

TRIBUTES TO HON. GORDON H. SMITH

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Gordon H. Smith

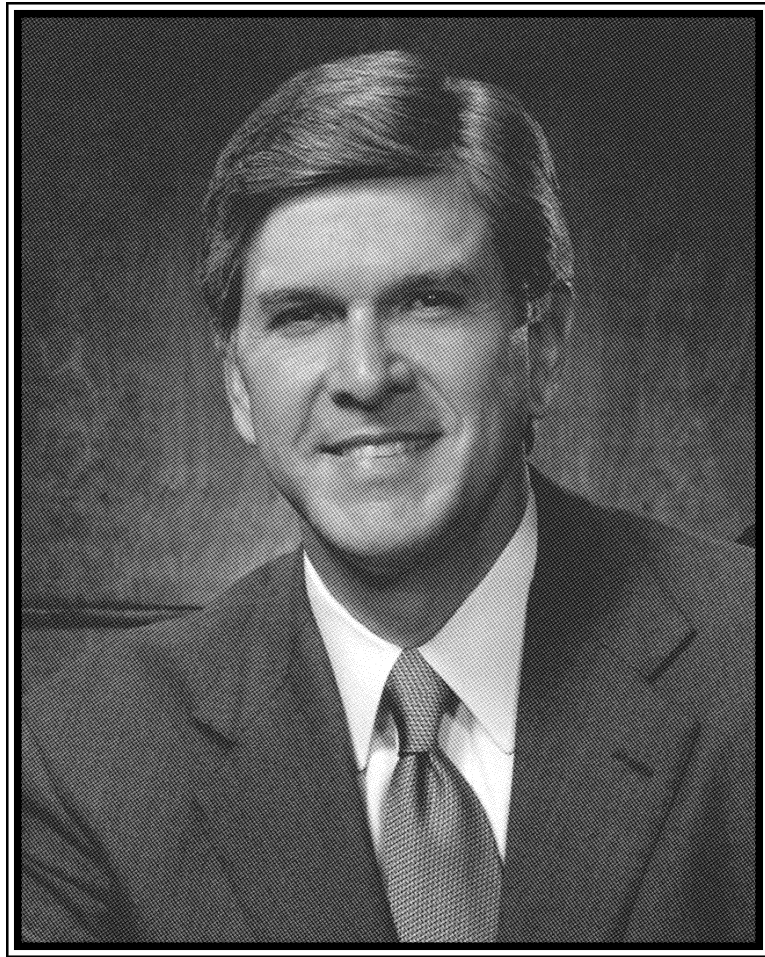
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES



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Gordon H. Smith

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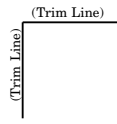
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Tributes Delivered in Congress

Gordon H. Smith
United States Senator
1997–2009



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
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CONTENTS

	Page
Biography	v
Proceedings in the Senate:	
Tributes by Senators:	
Alexander, Lamar, of Tennessee	17
Bunning, Jim, of Kentucky	17
Chambliss, Saxby, of Georgia	24
Coleman, Norm, of Minnesota	19
Collins, Susan M., of Maine	3
Conrad, Kent, of North Dakota	9
Dodd, Christopher J., of Connecticut	7
Dorgan, Byron L., of North Dakota	16
Enzi, Michael B., of Wyoming	20
Feingold, Russell D., of Wisconsin	8
Hatch, Orrin G., of Utah	15
Hutchison, Kay Bailey, of Texas	24
Kohl, Herb, of Wisconsin	17
Landrieu, Mary L., of Louisiana	3
Leahy, Patrick J., of Vermont	18
McConnell, Mitch, of Kentucky	4, 7
Reid, Harry, of Nevada	7
Smith, Gordon H., of Oregon	6
Snowe, Olympia J., of Maine	22
Specter, Arlen, of Pennsylvania	12
Warner, John, of Virginia	13
Wyden, Ron, of Oregon	9

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BIOGRAPHY

GORDON SMITH served his home State of Oregon in the U.S. Senate from 1997 to 2009. He earned a reputation for independence and effectiveness, working with both Republicans and Democrats to do what is right for Oregon.

Helping grow the Oregon economy was a top priority. As a member of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, GORDON SMITH cut taxes and helped working families keep more of their hard-earned money.

When it comes to health care, he was a leading advocate for mental health programs, expanding access to children's health care, and providing coverage for the uninsured while protecting Medicaid. The *Oregonian* called GORDON SMITH the "leading Republican voice against dismantling the nation's health-care safety net."

Oregon's farmers, fishermen, and outdoor enthusiasts have come to know GORDON SMITH as a friend. While others were looking to shut down the forests or fence off our farmers, GORDON SMITH was making public policy that does not leave Oregonians high and dry. Whether writing salvage logging legislation or preserving landmarks like Mt. Hood, he balanced the use of natural resources to protect Oregon's treasures and people's livelihoods.

From preschool to college education, he worked to make sure Oregon's schools are strong. In the Senate, he fought budget cuts to Head Start Programs for preschoolers and worked to make student loans more accessible for college students. As the chairman of the Senate Hunger Caucus, the Senator worked to alleviate hunger in Oregon and address the problem around the globe.

GORDON SMITH was the preeminent Republican advocate in the U.S. Senate for bringing our troops home from Iraq and focusing their mission on fighting terrorists. The *Register Guard* said SMITH has "the courage to back up criticism" and that he spoke "honestly" about Iraq. *La Grande Observer* said he "spoke with conviction and sincerity" when calling for a change in tactics in Iraq.

