which is going to lead us into the kind of help for students across America to go to college that we haven't seen since the passage of the GI bill after World War II. Time and again, this Senator has used his commitment and combined it with an energy that has produced dramatic results.

I have had the honor of serving on the Judiciary Committee with him, and I know that from time to time he has stood up and taken a lonely and sometimes difficult political position for what he believed was right. It is that kind of courage and dedication to principle which leads me to believe he is one of the finest colleagues with whom I have ever had the honor to serve.

Finally, he knows that life here in the Senate is a privilege. It is a privi-

lege for each of us. Although he has been here longer than most—perhaps only one other Senator has been here longer—he understands that for each of us this is a great privilege, to represent great States in a great nation. It is a source of great pride for me to have once sat in that gallery as a college student and looked down on Senator TED KENNEDY on the floor, wondering if I would ever meet him, and to be able to stand here today on the occasion of his 15,000th vote and to count him as a friend and an inspiration.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this is a great pleasure—a great pleasure—that I congratulate my very highly esteemed colleague and dearest friend, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY, upon the casting of his 15,000th vote. Senator KENNEDY has now become a member, an illustrious member, of one of the most exclusive clubs in the whole wide world. Throughout the entire history of the Senate, only 2 other Senators have cast 15,000 votes—I and the late Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. As a charter member of this exclusive club, I welcome Senator KENNEDY aboard.

This latest achievement is only one of many for this fine son of Massachusetts. He has spent more than half his life in the Senate, and he is the third longest serving Senator in U.S. history. As I have said before on this floor, history will be kind to Senator KENNEDY. I have no doubt that history will not only regard Senator TED KENNEDY as one of the most effective national legislators of the 20th and now the 21st century but also as one of the great Senators ever to have graced this illustrious Chamber.

Although born to a life of privilege, Senator KENNEDY has dedicated his life to serving others. Senator KENNEDY represents the heart and the conscience of American liberalism. Senator KENNEDY is responsible for much, indeed much of the progressive legislation of the last four decades. He is always a powerful and eloquent voice for the poor and the oppressed, expressing his views in soaring speeches and passionate struggles for the rights of labor, for health care reform, and for strengthening the social safety net for America's less fortunate.

In the Senate, he has demonstrated that it is through public service—to paraphrase his late brother, President John F. Kennedy—that Americans can stop asking what their country can do for them and actually do something for their country.

Senator TED KENNEDY gave me unstinting support during the years when it was my privilege to serve as the Senate Democratic majority leader and minority leader at different times. When times got tough, I knew that I could always count on TED KENNEDY's advice and his support. It may have been a needed vote; it may not have

been. It may have been assistance in building approval for legislative proposals. But whatever was needed, TED KENNEDY was always there, and I was always grateful.

Thank you, TED.

I shall always value TED KENNEDY's friendship not only to me but to the great people of the great State—E Pluribus Unum—of West Virginia. And I am quite pleased and I am proud—proud, TED—to have had the pleasure and the honor and the great privilege of serving with this extraordinarily great Senator in the Senate.

Congratulations, congratulations, congratulations, Senator TED KENNEDY, on casting your 15,000th vote. But even more importantly, congratulations on being such a needed advocate for the powerless in our great and powerful country. Americans are a compassionate people, and the senior Senator from Massachusetts has no intention of ever, ever, letting the Senate forget that. Amen.

Thank you, sir.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is such an honor for me to be here and hear the Senator who has served the longest and cast the greatest number of votes heap high praise on the Senator who is No. 3 in that category. It is such an honor for every one of us, the other 98 who are here, to serve with both of them.

