RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

A LONGSTANDING TRADITION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I thank very much the Senator from Maine, Mr. KING, for his fluent reading of President George Washington's Farewell Address, a message to the American people at the close of his great Presidency—the first Presidency.

The annual reading of the farewell address is one of the Senate's longstanding traditions. The custom began in 1862 as a commemoration of the 130th anniversary of President Washington's birth. It was intended to boost congressional morale during the Civil War.

As then-Senator Andrew Johnson—by the way, I have a great painting of President Johnson in my office. I always tell people who come to my office to contrast that with the statue of President Johnson when he was Vice President. I have the good fortune of having Andrew Johnson's desk at the time Lincoln was assassinated. I have that beautiful piece of furniture in my office. It is stunningly beautiful. I haven't had a chance to talk about that before, so I took this opportunity.

As then-Senator Andrew Johnson of Tennessee said before the first recitation of the address:

> The time has arrived when we should recur back to the days, the times, and doings of Washington and the patriots of the Revolution, who founded the government under which we live.

In 1888—the 100th anniversary of the Constitution's ratification—the Senate then observed the ritual, and every year since 1896 the Senate has marked Washington's birthday, honored his legacy, and recurred back to those who founded the government under which we live, as we did today with the reading of Washington's Farewell Address.

As Senator KING mentioned, President Washington prepared the address with input from James Madison, America's fourth President, as well as Alexander Hamilton, the Nation's first Treasury Secretary. Similar to our Nation's founding documents, including the Constitution, the Farewell Address was a collaboration between the great minds of our country's formative years. Each year, for 118 years, the Senate selects one of its Members, alternating parties, to deliver these valedictory remarks.

I am pleased the Senator from Maine, an avid student of history—and he truly is—was able to carry on this important tradition today. Senator KING has delivered unique aspects of history to our caucus and, of course, on the Senate floor he has no parallel to his being able to pinpoint times of history. I admire him very much, as we all do.

With this bipartisan custom of honoring our Nation's founder fresh in our minds, the Senate embarks on a fresh work period today. I hope this session will be marked by a tone of cooperation. Washington's collaboration with Madison and Hamilton, among others, is proof enough that when patriots collaborate with the country's good in mind the product is vastly improved. Too often over the past few years our two parties have found themselves working at odds instead of pulling together for a common purpose. I hope to change that this work period.

In addition to considering a number of important nominations, the Senate will consider legislation that should draw overwhelming support from Members of both parties, a bill sponsored by the Senator from Vermont Mr. SANDERS which expands health care and benefits for our Nation's veterans.

I also hope Democrats and Republicans will work together to pass the child care block development grant bill this period. It is bipartisan in nature, and I think it should pass. This measure ensures working families have safe child care options, protecting both children and working parents. This bipartisan bill, as well as the veterans measure we will consider this week, will offer an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to find common ground and work together.

COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS HEALTH AND BENEFITS AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 301, S. 1982.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 301 (S. 1982) to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if any, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. Senators, during this period of time, will have an opportunity to speak for up to 10 minutes.

At 5 p.m. this afternoon the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Jeffrey Meyer to be U.S. district judge for the State of Connecticut. At 5:30 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the Meyer nomination, and there will be additional votes on nominations this evening.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2024

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding S. 2024 is at the desk and due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (S. 2024) to amend chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, with regard to the definition of ''marriage'' and ''spouse'' for Federal purposes and to ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Maine.

HISTORY OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Mr. KING. Mr. President, it was a great privilege for me a few moments ago to read George Washington's Farewell Address for a number of reasons; one, we learned in doing a little research on this practice—which as the majority leader indicated goes back more than 100 years—that the last Senator from Maine to read President Washington's Farewell Address was Senator Ed Muskie, who read it on this floor exactly 50 years ago. The last Senator to read before him from Maine was a freshman Senator in 1949, one Margaret Chase Smith. So if you believe that I am honored and humbled to be following in those footsteps, you would be correct. This is one of the seminal documents in American history. It really ranks with the Federalist Papers, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution itself. As the majority leader indicated, it didn't simply spring from Washington's mind. It actually has an interesting history. It was originally drafted in 1792, at the end of Washington's first term, when he intended to retire. He kept wanting to retire all the way from the end of the Revolutionary War, and the public kept calling him back into service.

The first speech in 1792 was drafted by James Madison, who was the father of our Constitution. Madison, Hamilton, and Jefferson convinced Washington that he couldn't leave at the end of his first term because there was too much going on in the country. The country was still in its very formative years, and patriotism required him to stay for a second term, which he reluctantly did.

This speech was delivered in September of 1796—at the end of Washington's second term—and was based upon the original Madison draft, edited and updated by Alexander Hamilton. I don't know about others, but I wouldn't mind having Madison and Hamilton be my ghostwriters—two of the greatest minds in American history and minds which didn't always agree about all the principles of what the country should work toward, but they agreed to work with Washington on this remarkable address.

I would like to take a moment to talk about Washington's importance. I used to teach about leadership, and one of the fundamental principles I used to pound into my students was that execution is as important as vision—that