Known as GORDY to his nine brothers and sisters, he grew up in Pendleton and later in Bethesda, MD, where his father

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Milan served in the Eisenhower administration. GORDON SMITH played basketball and was an Eagle Scout. After serving on a church mission in New Zealand, he graduated from Brigham Young University and Southwestern University School of Law.

Prior to his election to the U.S. Senate in 1996, SMITH operated his family's frozen food processing company in Pendleton. He first entered public service in 1992 serving in the Oregon Senate, where he became Senate president in 1995.

A native Oregonian, he and his wife Sharon live in Pendleton where they raised three children—Brittany, Garrett, and Morgan.

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TRIBUTES
TO
GORDON H. SMITH

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Proceedings in the Senate

SATURDAY, *September 27, 2008*

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF SENATE DOCUMENT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the tributes to retiring Senators that appear in the *Congressional Record* be printed as a Senate document and that Senators be permitted to submit such tributes for inclusion until Friday, November 21, 2008.

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

WEDNESDAY, *November 19, 2008*

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, for nearly 70 years the film “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” has inspired Americans and people around the world with its uplifting story of how one man of conviction and character can make a difference. Today, I am honored to offer a few words to the Mr. Smith of our time: Senator GORDON SMITH of Oregon.

Senator SMITH came to Washington to make a difference—and he has. He and I were sworn into the U.S. Senate on the same day, January 7, 1997. Although his State and mine are a continent apart, we quickly found that we had a lot in common.

It has been a joy to work with GORDON SMITH on so many important issues. Of course, where I come from, the name Senator Smith conjures up not just the beloved movie but also a towering, real-life figure, and my inspiration in public service. Although Margaret Chase Smith of Maine and GORDON SMITH are separated by time, they are united in a spirit of independence and integrity. Both served with strong convictions but with respect for the principles of others. Both spoke up when they saw wrongdoing. Both had extraordinary courage that allowed them to speak out when they thought their own party was in error. Both saw the aisle not

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as a barrier to progress but as a bridge to reaching consensus on behalf of the American people.

This focus on moving forward is especially apparent in GORDON SMITH's effective work on issues of great importance in Maine, in Oregon, and everywhere in between—health care, tax relief, small business, equal rights, and foreign policy. These challenges are ones that require careful consensus building, a responsible approach that has defined GORDON SMITH's service here.

GORDON SMITH is simply a wonderful person and an extraordinary leader. We all remember the terrible tragedy he suffered with the loss of his son during his service here, a terrible tragedy that gave him and his family such sorrow. But it is typical of GORDON SMITH that out of that tragedy, he chose to do something to help prevent other families from enduring the tragedy of the loss of a child. That is so typical of GORDON SMITH—always thinking of others, always trying to do what is right, always committed to public service.

Smith is one of the more common names in the English language, but in this Chamber the name has special meaning, one of uncommon principles and extraordinary accomplishments. It reminds us of a cherished film, of the great lady from the State of Maine, Senator Margaret Chase Smith, and now of Senator GORDON SMITH. I thank him for his service and his friendship, and I wish him all the best in the future.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise with sadness to say goodbye to our friend the Senator from Oregon, GORDON SMITH. For 12 years he has made the people of Oregon proud by serving as a model legislator: thoughtful, independent, and focused on getting results for our country and his State.

GORDON heard the call to serve others early in life, becoming an Eagle Scout as a boy and taking a 2-year mission to New Zealand for his church. He earned his bachelor's degree at Brigham Young University and his law degree at Southwestern University.

He then bought back the family business, a frozen vegetable company, and transformed it into one of the largest and most profitable in the country. With GORDON's departure, we are losing the Senate's only member of the Frozen Food Hall of Fame.

GORDON's desire to serve led him to run for the Oregon State Senate in 1992. His peers recognized the star in their

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midst when they elevated him first to minority leader, then to senate president during his first term in office.

GORDON then entered a special election to fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat. Election day fell in January 1996, and GORDON lost that race—the winner was our colleague, his fellow Senator from Oregon.

But then GORDON did something no one else has ever done, and proved to the people of the Beaver State how much he cared about making sure every Oregonian's voice was heard in Washington.

He ran for the Senate again in the regularly scheduled election later that year, making him the only American in history to run for two Senate seats in the same year. The people of Oregon gave him their trust and GORDON has never let them down.

Oregonians can rightfully be proud of his conservation record, as he championed legislation to successfully secure the protection of 170,000 acres of wilderness on Steen Mountain and the Bull Run watershed.

While protecting our natural resources, he also understands the importance of the many working Oregonians who depend on his State's natural resources for their livelihood. The foremost example of his work in that regard is his tireless effort to protect the farmers of the Klamath Basin area, and to keep their agricultural lands in production.

He has fought to lower the number of uninsured and drive health care costs down, and has been a tireless advocate for the disabled and mentally ill.

He has sponsored legislation to strengthen the prosecution of child exploitation cases, fought for new protections against Internet predators, and led the effort to increase funding for programs that help victims of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

GORDON has also been a leading voice on issues of education, and has fought to secure rural schools throughout Oregon. He has fought for lower taxes, so more Oregonians can keep more of what they earn.

But there is one issue in particular where GORDON led the way in a very personal manner for a cause close to his heart. In 2003, GORDON's son, Garrett, committed suicide just one day before his 22d birthday.

The torment a parent must feel after losing a child must be the worst horror imaginable. No amount of sympathy, no words, nothing any of us could do could possibly ease the pain in GORDON's and his family's hearts.

