

us and our staff, and I thank our colleagues for letting us come to this position where we see the end in sight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, in every respect, I second the words of the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Speaking for this Senator, in the course of last year, this Senator has spent 6 months working on the children's health insurance bill with staff who do so much work that they sleep 2 or 3 hours a night, including the weekends, and achieved nothing. We have had, in a sense, the same process on the FISA bill. It is very complicated because it is a very delicate subject and requires this very difficult balance between intelligence collection for the security of the Nation and civil liberties of the people.

I am extremely proud of the way the vice chairman and others, particularly the majority leader and the minority leader, have conducted this affair. It took quite some time to get it going. I do believe I also see light at the end of the tunnel. I think if we do our work on Tuesday, we will have time to conference this bill with the House and send a bill to the President. In any event, I am grateful, particularly to the staff whose work is never mentioned enough.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I might be allowed to proceed as in morning business for the next 5 minutes.

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN AND GOVERNOR MITT ROMNEY

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, this afternoon, I and a number of others who have been supporting Gov. Mitt Romney for the Presidency of the United States met with the Governor and his good wife Ann to have a post-mortem following his announcement that he was suspending his campaign.

I was perhaps the first Member of this Chamber to announce my public endorsement of Governor Romney, so I wish to be among the first to extend my congratulations to Senator MCCAIN, who has now, by virtue of Governor Romney's suspension of his campaign, locked up the Republican nomination.

We all have our understanding of Senator MCCAIN's persistence and his determination to go forward in what he considers to be a good cause. There has never been a demonstration of the importance of that persistence quite as dramatic as his comeback from this campaign.

We can remember the time when all of the pundits and, frankly, all the rest of us, myself very much included, wrote off the McCain campaign, assuming that Senator MCCAIN was lying

dead in the gutter by the side of the road. I remember talking with some of his supporters in this Chamber at that time who said the McCain campaign is reeling and we don't know whether it is going to ever come back. I remember the rumors that flowed around this town, where people said: We cannot raise any money for the McCain campaign. No one wants to contribute to a lost cause.

JOHN MCCAIN, perhaps alone—maybe he had the support of his wife; I assume he did—said: No, I am going to go forward. He picked himself off, took himself off to New Hampshire, and did the same kind of thing he did 8 years ago when he ran against President Bush. In this case, he not only won New Hampshire, but he was able to expand that to wins elsewhere, to the point where we have the result today. So he deserves our congratulations as we recognize this truly extraordinary political accomplishment on his part.

I share with my colleagues this comment from Governor Romney. As those of us were supporting him from both the House and the Senate were gathered around him and talking about this, he shared with us this particular insight. He looked at what has happened. He sat down with his supporters. He looked for all the reasons why he should feel good. They pointed out he had won 4 million votes in the various primaries and caucuses and Senator MCCAIN had won 4.7 million. So in terms of the voters who supported him, he was not that far behind. He had won 11 States. Senator MCCAIN had won 13. So on that basis, he was not that far behind.

But the cold calculating reality of it was he was very far behind as far as the delegates were concerned. So he said to his advisers and his political consultants: What would it take for me to win the nomination? And they said to him very bluntly: You must destroy JOHN MCCAIN. That was not his word. I don't remember his exact word, but you must go negative, to use the vocabulary of the political consultant, in such a way as to make it impossible for JOHN MCCAIN to proceed with the confidence of the American people. Governor Romney said: I am not going to try that. Even if it might work, I don't want to try that. I don't want to do that. And he made the decision that was announced today.

Along with my congratulations to Senator MCCAIN on his extraordinary achievement and his assuming the position now as the obvious Republican nominee, I also congratulate my friend, Mitt Romney, on the graciousness with which he recognized what was happening and his willingness to withdraw now rather than drag the party on into a protracted fight that would make it very difficult for Senator MCCAIN to take control of the levers of power in the party and organize himself for the fight in the fall.

These are two good men, each one of different views, each one of very dif-

ferent background, each one of which would bring a different set of talents to the Presidency, each one of which has now exposed himself to the fire of the primary process. One has emerged victorious; the other has recognized that and stepped aside. I think it is a demonstration that the American political system, however messy, works.

