

with out slowing down or acknowledging the children. Through her bravery and quick thinking, Nicole saved this young boy from being hit by that car.

Raul Valdez, a AAA school safety patroller at West Gate Elementary in Manassas, VA, showed great courage when he saved a young girl who ran out in front of an oncoming van on April 13, 2007. Following an adult guard's "hold back" instruction, Raul put his arms up to prevent students from crossing the busy area of the school drive where buses and daycare vans collect children. When a young girl attempted to run across the drive, Raul reached for her shoulder and swiftly pulled her out of the way of an approaching daycare van. Thanks to Raul's attentiveness and his speedy reaction time, that young girl was saved from harm.

Clarissa Sourada is a safety patroller at Union Mill Elementary in Clifton, VA. On a morning in February 2007, Clarissa was holding two children at the edge of a residential driveway near her post, waiting for the clear to cross, when she noticed a vehicle backing towards them. She alerted the children to the danger and called for them to move out of the way. When one child did not heed her warning, Clarissa pushed the child from the driveway to the sidewalk, safely out of the path of the car. That child's life was saved thanks to Clarissa's quick thinking and attentive supervision.

As these three exceptional young people have demonstrated, the participants in the AAA School Safety Patrol Program serve an important role in ensuring that our young people get to school safely. This program has helped save countless lives, and I thank the AAA and the program volunteers for making it all possible. I know I speak for every Member of the Senate in expressing our gratitude for their valuable work in our communities.

ONE YEAR AFTER VIRGINIA TECH

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, April 16 marked 1 year since the deadliest shooting rampage in our Nation's history, a tragedy that took the lives of 32 Virginia Tech students and faculty members and wounded 17 more. April 16 was a day that forever changed the lives of many and we struggle to make sense of this senseless tragedy.

In almost 32 States, and on at least 32 college campuses, survivors and family members of those killed or injured in that shooting recently joined students, parents, and concerned citizens to remember the lives lost on April 16, 2007. During remembrance events across the country, hundreds laid silently on the ground in groups of 32 to honor the 32 innocent victims murdered at Virginia Tech. In my home State of Michigan, people gathered in Detroit and Kalamazoo to ring bells, read names, and recite prayers, all to remember the victims of this horrible tragedy.

These commemorations also sought to remember the families and loved ones of the more than approximately 100,000 people who are killed or injured by a firearm every year in America. Hundreds joined in expressing their frustrations at the glaring gaps in our Nation's gun laws. In August 2007, a panel of experts, commissioned by Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, issued a report based upon their independent review of the tragedy at Virginia Tech. Among other things, the report pointed to weak enforcement of and gaps in regulations regarding the purchase of guns, as well as holes in State and Federal laws. It also emphasized the critical need for improved background checks and the danger firearms can present on college campuses.

Despite these calls from experts and outcries from the American people, the Congress has yet to act to make it harder for dangerous people to obtain dangerous weapons. By strengthening our background check system, closing the gun show loophole, and renewing the assault weapons ban we could help put an end to the type of tragedies such as the one that occurred at Virginia Tech.

RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF FORMER SENATOR WALTER "FRITZ" MONDALE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a statement made by Senator LEAHY at the University of Minnesota on April 7, 2008.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Thank you Senator Klobuchar. And what a joy it still is to say those two words together. Minnesota's new senator already is bringing even more distinction to the seat that Hubert Humphrey held. She is another star who was mentored by Fritz Mondale, and she is upholding that grand DFL tradition.

When I was asked if I could be here with you, I was more than glad to clear my calendar to do it. It is a special honor and a great pleasure to be here with you in recognition of the service, the historical significance, and the 80th anniversary year of a friend, a former colleague, and an American statesman.

In this room we know him as "Fritz." Others call him Walter. When he was a halfback in high school, they called him "Crazylegs Mondale" for some reason. He has also gone by Mr. Attorney General, Senator, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Ambassador, and Dad. I think I like Crazylegs best. I can't wait to ask him about how that happened.

The history of the era of his public service has not yet taken full form for the ages, but even now Fritz Mondale looms large as a model and as a catalyst, in his roles in the Senate and as Vice President.

I have been asked to focus particularly on his time in the Senate.

Walter Mondale is sometimes described as the paradigm figure of the transition between two eras—the FDR Coalition up to the War in Vietnam, and the social ferment that came after the war. And perhaps this is so. But to me, who Fritz Mondale is, and what he stands for, are just as important as when

he stood there. Deep echoes resonate throughout his service of the first principles of our Republic. The issues he led on then are as fresh as today's news, and as enduring as our founding documents.

Issues like the concentration and abuse of power. Or social and economic justice and the consolidation of wealth in the pockets and portfolios of just a few. Or the role of government in protecting the little guy when powerful market forces run roughshod. Or the tension between freedom and security. Or the challenge of achieving energy security. Or the very roles of both the Senate and the Office of the Vice President in the American system. Even the question of whether a woman ever could credibly assume the highest office in the land. Trace any of these issues back in time, and you will find Fritz Mondale at earlier decision points. For example, just imagine how loose from our moorings we might be right now without the guideposts of the FISA law, which resulted from the investigation that he, Frank Church and others launched into earlier abuses of the power of government to snoop into Americans' lives.