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Yet even in his grief, GORDON showed us the strength of his character when he wrote about his loss in his moving memoir, "Remembering Garrett." And he channeled his sadness into successful legislation, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, to create screening programs to identify and help youths at risk for suicide.

I'll never forget his powerful words on behalf of that legislation in this very Chamber. He said, "[There's] no owner's manual to help you bury a child, especially when the cause is suicide. So I've committed myself to trying to find meaning in Garrett's life." GORDON, with that brave act you prevented the tragedy of suicide from befalling countless other families. I can think of no more profound example of strength and leadership than that.

Every Senator knows what a pleasure it is to work with GORDON. He believes we were sent here to find solutions, not confrontations. And for every day he has served in public office, finding solutions has been his goal.

GORDON, it has been a privilege to work with you these many years, and to spend time with you and your wife Sharon. America is a stronger Nation thanks to your dedication and spirit of public service. Please don't forget you have many friends here, and we all wish you well in your bright future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. Cantwell). The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I thank my leader, Mitch McConnell. Winston Churchill observed that "Democracy is not always a polite employer." That is the case in my reelection effort. Yet I feel nothing but gratitude to the people of my State.

I acknowledge the wisdom of the people of Kentucky in your reelection and of the wisdom of my colleagues for electing you again as our leader. You are an articulate advocate for causes that I think are important for America not to forget in the coming days. It is one of the high privileges of my life that I have been able to serve with you as a friend and as a colleague.

I thank you and I thank my Senate family, without respect to party, for the help that was given to Sharon and me at the most painful time of our lives—to find additional meaning in the life of our son by helping the sons and daughters of others. I hope and pray that my Senate colleagues, while I am gone, will not forget those who struggle with mental ill-

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ness. I am so proud of Senator Domenici, Senator Kennedy, and others who championed mental health parity. It has been a privilege to be on their team in this cause. It is a silent cause. It is one that does not get a lot of ink or much attention because America is still opening its mind to this important area of medicine. But we have blazed a new trail, and much of it was because of your leadership, sir.

For the privilege of serving with you, of serving my State, of serving with these colleagues here, I thank God, and I thank the State of Oregon, and I say God bless America.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, may I just add a word to my friend from Oregon. He has had an extraordinarily successful tenure here. In my view, I would say to my friend from Oregon, you can always look back on these 12 years with a sense of accomplishment. You have been a major player in this institution on a variety of different, extremely important matters that will affect each generation to come. So on behalf of all of our Republican colleagues, and I am sure on behalf of everyone in the Senate, I thank you for your extraordinary service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the Senator leaves the floor—I am sorry I had to leave, I was called away from my desk—I wanted to say through the Chair to my friend GORDON SMITH that I, of course, watched all the election results very closely. But my wife watched one election result, and that was yours, because of the long-standing relationship she has with you and Sharon. The record is very clear of our long-standing friendship and our having had a similar experience with our loved ones following suicide.

I am sorry I didn't have more time to maybe write something out that may have been more meaningful, but I hope the Senator from Oregon will always understand the affection, respect, and admiration I have not only for what you did in your Senate service but for what you do in your personal life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. Let me say as well, I don't have a prepared statement to make either, but I want to tell my friend from Oregon how much I have enjoyed my work with him over the years on a number of very important issues dealing with the

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issue that the Senator can speak of not only with eloquence but with a great deal of passion, and that is the issue of mental illness. We were able to pass, in the waning days of our session, of course, the mental health parity bill. How important that was. Pete Domenici, TED Kennedy, Paul Wellstone, and others worked on it, but GORDON SMITH was invaluable in that discussion.

I enjoyed immensely my work with him during his two terms in the Senate. I will say to my friend, the Good Lord is not through with you yet. There are a lot of things you can do for our country. You have done a lot already. So I hope you come back often and see us and know you have friends who care about you and cherish you very much. Although there is an aisle here that separates us politically, the aisle doesn't exist when it comes to respect and admiration. In those terms, I am your seatmate in terms of my respect for you. I thank you for all you have done.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I want to thank Senator GORDON SMITH for his service to the people of Oregon. During my time on the Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee I have watched Senator SMITH fight ardently for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that has saved countless lives around the globe. His leadership on legislation to fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases has been vital to our efforts to bring help to many African nations.

I also applaud his work to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which I was also pleased to co-sponsor. His efforts to end employment discrimination based on sexual orientation represent an important step toward ensuring equal rights for all Americans.

Finally, I want to recognize Senator SMITH's work on legislation to require health insurers to include mental health benefits in their health insurance coverage. This excellent example of bipartisan cooperation, the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, was made possible in part by the commitment of Senator SMITH to ensuring those suffering from mental illness have access to medical treatments that will improve their quality of life.

Once again, I thank GORDON SMITH for his dedication to the people of Oregon and the country while in the Senate, and I wish him all the best in the future.

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Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, when a departing colleague has been a strong working partner as well as a friend, saying goodbye is not easy. I have had the pleasure of serving on several committees with GORDON SMITH over the course of his career. We have sat across the dais from each other at the Budget Committee, the Indian Affairs Committee, and the Finance Committee.

I am proud of what Senator SMITH and I have been able to accomplish in promoting savings and capital preservation for people in their retirement years. He recognized a long time ago that the sooner workers begin saving for retirement—and the longer they sustain that commitment—the better off they and their families will be when they have to depend on those savings.

The successes we enjoyed in getting some of our ideas included in the Pension Protection Act of 2006 led to more ambitious proposals to address the special retirement savings and income needs of women and older workers. And GORDON SMITH was the first to join the effort to promote lifetime income instruments as a response to longevity advances, which constitute the greatest threat to the retirement income security of the baby boom generation.