I will be brief because so much has been said, but TED KENNEDY has been a beacon, he has been a mentor, he has been almost a father figure to so many of us in the Senate. He is so committed to the things he believes in, and you hear it in his speeches and you see it even more so in the great craft with which he yields the legislative pen. But unlike some who may love mankind in the abstract, TED KENNEDY also has a quintessential kindness and decency to the individuals of this body and to individuals he just meets. We all see it in him as he walks the halls. TED KENNEDY is a special human being. He would be a special human being in any craft or vocation because of who he is, what he knows, where he comes from. But I think every one of us—from Senator BYRD, No. 1 in seniority in the Senate, to Senator BARRASSO, No. 100—count our lucky stars that we are able to serve with and know a great man such as TED KENNEDY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would not want all the accolades to Senator KENNEDY to come from that side of the aisle. Forty years ago, in 1967, I came to this body as a very young legislative aide to Senator Howard Baker, and TED KENNEDY was a very young Senator but already in his second term. All the talk for the first few months—and I imagine Senator BYRD can remember this—was about how long would it take for Senator Baker, a new Republican Senator, to

break on some important issue with father-in-law, the Republican leader, Senator Everett Dirksen and after a few months we knew because Senator Baker walked across the aisle and joined with Senator TED KENNEDY and they fought against Senator Dirksen, Baker's father-in-law, and Sam Ervin, the most respected constitutional lawyer in the Senate, on the issue of one man one vote.

I remember working with Jim Fluge, Senator KENNEDY's friend who came back to work in the Senate 3 or 4 years ago. The upstarts won that debate; Baker and KENNEDY beat Dirksen and Ervin on the one man one vote issue. That was my first exposure to working with Senator KENNEDY.

Several years passed and President Bush the first asked me to be the Education Secretary, and I came to Washington and what did I discover? I have to be confirmed by a committee chaired by Senator TED KENNEDY. That was 1991. That was 16 years ago. I was eventually confirmed and then we worked together for nearly 2 years on educational issues.

Then, 4 years ago I came back and I am in the Senate and today I am serving on the committee that once confirmed me, and who is the chairman 40 years later? Senator TED KENNEDY. So I have had a very special privilege of working with Senator KENNEDY and admiring him, both as a legislative aide and a Cabinet member and now as a colleague in the Senate.

I can say as a practicing Republican what every Senator in this body already knows: Nothing will bring a Republican audience to its feet faster than a speech against high taxes, against Federal control, and against TED KENNEDY. But those outside the Senate might wonder, then, how could the Republican leader and others here hold him in such affection? I can give you one example. We have a tradition in the Senate still called the maiden speech. We think about what we might say when we first come here and make it a special occasion. My first speech was about what it means to be an American, how could we put the teaching of American history and civics back in its rightful place in our classrooms so our children could grow up learning what it means to be an American. This is the subject the Senator from West Virginia has worked on, spoken about, and legislated on many times.

But after I made that remark and introduced a piece of legislation, who was the first Senator to come over and volunteer to go around among his Democratic colleagues and round up enough cosponsors so the legislation could pass and eventually funds be appropriated? It was Senator KENNEDY. Who is the Senator who at least once a year takes his entire family to some part of American history and helps them all understand that? I remember his coming back and telling me how excited he was when the family went to Richmond and

were in the church, I believe it was, where Patrick Henry was down on his knees and gave his speech about American liberty.

That is a part of TED KENNEDY that those of us in the Senate, on both sides of the aisle, know. It is a part we respect and a part we appreciate. He cares about what it means to be an American because he and his family are such an important part of American history.

It is a great privilege to serve in this body with Senator KENNEDY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to express appreciation to all my colleagues for their generous comments this evening, in particular to the two leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL, for their kindnesses tonight and other times where they have been generous of spirit and thought.

I want the people of Massachusetts to know this is not an ending; 15,000 votes is not an ending. No one could demonstrate that better than my friend and colleague from West Virginia who still speaks with such eloquence and such passion and does such an extraordinary job in preserving this institution the way our Founding Fathers wanted it to be. He has no peer—certainly in my lifetime and I think probably in the history of this body.

The greatest public honor of my life has been representing the people of Massachusetts. I love the State. I love the people. I have been greatly honored by their confidence and their support over the many years—joyous years, sad years. They have been extraordinary in terms of their support of a voice in the Senate and a vote to try to recognize that America is not just a land, it is a promise. It is a never-ending promise about strengthening our families and about strengthening our country and about being a fair country and creating greater opportunity and leading the world when we basically reflect our greatest values.

I have been greatly honored in working in the Senate with extraordinary men and women over the period of years. I include so many who are here now, so many of those who have worked with me over the period of years, men and women of great integrity and strong commitment and caring about this Nation. They have demonstrated extraordinary courage, extraordinary leadership, and have helped to make the country a much better and fairer land; many on our side, many on the other side—many on the other side.