Again, I extend my congratulations to Senator MCCAIN.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

SERVICE OF PAGE SAM WOHS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Senate Page Program has been an integral part of the functioning of the Senate since its inception in 1829. Senate pages are always on the Senate floor when the Senate is in session, helping to ensure that the proceedings in the Chamber run smoothly and efficiently. Pages also are asked to complete a variety of other tasks when the Senate is not in session. We ask a lot of our Senate pages, and they always respond. A page is not only expected to serve the needs of the Senate, which is an important and time-consuming task, but also is expected to attend school and complete the necessary requirements of a high school junior.

Senator Daniel Webster selected the first Senate page. In those days, as is the case today, a page was chosen and sponsored by a Senator. There is a long and fine tradition of pages chosen by Michigan Senators, and I am proud to have sponsored many pages that have ably and responsibly served the Senate.

Sam Wohns, Michigan's most recent Senate page, completed his service as a Senate page last month with dedication and enthusiasm. Sam is a part of a fine tradition and a select group that has had the privilege to serve as a Senate page. He has proven through his hard work in the Senate and through his many successes in the past that he, like many of his peers, are some of our nation's best and brightest. This experience has prepared him well to meet future challenges, as it has for the many that have preceded him.

Each semester the Senate Page School conducts an essay competition. Every page is given the opportunity to

submit an essay that reflects their thoughts about their experience as a page. The winner earns the right to deliver that essay at the closing ceremony for his or her page class. Sam Wohn's essay was selected as the winning essay last month, and it is clear from his essay that this past semester has had a positive and inspirational impact on him and his fellow pages.

It is a distinct honor to be chosen as a Senate page, and the work that this page class has done is valued by all of us in the Senate. I know my colleagues join me in thanking each Senate page for a job well done. I look forward to hearing about their many successes in the future.

I ask unanimous consent to have the text of Sam Wohn's speech at the closing ceremony of his page class last month printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Good morning. It's hard for me to believe that today is our last day of Paging. Part of me feels like I just arrived. I still have so much to learn about our political process and there is still so much more that I want to do in DC. On the other hand, part of me feels like I've been here for years. I'm fully adjusted to dorm life, shortened class periods, and the demands of working at the Senate.

While I had dreamt of nearly every aspect of being a Page before I first stepped foot in Webster Hall, I hadn't imagined having to leave. Knowing that I'll never again have the opportunity to bring a senator a glass of water or to rush back early from dinner to open doors during a rollcall vote is disheartening, but knowing that I'll have the friendship of my fellow Pages for years to come is encouraging.

The other Pages from all around the country have enriched my experience more than anything else. And while I did learn the particulars of parliamentary procedure, the proper way to set up an easel, and how to operate on five hours of sleep a night, the most important lesson of this semester has been the value of teamwork. The bond between all of the Pages made no challenge insurmountable and made no hardship unbearable. Without that support network, I think my experience as a Page would have been very different.

As I was preparing this speech, I came across an email that I sent to my parents in the summer after my freshman year. I described the Page Program as a "flawless utopia" in that email. After taking Advanced Composition this semester I know that my word choice, "flawless utopia," was a little redundant, but I think you get the idea—I had high expectations. I expected nothing short of an amazing experience, and my experience was nothing short of amazing.

Yet, it wouldn't have been as rewarding if it wasn't as challenging as it was. The weeks when I didn't get done with work until ten o'clock at night were the most memorable. I'll never forget the last night of rollcall votes when the senate was in session until after midnight or the last day of legislative business when Senator Levin showed all of the Pages his favorite signatures inside the desks on the floor. I worked long hours, but it certainly didn't seem like work.

I consider this semester a gift. I feel so fortunate to have been a student in each of my teacher's classrooms, to have made so many

great friends, and to have played a role in the functioning of the world's most powerful legislative body. This semester has been a gift of knowledge from my teachers, a gift of friendship from all of the other pages, and a gift of new awareness and perspective that I gained from the many responsibilities all of us Pages shared at the Senate and at Webster Hall.

Like most gifts in Washington, this one has strings attached. As former Pages, we'll have obligations that we didn't have before. Our firsthand knowledge of the legislative process obligates us to stay informed of current events, our new awareness of some of the deep injustices in the world obligates us to do what we can to address them, and our work experiences obligate us to share our many stories with friends and family.