In view of the economic situation the country now faces, the efforts that Senator SMITH and I began must continue. I sincerely regret that he will not be my primary partner on this agenda in the 111th Congress. I certainly hope that he will continue to use his influence and intelligence to keep the focus on this clear national priority.

Finally, I want to salute Senator SMITH for the character of his service to his State, this body, and to the Nation. He is the kind of deliberate, open-minded, and thoughtful public servant the Founders must have had in mind when they conceived the Senate. We will truly miss this distinguished gentleman from Oregon.

THURSDAY, *November 20, 2008*

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, at this moment, exactly 13 years ago, I was locked in the toughest political battle of my life against GORDON H. SMITH. I went on to narrowly win that race and continue to hold that Senate seat today. But GORDON SMITH dusted himself off only a few months later and took on yet another very tough battle, and that time he

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won the Senate seat that had been held for 30 years by our remarkable Senator Mark Hatfield.

At that point, Oregonians did not know what to make of their Senate delegation. They had two Senators, myself and Senator SMITH, who were replacing Bob Packwood and Mark Hatfield. Those two individuals were the chairman of the Finance Committee and the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. And, of course, the old story was that Bob Packwood got to raise all of the money because he was chairman of the Finance Committee, and Mark Hatfield got to spend it all because he was chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Of course, I was very much concerned about what was ahead because I thought it was very possibly going to be a long and uncomfortable 6 years serving with the fellow with whom I had just duked it out over many months of a political campaign that, as the two of us like to say, was not exactly for the fainthearted.

One of the great surprises of my career came, however, when I discovered that my new colleague, GORDON SMITH, was as thoughtful and kind and decent outside the political arena as he was tough and competitive inside the political arena. It was that charm and that decency and his desire to meet me halfway on Oregon's interests that got me closer to GORDON over the years and led to an unusually strong working relationship and what became a strong and genuine friendship.

GORDON lost a very tough reelection race a few weeks ago in a State that has changed rapidly from what was a very small Democratic voter edge, back when we ran against each other in 1996, to what has become a significant Democratic voter edge in 2008. GORDON and his skillful campaign team battled hard and tough as they always have. They did everything they could to withstand a formidable political tide and a very strong Democratic challenger, a challenger whom I support. So it is with mixed and conflicting emotions that I come today to pay tribute to my colleague and my friend of 12 years, GORDON H. SMITH.

GORDON and I have had plenty of political differences, enough differences, differences that we knew would be the case, that made us say from our very first meeting, when GORDON won that race to replace Mark Hatfield, that we would be supporting each other's opponents in years ahead.

Political campaigns are important, and each of us was called upon to separate our friendship from our beliefs every

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2 years. Yet I will say this afternoon that I have come to genuinely loathe much of what has become of the political process in our country. The relentless and omnipresent negative ads obscure and distort to the point that it can be difficult for the typical citizen to maintain anything resembling a healthy perspective on fundamentally good and decent individuals who seek public office.

Thankfully, the negative ads are now off the air, and I want to make sure Oregonians once again remember the GORDON SMITH I have known for 12 years. GORDON has been a good and decent and selfless public servant.

The fact is, GORDON SMITH did not need to serve another term in the Senate. He and his wife Sharon have built a strong and prosperous business, and they could have done countless things with their time that would have been more glamorous and certainly produced less strain and wear and tear on their personal lives. But GORDON ran because of his belief in the role that he believed he could play in shaping our country's future. That, in my view, is the essence of being a good public servant. No one in this body or in the State of Oregon ought to lose sight of the extraordinary sacrifices that GORDON and his wife Sharon have made over the course of almost two decades of public service.

Among GORDON's many personal triumphs in the Senate, I would like to highlight two that are especially important to our State, to our country, and to me personally. I wanted to remind my colleagues and the people of our country of the very difficult decisions made by GORDON and Sharon to share with the public and the Congress their heartrending struggle on behalf of their son, Garrett. They did this selflessly to further the cause of mental health treatment, and particularly the cause of mental health parity.

If not for GORDON's courage in sharing their family's story, I believe Congress might not have acted on mental health parity this past fall, and thousands of parents might never know that they are not alone in their difficult struggle.

There were other critical tasks that GORDON shouldered and one that I was especially appreciative for his leadership on, and that was being the voice for rural folks, for people whose way of life and quality of life is connected to natural resources that are bountiful in our State.

GORDON spoke for the farmer, and he spoke for the rancher. He spoke for the logger, for the millworker, and the miner. He spoke for the rural communities they live in, com-

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munities that struggle to retain a voice in increasingly urban America.

It was written fairly frequently in Oregon's papers, and was in the *New York Times* at one point, that there was something in the State of Oregon that people came to say was the Senate's odd couple. In fact, I think the headline in the *New York Times* when they talked about us was wildly inflationary, and GORDON and I came to laugh about it. I think the headline was, "Oregon's Odd Couple Makes It Work." It was essentially all about how there were two Senators from Oregon; one of them was a Mormon fellow. He was a Republican. He was from somewhere called Pendleton. GORDON and I were never convinced that folks in the *New York Times* knew exactly where Pendleton was, but that is how GORDON was described.

Then they said the other Senator was a Jewish guy, and he was from Portland and he was a legal aid lawyer for the senior citizens, and he was an activist with the Gray Panthers. What in the world would these two people ever have in common?

Well, I want people to know that gentle spirit, that Mormon from wheat and pea country taught this Jewish fellow from the city an awful lot about the too often forgotten voices, particularly those in our rural communities.

In his absence, I will do everything I can to remind colleagues, particularly Democratic colleagues on my side of the aisle, of the challenges faced in rural communities, of the people and the issues that GORDON H. SMITH championed every single day in the Senate. I wish GORDON and Sharon well in whatever their future endeavors are. I have already made it clear they will always have my friendship and assistance in any project they pursue in the days ahead. But most important, I come to the floor and thank GORDON for his personal friendship to me and his service to our State. I ask my colleagues here and the people of our home State to voice their thanks today to two very special people, Sharon and GORDON H. SMITH.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I have listened to the eloquent comments of the Senator from Oregon, Mr. Wyden. I had planned to insert a statement in the *Record* complementing Senator GORDON SMITH on his tenure, but I would

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like to add my voice of laudatory comments at the conclusion of the statement of Senator Wyden. I agree with him that Senator GORDON SMITH has made an enormous contribution to the Senate in his two terms, and he will be sorely missed. He is a member of a small band of moderates on this side of the aisle. I suggest that GORDON SMITH's brand of Republicanism is very much in need in this body. Very frequently, Members on the Democratic side of the aisle seek co-sponsors. I have been told on a number of occasions that the "pickins are slim." GORDON's absence will make it more difficult.

GORDON SMITH has been outspoken on many of the very important causes that require bipartisanship. He was one of the few on this side of the aisle to sponsor legislation to fight hate crimes, for example. At the outset, support for Federal funding for embryonic stem cell research was limited. GORDON SMITH was at the forefront of that effort, as I was. GORDON SMITH made a very eloquent speech from his chair a few rows behind me on the Iraq war. He was moved one day to come over and spoke from the heart, something which happens relatively infrequently in this Chamber. Sometimes people in this Chamber speak from the head. Even that has its limited aspects, if we take a close look at the *Congressional Record*. But GORDON SMITH was a big plus here.

I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Wyden. I know GORDON is a young, vigorous man. He has a bright future ahead of him. I think he will live to fight another day on the political wars. Some of us have had an election loss or two. It is a learning experience, not one I recommend, but there are ways to move forward. That can be a lesson that could stand anyone in good stead. I am sure Senator GORDON SMITH has a great future ahead of him.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, today may mark the last day of this session, although I shall not try to make that prediction. However, I would not want this day to pass without availing myself of the opportunity and the privilege to come to this floor and say a few words on behalf of the very dear and valued friends whom I have served with in this Chamber as they depart and go on the road of life to, I expect, in each case great challenges.

GORDON SMITH and I have become friends for ever so many reasons. One, we both love the outdoors. He and his devoted wife Sharon and my wife have all been close friends through these years. As I look back, I will always remember GORDON. I remember when I was chairman of the Armed

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Services Committee and entrusted with the extraordinary responsibilities—along with other committee members, as well as, indeed, every Member of this Chamber—entrusted with those decisions relating to this Nation’s Armed Forces who were fighting so valiantly then, today, and for the foreseeable future—I hope the short future—in Iraq.

GORDON and I had many very quiet and private conversations about his deep concerns and convictions. His convictions emanated from the depths of his heart. Politics played no role in his approach to the conflict in Iraq. He was gravely concerned about the loss of life and limb, the image of this Nation, and, indeed, the families of the loved ones who are fighting in that conflict. So I say: GORDON, we had our differences, but I respected your stance. I can see him standing back there as erect as he always was, standing and voting against me and voting against others, but again, drawing on his own deeply held personal convictions. Time will tell and history will tell if I was right or if I was wrong, but I found his counsel, his willingness to listen, his willingness to share with me his most inner thoughts about that conflict a very valuable asset as I and others in leadership positions carried the heavy burden of that conflict. So I am grateful to him. He is a very sensitive man, and he showed that sensitivity every so often as he plunged into the complex issues with regard to health care, the almost insoluble problems—problems that he recognized have to be solved, particularly so that people of lesser means can achieve a measure of health care equivalent to those who have the means can receive for themselves. It is a hallmark of how this man proudly walked his way through life, with a loving wife by his side and the family whom he loves so dearly, and always thinking about those who perhaps have not had the opportunities that he and I and others have had, particularly as it relates to health care.

He also loves the outdoors. A great golfer, we played together from time to time. His skill is far superior to mine in every way. He is a lover of art. We shared our interest in paintings, particularly paintings that had come from Scotland. To have had the friendship of GORDON SMITH is to have shared the life of a wonderful human being, and I thank GORDON for all that he has done for me and for this great Nation, and for his beloved State. I wish him well in his next venture, and I look forward to meeting him along the way.

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Mr. HATCH. Mr. President. I thank you for the opportunity today to pay tribute to a very special man, caring husband and father, and great Senator, GORDON SMITH.

Sadly, he will be leaving this august body soon and returning to private life. The U.S. Senate will be losing a great leader, a man of high integrity, and a true statesman.

GORDON joined the U.S. Senate in January 1997, after winning an election as a rural conservative in a State defined by a more liberal landscape. After his election, Senator SMITH quickly made his mark as someone both sides of the aisle could work with for the good of his State and our Nation. He displayed the characteristics of what I believe makes a truly great Senator—someone who is willing to roll up his sleeves and battle for what he believes is right.

His commitment to Oregon was exemplary. He focused on issues that were critical to the citizens of his State including education, health care, natural resources, and bridging the rural-urban divide. Along the way he displayed a true independent streak, bucking his party when he believed he needed to go a different direction for the good of those he represented.