When we think back on the great battles and challenges we have had over the period of years, we made progress when we came together. That has been true.

I am very grateful to my friend, and he is my friend, JOHN KERRY, my colleague. I thank him for his friendship and support over many years. He has pointed out he has helped me in my

first campaign. I tried to help him on his last campaign. We are friends and colleagues and have a good deal of respect for each other. I have a great deal of affection and respect for JOHN.

I thank the Senator from West Virginia, Senator BYRD. As we know, he is not only the President of the Senate, but he has devoted his life to this institution. On so many different occasions and on so many different times—I know many in this body can remember it—when this institution was teetering on whether we were going to maintain our position as the Founding Fathers wanted it and tried to devise it or whether we were going to move off track, he has reminded us, particularly in the great debate we had on the Iraq war, about that role of this institution and its role in American life and its role in the world. We are all mindful of that.

He has been a friend. We have a time where we go back and remind each other of the times we differed, but what we also, I think, have valued is the fact that our friendship I believe is stronger because of the times that we did differ. We have great affection for each other, respect for each other. I thank him for his extremely kind and generous remarks.

Mr. BYRD. And I thank you, TED.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, finally, I could not take this moment without thinking back about, personally, the service in this Chamber. When I first arrived in this Chamber, I was fortunate to have two brothers, one a President and another an Attorney General. I had the opportunity to work with them on those responsibilities in that regard. Then, to have a brother who served in the Senate was a golden time for me during that period of time.

I have been enormously proud of the work my nephew, Congressman KENNEDY, serving in the House of Representatives, and now PATRICK, my son, who serves in the House of Representatives and is a leading voice in terms of the mental health issues for our country—I am so proud of all his good work.

We grew up in a family that believed in public service, that elective office can make a difference but also understood that other people make extraordinary differences in advancing the cause of fairness and decency in the Nation. I think of the work of my sisters in that undertaking, all of whom have been involved—whether Special Olympics or Very Special Arts or other programs in which they have all been involved.

We still believe in the importance of public service and the honor, the high honor that one has in elective office. There are many of those who dismiss that concept as an old-fashioned viewpoint, but I think any of us who have read the history of this Nation and who understood its history know there is no higher personal honor than to have that opportunity.

Finally, I welcomed the opportunity to come back to serve as a Senator

from Massachusetts, to try to be a voice of what I call the march for progress in this country. Thomas Jefferson used to say every 25 years a nation redefines itself. He talked about the continuing expansion of the real cause of liberty in this Nation—not in ways that so frequently are overused and overstate that word but in its core, principal meaning.

As I mentioned, this Nation is a country that is a continuing process. That is why each day that I wake up, I think of a new opportunity to try to have some constructive impact. People will agree, and some will differ, on the directions. Sure, programs change—and that is understandable—but basic, fundamental values about what this Nation is all about and what so many of us who have the great honor of service in this body understand is that America is a continuing discovery and a continuing promise and a continuing opportunity for each and every one of us to make some contribution.

I thank the Senator from Tennessee for his comments. I remember that debate very well. It was a rather basic and fundamental issue about one person one vote. The question at that time was, is that going to be continued or whether there was going to be such flexibility that we were going to continue the gerrymandering of different districts. Senator Baker, with the very strong assistance of Senator ALEXANDER, reminded this body and helped maintain and insist about what the Supreme Court had said about that issue. I thank him for his comments and also for his continued work in the areas of education and so many other areas.

I have been fortunate to have a number of my colleagues here from Massachusetts, a number of members of the delegation.

There were some former colleagues here as well. Senator Riegle was here, and Senator Culver. I was reminded actually over the August recess that I had cast the 15,000th vote. I was talking with Senator Culver, and we were reminiscing. He was here when I cast my first vote, which goes back over a very long, considerable period of time. I am grateful for his presence as well as my other colleagues, BILL DELAHUNT, JIM MCGOVERN. We saw many of those who were here earlier from our Massachusetts delegation. I thank them very much.

People ask me how long I will continue to serve in the Senate. I give the same response, that is, I am going to stay here until I get the hang of it.