Many people have told me that a semester of Paging is similar to the first semester of college. I can only hope that my college experience is as memorable as the last four and a half months. It has been an honor and privilege to serve with you all. I will miss you and yet I know that we are inexorably connected for a lifetime.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT BALL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, all of us who knew Robert Ball are saddened by his death last week. For many of us in Congress and for tens of millions of Americans in recent decades, Bob Ball was Mr. Social Security. He deserves immense credit not only for his indispensable leadership in making it the most successful and most beloved social program in the nation's history, but also for doing so much over the years to keep it that way when some in high places sought to undermine it.

President Kennedy named Bob as Commissioner of Social Security in 1962, the same year I came to the Senate, and I know my brother would regard him as one of his finest appointments. Bob's leadership was indispensable in maintaining the strength of Social Security in the 1960s and dramatically expanding it to include Medicare and disability benefits. Countless times over the years, I have benefited from Bob's extraordinary wisdom, experience and friendship.

Bob stepped down as Commissioner in 1973, but he never really retired. He was a key member of the Greenspan Commission on Social Security reform in the early 1980s, and in 1986 he founded the National Academy of Social Insurance, whose studies and publications have been an invaluable policy resource for all of us in Congress on Social Security, Medicare, and other important social programs such as workers' compensation and unemployment insurance. Through its awards and internships, the Academy has inspired many young people in government, the private sector and universities to devote themselves to these issues as he did.

As recently as last fall, at the age of 93, Bob was sending out to his extensive mailing list his ideas for protecting and financing Social Security, backed up, as they always were, by sound cost estimates provided by loyal Social Security employees who are still deeply inspired by Bob.

I will miss Bob very much, and I extend my deepest condolences to his wife Doris and all his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Bob Ball was one of a kind. Few if any in the long history of our country have done so much for so many for so long.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that last Friday's obituary in the New York Times on Bob Ball be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Feb. 1, 2008]

ROBERT M. BALL IS DEAD AT 93; LED SOCIAL SECURITY

(By Dennis Hevesi)

Robert M. Ball, the commissioner of Social Security in the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations, an architect of Medicare and an influential opponent of privatizing Social Security, died Wednesday at his home in Bowie, Md. He was 93.

The cause was congestive heart failure, his son, Jonathan, said.

"Bob Ball left an indelible mark on the Social Security program and the agency in that he played a critical role in the establishment of Medicare," the current commissioner, Michael J. Astrue, said Wednesday in a statement. "His commitment to Social Security was unequaled."

Mr. Ball was commissioner from 1962 to 1973, but his advocacy for preserving the program went well beyond his retirement from public service.

In 1981, he represented the speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., Democrat of Massachusetts, on the National Commission on Social Security Reform.

Called the Greenspan Commission, for its chairman, Alan Greenspan, who later became chairman of the Federal Reserve, it was created by President Ronald Reagan at a time when Social Security faced financial problems. High inflation and high unemployment were significantly decreasing revenues.

Mr. Reagan wanted a report by the end of 1982, but the commission was deadlocked along partisan lines. Behind the scenes, Mr. Ball negotiated with James A. Baker III, Mr. Reagan's chief of staff, and Richard G. Darman, a deputy Treasury secretary.

Weeks before the deadline, they came up with a compromise, a complex balance of tax increases and benefit cuts that was acceptable to the president and to Mr. O'Neill. Those 1983 amendments remain the most recent substantial changes to the system.

In 1996, Mr. Ball was a member of a Social Security advisory council that was considering partial privatization of the system, a precursor to the broader plan that President Bush would propose eight years later. The council chairman, Edward M. Gramlich, a Federal Reserve board member, favored the plan. But Mr. Ball managed to place so many other issues before the council that privatization was kept off the table.

Still, privatization became a centerpiece of Mr. Bush's re-election campaign in 2004. The president wanted to allow workers to divert part of their Social Security payroll taxes into private accounts. Opponents, including Mr. Ball, said the Plan would leave the system under-financed.

"Bob Ball essentially set up a war room in his living room; a phone, a fax machine and his big Rolodex," Thomas N. Bethell, the editor of Mr. Ball's 2000 book, "Insuring the Essentials: Bob Ball on Social Security" (Century Foundation Press), said on Thursday. "He wrote position papers, broadsides and papered Capitol Hill with them."