Here is something to which we all can attest. Fritz Mondale is a good man whose decency elevated every institution in which he served. Who he is has everything to do with what he achieved.

Clarence once said that his brother's politics were, as he put it, "an extension of our father's preaching," and I can see that. Their father, the farmer-turned-minister, felt and saw the ravages of the Great Depression on the farms and the communities of the heartland. And when Fritz entered politics, he did it for the right reasons, to make life better for the people.

In the Senate we mostly chalked Fritz's personality up to clean air, clean living and Norwegian genes. He was and is well liked on both sides of the aisle. Fritz's dad taught him that your integrity is everything, and the lesson stuck. He kept his word and everyone trusted him. He was always well prepared. And he surrounded himself with good and competent people. He had one of the best staffs on the Hill, and it's a treat to see some of those staffers sprinkled around the room today.

I've known Fritz a long while, but you still pick up some new perspectives in preparing for an occasion like this. I knew he was avid about hunting and fishing in the North Woods, but I hadn't known his reputation for being such a good "bull cook."

I looked it up. A bull cook is the fellow stuck with doing the chores around camp, cutting fuel, cleaning up and cooking. But when he rings the bell in the morning, everyone has to get up. I think that after being in a place like the Senate where no one is able to give orders that stick, Fritz likes that sense of real power when he rings that bell.

One side of Fritz that the public did not see as readily as we did in the Senate was his sense of humor—one of the best I have ever known. In many a tense moment, his sense of humor often defused the tension and restored the spirit of comity that is so crucial in getting things done in the Senate.

I wish the American people had seen more of that side of Fritz Mondale. Mike Berman told Fritz's biographer Finlay Lewis that the staff was always urging Fritz to loosen up in public. Mike said, "I can't count the number of lit cigars I have stuffed in my pocket over the years."

He loved the Senate, and the Senate loved him back. He once said that he "found his sweet spot" in the Senate. He was a quick learner and craved learning new things. He said the Senate "was like mainlining human nature." And it's true. You pick up any day's Congressional Record, and it's like America's newspaper. Whatever is happening in

the country or the world on any given day is being talked about and sometimes even acted on in the United States Senate.

His first major legislative achievement was a 1966 law to make automakers notify car owners of dangerous defects. He went on to win another victory for consumers by stepping up regulation of slaughterhouses that had been selling diseased and putrid meat.

But he really came into his own in mastering the legislative process with a key victory on his open housing bill. Part of his success in winning a key cloture vote, against great odds, was helped along by his earlier bonding with a crusty earlier chairman of the Judiciary Committee, James Eastland. I hasten to note that I haven't yet entered into my crusty phase. Fritz knew the art of being able to disagree without being disagreeable.

That was a heady and vibrant legislative era, and Fritz had a hand in virtually every major piece of civil rights, education and child care legislation that emerged from Congress during that period.

To me, part of his Senate legacy that is the most significant and timely—timely, even today—was his work on and after the Senate's investigation—headed by Senator Frank Church—into the abuses that led to the spying on the American people by their own government. The FBI's COINTELPRO operation, for instance, had spent more than two decades searching in vain for communist influence in the NAACP, and they had infiltrated domestic groups like organizations that advocated for women's rights.

More than any other member of the special committee, Fritz Mondale mastered the issues and dug into the research, which spanned testimony from 800 witnesses and more than one hundred thousand classified pages. The evidence added up, in his words, to "a road map to the destruction of American democracy." Powerful government surveillance tools were misused against the American people. There had been little effective congressional oversight of these federal investigative and intelligence agencies, and too little judicial review.

Their work led to the creation of the Select Committee on Intelligence, and later, to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—the FISA law that only lately has entered the public lexicon.

Then, as now, in the name of security, some were willing to trade away the people's rights. Then, as now, some would have the United States of America stoop to the level of our enemies, giving them a victory over us that they could not achieve on their own.

The parallels with today are clear and so are the lessons, but Fritz freshened the bottom line for us in his address to Senators not long after 9/11, as part of the Senate's leaders lecture series. Even before Abu Ghraib, the disclosure of the torture memos, the revelations about unlawful surveillance of Americans, or White House political tampering with U.S. Attorneys, this is what he said in September, 2002: "There is always the danger that our fears will overcome our faith in the power of justice and accountability. Whenever we have gone down that road, we have hurt the innocent and embarrassed ourselves. Justice and accountability make us better able to face our enemies. Justice strengthens us." Unquote, and amen.

Another of Fritz Mondale's most remarkable and lasting achievements in the Senate was to engineer a change in the Senate's rules, to curb the abuse of filibusters in thwarting the will of clear majorities of the American people. The difficulty in passing the civil rights laws of the 60s had gradually convinced more and more Senators that the bar for cutting off debate in the Senate was set too high.