I look forward to that. I would never get the hang of it if I did not have the wonderful love, affection, and warmth my wife Vicky, the joy of my life, gives to me every single day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IRAQ

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, during August, as many Members of this body did, I traveled to Iraq, met with Tennesseans there, met with General Petraeus, General Odierno. Then I traveled to Tennessee and discussed my visit and listened.

I want to talk for a few minutes about where I believe we should go from here in Iraq. The strongest message I received, both in Iraq and in Tennessee, was this—not that we get out, not that we even win a victory of the kind we won in Japan or Germany, but it is time for the United States Government to speak with one voice on Iraq.

A retired four star general from Tennessee, who has a lot of experience with the special forces, put it this way to me: He said our biggest problem in Iraq is we are divided and the enemy knows it.

It is inexcusable that we in the Senate should spend so much time lecturing political leaders in Baghdad for their failure to come up with a consensus when we ourselves have not been able to come up with a consensus about Iraq.

It is time for the Government to speak with a single voice about where we go from here in Iraq. Our troops deserve it and our enemy needs to hear it. I believe that one voice would be a new strategy to change our mission in Iraq from combat to supporting, equipping, and training the Iraqi troops, and then stabilizing Iraq province by province, neighborhood by neighborhood, tribe by tribe.

If we adopt this new strategy as a nation, and if we speak clearly to our troops and to the enemy with one voice, I believe this would likely bring home half our troops within a year or two.

Such a new strategy would put us on a path to finish responsibly what we have undertaken in Iraq. I believe there is a consensus within this body for such a new strategy. I believe that consensus is sitting there staring us in the face.

The strategy I am describing would implement the unanimous recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group chaired by former Secretary of State Jim Baker, a Republican, and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, a Democrat. It would take into account the lessons and successes of the last few months under the leadership of General Petraeus in Iraq.

Basically the new strategy I am describing would implement the recommendations of Baker-Hamilton province by province. The Baker-Ham-

ilton strategy, the one I am describing, would be grounded upon three basic principles. First, the United States will begin immediately to move our forces in Iraq out of direct combat and into roles of support, training, and providing equipment as security conditions on the ground permit.

This will proceed province by province as Iraqis demonstrate their capacity to manage their own security as they have, for example, in Anbar Province where President Bush visited yesterday.

Generals Petraeus and Odierno told a group of us Senators about 10 days ago that they believe that 6 or 7 provinces are on the way to being ready for this sort of mission change and this sort of stabilization. We have seen it in Anbar. We saw it in northern Baghdad where we flew by helicopter to an edge of Baghdad where about 70 American troops were living in a neighborhood. We had dinner with two Sunni sheiks, two Shiite sheiks, and we talked about the progress there.

What had happened is that the Iraqis had simply become exhausted with terrorists of various kinds killing their relatives and terrorizing their neighborhoods. One of the sheiks with whom we had dinner had seen his teenage son murdered in his front yard.

When sufficient American forces, coalition forces, had come to the neighborhood to work with the fed-up Iraqis, they had proceeded basically to run the terrorists out of town. It was much easier for them to tell, as they said, who are bad guys than for us to tell who they are. They described them as various groups of thugs, criminals, insurgents, militias, all there for no good. But when the Iraqis began to man the checkpoints and when Iraqis worked on the neighborhood watch, and when 600 of their sons were sent to Baghdad to the police academy, as had been done with the prospect that they would then come back and help, then the American officers there said: It may not be long before we are able to shift our mission from combat to support, equipping, and training of the Iraqi troops for this area.

Now, that is not to say that means instantly in every part of Iraq things will be safe. They certainly were not while we were there. Two province governors were assassinated within a 2-week period of time just before we came. Fourteen Americans lost their lives in a helicopter crash 2 days before we were there. On the day we were there, we found out later, two suicide bombers had gone to the nearest other outpost such as the one we visited and killed 4 people and wounded 11 others.

There is plenty of danger left in Iraq. But there is no mistaking the fact that when we begin to see—and under Petraeus's leadership we begin to have—those outposts around Baghdad, and work with the Iraqis in certain parts of the country, significant military progress is being made.

So the first principle of a new strategy would be to change the mission of