Senator SMITH's leadership and abilities were greatly appreciated by the committee members he served with, and the positions he was asked to assume. As chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging he presided over critical issues facing our Nation's aging population. In addition, he made tremendous contributions to four additional committees: Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Indian Affairs; and Finance.

He was also selected four times by the leadership of our party to become the deputy whip, an important position we could all look to for guidance and support.

I had the distinct pleasure of traveling with Senator SMITH on two occasions to Iraq to assess the situation first hand, visit with the troops, and become more intimately familiar with the challenges facing our country overseas. We shared a genuine interest and concern in the events taking place in that country, and I will forever be grateful to Senator SMITH for taking that journey with me.

Before joining the Senate, GORDON made his mark in the business world—assuming the helm of his family's frozen vegetable processing company. His strength and commitment steered this company to new success, and established himself as a business leader with qualities to emulate.

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You can't talk about GORDON SMITH without talking about the love he has for people, especially his wonderful family. GORDON and his wife Sharon have raised three wonderful children: Brittany, Garrett, and Morgan. Even while meeting the demands of his job, you always knew his thoughts and actions centered on home.

During his second term in office, GORDON and Sharon had to face a tragedy almost impossible to bear. Their son Garrett lost his battle with depression and grief. As I watched this deeply grieving father, I was so powerfully reminded that life isn't always about what happens in the walls of the U.S. Capitol but it is about our families, our friends, and the love we share with those closest to our souls.

Senator SMITH didn't just let his grief consume him—he took action. Perhaps his proudest accomplishment in Senate service would be the passing of a suicide prevention law named after his son. This law passed unanimously and has made a real difference in programs across the country that are designed to help those in critical emotional need.

I am truly grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve with this great man for 12 years. In a town where true friendships can be rare, I have been blessed to find a true friend in GORDON SMITH. Although we didn't always agree, our deepest fundamental beliefs were shaped in the same bedrock of less government, opportunities for all, and integrity in public service.

I always knew that whether in times of trouble or success, I had found a true comrade in service, someone I could trust to do what is right and hold fast to the notion of public service for the people.

Robert Louis Stevenson stated, "We are all travelers in the wilderness of this world, and the best we can find in our travels is an honest friend." GORDON has been just that friend to me.

I will miss working alongside this great Senator, and true American. However, I know that throughout his life he will continue to work for the good of others in whatever endeavors he chooses to follow. I want to wish GORDON and his wife Sharon and their children many years of continued success, happiness and peace as they travel life's path together. Thank you for the opportunity to honor this extraordinary man.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order from September 27 regarding tributes to retiring Senators be modified so that Senators be permitted to

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submit such tributes for inclusion in a Senate document until Friday, December 12, 2008.

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

MONDAY, *December 8, 2008*

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to honor my friend and colleague from Oregon, Senator GORDON SMITH.

I have worked with GORDON since coming over to the Senate in 1998. It has been an honor and privilege to serve on both the Senate Finance Committee and Energy and Natural Resources Committee with him. GORDON has a long list of accomplishments to show for the people of Oregon and the Nation. He has served the people of Oregon well, and I know they are proud to call him one of their own. His leadership in the Senate will be missed, and it has truly been an honor serving with him.

I thank GORDON for all of his contributions to the U.S. Senate, and I wish him and his family the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, four of our most valuable Senators will not return next year and we will miss them. ...

GORDON SMITH is the most eloquent among us Senators. Every Republican Senator would say that, and any Democrat who had heard him would agree. He has a quiet way, an intelligence and a way of speaking that commands attention and respect. He has his feet firmly planted on the ground in Pendleton, OR. He understands the private sector. He has been courageous in his willingness to support and chide and criticize his party when needed. He will be sorely missed.

WEDNESDAY, *December 10, 2008*

Mr. KOHL. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to my colleague, Senator GORDON H. SMITH of Oregon. We have served together on the Special Committee on Aging since he came to the Senate in 1997. For the past 4 years, I have had the distinct pleasure of leading the committee alongside him.

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Our committee has a proud history of bipartisanship. Both the chair and the ranking member have the power to hold hearings, lead investigations, and conduct oversight for the good of older Americans. In every effort, the majority and minority staff involve each other, offering insights and inviting witnesses. The work we have done as leaders of the committee very much reflects the partnership we forged. And I am pleased to have had the opportunity to share many successes with Senator SMITH, the most recent of which—a 2-year extension of Supplemental Security Income, SSI, benefits for refugees and other humanitarian immigrants—was signed into law by President Bush this fall.

As the end of our era comes to a close, I wish to applaud Senator SMITH for his commendable leadership of the committee, and thank him for the comity he ensured as we worked together to support older workers, improve rural health care and Medicare accountability, and strengthen elder justice. I will be honored to push forth on these issues, which represent just a few of the many priorities we shared, though I will certainly regret the absence of my collaborator, Senator SMITH.

I wish Senator SMITH nothing but success and happiness as he leaves this institution. I, along with millions of older Americans, owe him a debt of gratitude for the work he has done here.

THURSDAY, *December 11, 2008*

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would like to pay tribute today to the service of Senator GORDON SMITH, who has served the people of Oregon and his country with honor. I have had the pleasure of serving with Senator SMITH during his two terms here in the Senate, and during that time he, and his wife Sharon, have been become dear friends. Marcelle and I have often enjoyed traveling with Senator SMITH and his wife Sharon, including a couple of trips to Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum.

Senator SMITH began his political career in 1992 when he was first elected to the Oregon State Senate. There he served as minority leader and the president of the senate during his first term in office. Since his election to the U.S. Senate, Senator SMITH has always been willing to reach across the aisle to bring our colleagues together, and his leadership has produced a list of impressive legislative accomplishments.

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During his two terms here in the Senate Senator SMITH has committed himself to efforts on behalf of the people of Oregon, supporting both criminal justice reform and expansion of youth services. Following the tragic death of his son Garrett, Senator SMITH worked tirelessly as an advocate for the early intervention and prevention of youth suicide, establishing a grant program for youth mental health programs through the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, which was signed into law by President Bush in 2004. I also appreciate the partnership that we forged in advancing the Innocence Protection Act, a package of modest procedural reforms relating to the death penalty, which I introduced in 2000, and much of which was enacted several years later.

Marcelle and I have valued his friendship and wish GORDON and Sharon all of the best.

Mr. COLEMAN. Madam President, when the Founders envisioned this Senate, I believe they hoped it would be a place where strong opinions, established life skills and varied experience would come together to serve the Nation. Senator GORDON SMITH of Oregon has matched that standard, and the whole Nation has benefited.

I have always been encouraged and inspired by Senator SMITH's forward-looking mind and his energetic advocacy of a better life for all Americans. He has fought for better schools for our children. He confronted the reality of America's "drop-out culture" and fought for individualized attention for at-risk kids.

We have worked together to ensure that the Medicaid Program fulfills its promise to America's less fortunate, and to extend the excellent quality of American health care to a broader and broader share of the population.

It has been an honor to work with GORDON SMITH on the Aging Committee in particular. His tireless advocacy to ensure that our seniors are afforded the dignity and respect they deserve has been an inspiration.

GORDON SMITH has also been a strong voice for Oregonians on the environment and the natural treasures in their State. And he turned personal tragedy into a nationwide effort to prevent suicide.

On issue after issue, GORDON SMITH has demonstrated a boundless enthusiasm for the process of reform, and a confidence that we can always make government programs more responsive, more relevant, and more effective for the American people.

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Like the modern day Oregon pioneers he represents, GORDON SMITH has always demonstrated both a fierce independence and a strong belief that there is a better way—if we dream big, work hard, and stick together, there is no problem too big for America.

In “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,” Hollywood memorialized the commonsense man of impeccable character as the ideal Senator. GORDON SMITH would have fit the part perfectly. I will dearly miss his integrity, his enthusiasm, and his friendship in this place. But I am excited for what the next chapter of his leadership will mean to Oregon and this country. I hope we can all bring more of his can-do spirit and positive energy to the urgent challenges we face in the days ahead.

FRIDAY, *December 12, 2008*

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, we have come to the end of another legislative session and we are all preparing to return home to celebrate the holidays with our friends and families back home. As we close the books on the 110th Session of Congress, it is good to have this opportunity take a moment to say goodbye to our colleagues who will not be with us when the gavel opens the next session of Congress. We will miss them all.

One Senator we will particularly miss when the next session of Congress begins is GORDON SMITH. GORDON is a remarkable representative of his home State and he has been an important voice for the people of Oregon during his 12 years of service in the Senate.

I have enjoyed coming to know GORDON and having a chance to work with him on several issues of concern to the people of our States. During his service, he has compiled a remarkable record of success that has earned him a reputation for his ability to get things done in both the private and public sector.

GORDON and I have something in common—a love of numbers and the intricacies of the law and how they impact the small businesses of our Nation. We are both aware of the importance of the small business community and the jobs they provide to the people of this Nation. Without them our local, State, and national economies would be in even worse shape than they are right now. With them, there is great hope and

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confidence that we will be able to find a solution to the economic problems facing our country.

GORDON knows something about running a small business from the days he spent trying to revive the frozen vegetable processing company that had been in his family's hands. Because of the strength of his will, his determination to succeed, and his commitment to excellence, he was able to produce amazing results. He took what had been an unprofitable business and turned it into one of the largest frozen food companies in the United States. His incredible ride to the top earned him a place in the Frozen Food Industry Hall of Fame.

It also earned him a spot on the Senate Finance Committee, where he has worked tirelessly to protect the small businesses of our Nation. His business sense and the practical experience he had of meeting a payroll and planning a budget helped him to master all of the details of our tax policy. He has an uncanny sense and a profound understanding of what works and what doesn't—and why. Fortunately, he has been at the right place at the right time and has known what to do to fix things and right our country's economic ship.

GORDON's commitment to our families has shown itself in many ways, most notably by his work to tackle the problem of uninsured children. He offered an amendment that passed the Senate providing for an increase in Federal cigarette taxes to fund a program to cover some 6 million uninsured children who were eligible for but were not enrolled in State health insurance programs or Medicaid.

He fought for our children because GORDON understands full well that they are our most important resource. If we don't provide them with affordable health care, a good education, and a supportive home environment that will make it possible for them to be successful in school and later in life, then nothing we do, no matter how well we do it, will matter much in the long run.

GORDON knew it would not be easy to pass that amendment, but he was ready for a fight. He made it clear that if anything was worth fighting for, that was it. It really was no wonder, therefore, when he won a clear and decisive victory, not for himself, but for those 6 million children who now have a chance to live a happier and healthier life thanks to GORDON SMITH. It's another proud chapter in his legislative career—and it's part of a legacy of service to the people of Oregon that will never be forgotten.

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As I have come to know GORDON, I have thought that he is a little like me because we both love to confound those in both parties who are surprised to see us working so well with Members on both sides of the aisle. We have both worked with Ted Kennedy and thanks to his willingness to help us pursue a common agenda, we have both been able to make progress on the issues that concern us and the people back home.

In the months to come, I believe we will most remember GORDON for the way he faced the personal tragedy of losing a son. I can only imagine the pain that comes with such a loss. GORDON handled that time in his life with great strength and shared his experience with us, not to draw attention to himself, but because he knew that "his having been there" would enable him to reach out to help those who might be facing a similar struggle in the lives of their own families.

As he began to heal from that painful wound, he took that personal tragedy and gave it added meaning by working to pass a suicide prevention bill that now bears his son's name. It was another battle he fought because it was the right thing to do. He took up the cause because he believed in it with all his heart. As a result, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act will forever serve as a loving testament of a father to the life of his son. It will encourage us all to reach out to those facing similar problems so they can receive the help and support they need to go on with their lives.

I have always known GORDON to be a man of great spiritual strength, a former Mormon bishop who has deep personal and moral convictions. He has a strong sense of right and wrong and his inner compass has helped to guide him in the direction that he felt was best for his State and the Nation. He is an individual blessed with a strong and determined spirit who has a special place in his heart and his life for his God and his country.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Senator GORDON SMITH, with whom I have had the privilege of working throughout his 12 years of service in the U.S. Senate. GORDON has been a great friend to me as he has to so many of us—but most important he has been a tremendous asset to the Senate, the Nation, and certainly the great State of Oregon.

Since his election to the U.S. Senate in 1996, the people of Oregon have benefited immeasurably from Senator SMITH's leadership. Throughout his service on numerous

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committees, including the Commerce and Finance Committees where we have served together, Senator SMITH has been a credit to this body and has left a positive and lasting mark—exemplified by his tireless work on the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, and the leadership he took in defending the Medicaid Program from misguided budget cuts.

Above all else, Senator SMITH always perceived his responsibility as representing his country before his party. There is no doubt that as we move forward into the next Congress, I, for one, will miss his independent perspective.

Since 1992, when he won election to the Oregon State Senate, Senator SMITH has devoted his life to public service—and his integrity and dedication to the finest ideals of service make him a role model for all Americans. Few who have held the position of U.S. Senator have been able to combine his candor, civility, aptitude, and absolute dedication to the public good that have allowed him to be such an effective, bipartisan Member of the Senate.

What many may not understand is the camaraderie that we build with our fellow Members of the Senate. We spend aggregate months each year separated from our homes, families, and friends and in doing so, each of us becomes a part of an extended family. So it was the most acute and profound sadness that we all felt in our hearts upon the loss in 2003 of GORDON’s son, Garrett Lee. And, having read Senator SMITH’s book, “Remembering Garrett, One Family’s Battle with a Child’s Depression,” I still find it almost unimaginable—the grace and courage he displayed in continuing his work during the most difficult of times after Garrett’s tragic passing.

As a testament to his humble nature, Senator SMITH turned from his own loss to help others. And he forged a remarkable and indelible legacy for his son with the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act—legislation to which Senator SMITH has dedicated his life. This act, which the President signed into law on October 21, 2004, authorized \$82 million for suicide prevention and awareness programs, and represented just the first step Senator SMITH has taken to help prevent other families from having to experience what his has endured.

Our government is supposed to work for the people, and few individuals during my tenure in public service have exemplified this truism more so than Senator SMITH. In the Senate, GORDON never allowed a party label to determine

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who he works with on critical legislation affecting our Nation. He had the skill to work across the aisle with intelligence and grace, and most of all, his highest priority was his constituents in Oregon. Whether he was fighting for transit funding in urban Portland or assistance in coastal fishing communities and rural timber towns, GORDON always knew where his roots were, and he was invariably an eloquent champion for those issues that truly mattered for the people of Oregon.

GORDON, we thank you, we will miss you, and please know that you have left a positive and indelible mark on the Senate. All the best to you, Sharon, and your entire family for the future.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. GORDON SMITH has served the people of Oregon extremely well.

Before coming to the U.S. Senate, he served as director of the family-owned Smith Frozen Foods Company in Weston, OR, where he created jobs and spurred economic growth.

GORDON SMITH entered politics with his election to the Oregon State Senate in 1992, and he became president of that body in 1995.

Since winning election to the U.S. Senate in 1996, Senator SMITH has worked with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle on critical issues.

Senator SMITH chaired the Special Committee on Aging, and he also served on the following Senate committees: Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Finance; and Indian Affairs.

Senator SMITH has also courageously used family tragedy as a way to educate and encourage Americans on a very important subject: suicide prevention for young men and women.

In 2004, I was so proud when President Bush signed the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, authorizing \$82 million for suicide prevention and awareness programs at colleges.

Senator SMITH also distinguished himself by championing rural Oregonians, including the many farmers and ranchers throughout the mountains and lake areas of his beautiful State.

I thank GORDON SMITH for his dedication and service, and I wish him well.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I too wish to speak of my good friend, Senator GORDON SMITH of Oregon. Senator SMITH came to the Senate for all the right reasons, most im-

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portant to represent the people who elected him, and he has done an outstanding job of doing just that. GORDON never shied away from the controversial issues and often went against the majority position of his own party. Every time he did so he articulated in a very professional way his reason why he was voting and the way he did. This always takes courage and conviction, and GORDON SMITH possesses both.

I will always admire GORDON's faith, which allowed him to survive personal tragedy as well as deal with the day-to-day decisions of the Senate.

Senator GORDON SMITH is one of those Members who makes serving in the Senate a pleasure. I will miss his counsel, his advice, and his friendship. Godspeed to him, Sharon, and their family.

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