That might not sound difficult, but changing the way the Senate operates is something akin to trying to change the weather.

As a freshman Senator, I had a front seat and a bit part in Fritz's highly organized campaign to change the cloture rule.

He and Republican Senator James Pearson of Kansas launched the effort to change cloture from two-thirds to three-fifths. Fritz preceded and followed that launch by carefully laying the groundwork, enlisting Senators one by one. When it finally reached the Senate Floor, the debate itself was protracted. Finlay Lewis set the scene well in describing part of the debate. Quoting him, "To an uninitiated or casual visitor, the proceedings must have seemed arcane, even bizarre. Here was the world's greatest deliberative body solemnly voting to table the Lord's Prayer. At another point, the Senate became polarized over a murky motion to table a motion to reconsider a vote to table an appeal of a ruling that a point of order was NOT in order against a motion to table another point of order against a motion to bring to a vote a motion to call up a resolution that would change the rules. At least, that's what it sounded like." Unquote.

Late, late one night, at about this point in the debate, Fritz and Majority Leader Mike Mansfield enlisted me, a young whippersnapper, to play a role. They asked me to stay on the floor one night around two in the morning to take the gavel as the presiding officer. They expected that a lot of tight rulings were coming up. But I felt the honor of the calling drain away as Mansfield explained that they needed someone big who was still awake to be in the chair for those rulings. Sometimes a Senator is no more than a conscious body in the right place at the right time.

The debate went on and on and on, and so did the parliamentary and coalition-building by Fritz and by his opponents. Relationships and Senate comity were being tested. Before they reached the breaking point, Fritz rightly knew when to strike a compromise, and he worked one out with Russell Long.

He won the change in the cloture rule, and it is not an exaggeration to point out that his efforts probably saved the Senate as we know it, and he did it without changing the Senate's fundamental character. As difficult as it still is to get things done in the Senate, without the Mondale cloture rule the Senate by now would be largely unmanageable.

It is saddening and frustrating today to see that even the Mondale rule has been abused. Filibusters are used far more often than they used to be. We had to have 72 cloture votes last year, and with a razor thin majority like the current Democratic majority in the Senate, that usually is an insurmountable hurdle. As Fritz knows and as Fritz practiced, the Senate's machinery is oiled by good will and self-restraint, and there is less and less of that around.

Through his public service, Fritz Mondale invested himself in the belief that our democracy offers civilizing power to all of us together as a community, through our representative government, to give each of us, and all of us, the opportunity to thrive, to make justice real, and to make the economy work for all and not just for some.

In a time when government is compiling more and more information about every American, every American deserves to know what their government is doing. Checks and balances and the kind of oversight that Fritz Mondale believes in and practiced makes government more accountable to the people. It helps make our system work as the Framers intended.

This is the way he put it in that address in 2002: "What a paradise we would live in if trust were never abused. But our Founders

knew better. They built our system on this deep insight into human nature. We are not perfect. We are, all of us, mixtures of the good and base, lofty and lowly, selfless and selfish. We are capable of sonatas, sonnets, and cathedrals. But we are also capable of greed, paranoia, and a dangerous thirst for power." Unquote. That insight of the Framers, he concluded, accounts for our unique system of checks and balances.

The Senate at its best can be the conscience of the nation. I have seen that when it happens, and I marvel in the fundamental soundness and wisdom of our system every time it does. But we cannot afford to put any part of the mechanism on automatic pilot. It takes constant work and vigilance to keep our system working as it should for the betterment of our society and its people. Keeping faith with these fundamentals accounts for much of the legacy of Fritz Mondale.

It is easy for politicians to appeal to our worst instincts and to our selfishness. Political leaders serve best when they appeal to the best in us, to lift our sights, summon our will and raise us to a higher level.

This year we celebrate our good fortune of knowing and benefiting from Fritz Mondale's ample service to the nation, and there is much to celebrate. His is the generous and optimistic spirit of the reformer, and of the patriot.

Thank you, Fritz. And Happy Birthday.

COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the work of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. Under the leadership of Arnold L. Punaro, the Commission has done this Nation a great service. It was my privilege as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee to include the legislation that established the Commission in the annual National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

On January 31, 2008, the Commission submitted its final report to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the Secretary of Defense. That report is thorough, is based on substantial and careful research and an extensive information-gathering process, and reflects many hours of deliberations by the Commission's members.

The 12 Commissioners, between them, brought 288 total years of military service, 186 total years of non-military government service, and many years of private-sector experience to the task. In addition to Chairman Punaro, the Commission's members are William L. Ball, III; Les Brownlee; Rhett B. Dawson; Larry K. Eckles; Patricia L. Lewis; Dan McKinnon; Wade Rowley; James E. Sherrard, III; Donald L. Stockton; E. Gordon Stump; and J. Stanton Thompson.

The Commission was established by Public Law 108-375, the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005, as amended by Public Law 109-163, to assess the reserve component of the U.S. military and to recommend changes to ensure that the National Guard and other reserve components are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported