

Barbara A. Mikulski

U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES





Barbara A. Mikulski

Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Barbara A. Mikulski

United States Congressman
1977–1987

United States Senator
1987–



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BIOGRAPHY

The people of Maryland elected BARBARA A. MIKULSKI to be their U.S. Senator because she's a fighter—looking out for the day-to-day needs of Marylanders and the long range needs of the Nation.

Growing up in the Highlandtown neighborhood of East Baltimore, Senator MIKULSKI learned the values of hard work, neighbor helping neighbor, and heartfelt patriotism. She often saw her father open the family grocery store early so local steelworkers could buy lunch before the morning shift.

Determined to make a difference in her community, BARBARA MIKULSKI became a social worker in Baltimore, helping at-risk children and educating seniors about the Medicare Program. Social work evolved into community activism when Senator MIKULSKI successfully organized communities against a plan to build a 16-lane highway through Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood. She helped stop the road, saving Fells Point and Baltimore's Inner Harbor, both thriving residential and commercial communities today.

Senator MIKULSKI is a trailblazer. Her first election was a successful run for Baltimore City Council in 1971, where she served for 5 years. In 1976, she ran for Congress and won, representing Maryland's Third district for 10 years. In 1986, she ran for Senate and won, becoming the first Democratic woman Senator elected in her own right. She was reelected with large majorities in 1992, 1998, 2004, and 2010.

A leader in the Senate, BARBARA MIKULSKI is the dean of the women—serving as a mentor to other women Senators when they first take office. As the dean, she builds coalitions—proving that the Senate women are not solo acts, but work together to get things done.

Senator MIKULSKI's experiences as a social worker and activist provided valuable lessons that she draws on as a U.S. Senator. She believes her constituents have a right to know, a right to be heard, and a right to be represented. She listens to her constituents and makes the personal, political.

TRIBUTES

TO

BARBARA A. MIKULSKI

Proceedings in the Senate

THURSDAY, *March 15, 2012*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on Saturday, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI becomes the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. We will mark that occasion on Wednesday when her family and friends will be present here in the Capitol. I have prepared detailed remarks for that occasion, but I thought it was important that we note very briefly here today this milestone in the history of our country.

Last January BARBARA MIKULSKI surpassed Margaret Chase Smith from Maine as the longest serving woman in the Senate. On Saturday, March 17, she will surpass Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers from Massachusetts as the longest serving woman in Congress.

Mrs. HAGAN. . . . As I take the floor in support of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, it is fitting to recognize one of our fiercest advocates for women's rights—my colleague and mentor Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who, on Saturday, will become the longest serving female congressional Member in history.

For more than 35 trailblazing years, Senator MIKULSKI has been a strong and unwavering voice for women, families, and the people of Maryland. She shepherded through the Lilly Ledbetter Act, which helps ensure that no matter your gender, race, religion, age, or disability, one will receive equal pay for equal work. She fought tenaciously for her important amendment to the health care reform legislation, ensuring that women's preventive care would be covered with no added out-of-pocket expense.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her mentorship, her leadership, and her fierce advocacy for women's rights. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Senator MIKULSKI and my colleagues to promote policies that support our women, our children, and our families and put them on a path to a brighter future. The Violence Against Women Reauthoriza-

tion Act is central to that goal, and I urge my colleagues to take up this bill and pass it without delay.

I yield the floor.

WEDNESDAY, *March 21, 2012*

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who loves us without ceasing, we turn our thoughts toward You. Remain with our Senators today so that for no single instance they will be unaware of Your providential power.

We thank You for Your infinite love that permits us to make mistakes yet still grow in grace and a knowledge of You. Lord, save us from any evil course or idle path that leads away from Your will. Today, we pray for the President of the United States and for the leaders in every land. Help them to bear their responsibilities with honor, and, Lord, today we also thank You for the amazing career of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a public servant, a social worker, and a tenacious advocate for vulnerable Americans. I rise today to honor a trailblazer and a mentor for me and countless others. I rise today to honor an outstanding U.S. Senator from Maryland and the dean of the Senate women, my friend BARBARA MIKULSKI.

I am privileged to have represented California in this body for almost 20 years. When I first ran for the Senate, back in 1992, I received a call from BARBARA MIKULSKI, personally urging me on and reaching out to provide encouragement.

I have relied on her advice, her friendship, and the Mikulski brand of candor ever since. As a matter of fact, one of my fondest evenings was a three-onion martini right down the street.

It is hard to believe, but when Senator MIKULSKI took office in 1987, there was only one other woman in this body, Senator Nancy Kassebaum, later Nancy Kassebaum Baker, the great Republican Senator from Kansas. Increasing the number of women in the Senate has been painfully slow. In

1991, the ranks of women in this body rose to three, then later to seven after the 1992 election. Today we have 17 women in this body and 76 in the House. As Senator MIKULSKI reflected in the *Washington Post* last year:

Women were so rare even holding statewide political office [back then] ... I was greeted with a lot of skepticism from my male colleagues. Was I going to go the celebrity route or the Senate route? I had to work very hard.

And she has. BARBARA has worked very hard to become an outstanding legislator and a trailblazing public official. Let me list a few of her firsts. She was the first female Democrat to serve in both Chambers of Congress—that in itself is impressive—the first female Democrat to be elected to the Senate without succeeding her husband or her father; the first woman to chair a Senate appropriations subcommittee; the first woman to serve a quarter century in the Senate; and the first woman elevated to a Senate leadership position.

She is the only current Member of Congress in the National Women's Hall of Fame. And she is not done yet. Just last week, BARB achieved another historic first. According to the Senate Historical Office, she reached 12,858 days of service, becoming the longest serving female Member of Congress in our Nation's history.

Senator MIKULSKI was born and raised in Baltimore. Determined to make a difference in her community—and you know that well, Mr. President—and guided by her Catholic belief and a belief in social justice, she became a social worker, helping at-risk children and educating seniors about Medicare. She once said, "I feel that I am my brother's keeper and my sister's keeper." Social work evolved into community activism when Barb successfully organized communities against a plan to build a highway through Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood.

Shortly thereafter, in 1971, she was elected to the Baltimore City Council where she served 5 years. That was about the time I was elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1970 in San Francisco. In 1976, she ran for Congress and won, representing Maryland's Third District for a decade. She was then elected to the Senate and has won reelection in 1992, 1998, 2004, and 2010 by large majorities.

As I said, BARB is an accomplished legislator. She is also one of the very best. She cares passionately about quality education and ensuring every student has access to higher education. She is a fighter for stem cell research to cure our most tragic and debilitating diseases. She is a tireless advocate for the National Institutes of Health. And she is a lead-

er on women's health, writing laws requiring Federal standards for mammograms, and a fearless proponent of breast and cervical cancer screenings and treatment for uninsured women.

We serve together on the Intelligence Committee. She asks some of the most prescient questions. I have seen her commitment to the FBI, to fighting terrorism, and also to cybersecurity where she headed a task force for our committee that has resulted in the cybersecurity legislation newly pending.

Finally, she has led the way to strengthen pay equity for women. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act is the law of the land today because of BARBARA MIKULSKI's effort. As BARB said when we passed the bill:

I believe that people should be judged solely by their individual skills, competence, unique talent and nothing else in the workplace. Once you get a job because of your skill and talent, you better get equal pay for equal work.

Or, in a manner that best captures BARB's candor, she said, "Women of America, square your shoulders, put on your lipstick, suit up, and let's close that wage gap once and for all." To me, that is classic BARBARA MIKULSKI.

Let me close with a story. Every so often at BARBARA's leadership, the Senate women get together for dinner. There is no agenda or staff, just Republican women, Democratic women, and a lot of lively conversation. We talk about our families, we talk about the workplace, we talk about the world, and, of course, we even talk, to some extent, about this place. Sometimes we enjoy Senator MIKULSKI's world-famous crab cakes, the best you will ever taste, and second only to the Dungeness crab of the west coast, I might add. If you have not, make sure you try the recipe on her Web site. We talk about our families and the way we can work together. It is a throwback to the civility of the Senate. These dinners are when BARB really stands out as the dean of Senate women.

Women in this country have always had to fight for the most basic of rights. I think young women forget that it was not until 1920 that we were able to vote in this country, and it was only because women fought for it. BARB will be the first to say her milestones are symbols of how far she has come. But she will also show us how much farther women have to go.

Today we take it for granted that a woman can be Secretary of State—we have had two—or Speaker of the

House—we have had one—or a candidate for President. Not quite yet. Oh, no, I take that back. We have had one. And one day soon, a woman will sit in the Oval Office of this great country. When she does, she will owe a great deal to BARBARA MIKULSKI.

On this day, let the *Congressional Record* of this Senate reflect and forever record that Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI is the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress, and this country is forever better because of it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I came here to talk on another matter, but I wish to take a few minutes to talk about my friend BARBARA MIKULSKI. We have served a long time together. When she came to this body, I think I may have been chairman of what was then called the Labor and Human Resources Committee, now the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

From the day she got on that committee, she made a difference in every way, not just for women but for every single American in this country. I have a tremendous amount of profound respect for Senator MIKULSKI and what she has been able to accomplish.

Let me mention one thing. Back in the early 1990s, she and I worked together on what was called the FDA Revitalization Act. That act was a very important one, because we had the FDA spread out all over the Greater Washington, DC, area, probably 30, 35 different offices, some of which were in converted chicken coops. It was ridiculous to have these top scientists in anything but a centralized location with top computerization and all of the other scientific instruments they need to do this work for the American people. I have to say that BARBARA MIKULSKI played a pivotal role in helping to develop that tremendous facility. I want you to know that I do not think it would have been developed without her effort and her dogged work to make sure that we now have a centralized—and it still needs improvement but centralized—FDA campus that literally is saving the lives of millions of people and making the lives of millions of people better.

I could go on. I have a lot of respect for my distinguished colleague from Maryland. I would feel badly if I did not get up and tell people how much I do respect her. She believes in what she does. She loves this body, most of the time, I

think. And she cares for her fellow Senators. We care for her. I want her to know that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in honoring our friend and colleague who is often regarded as the dean of the women in the Senate, BARBARA MIKULSKI.

Earlier this week Senator MIKULSKI added to her already long list of accomplishments the distinction of being the longest serving female Member of Congress in the history of the United States of America.

Senator MIKULSKI's life is a story of the American dream. Raised in a working-class immigrant family in the East Baltimore neighborhood of Highlandtown, Senator MIKULSKI learned at a young age about the struggles of working families and ethnic Americans and the value of paying it forward.

She helped at her father's grocery store, which opened early in the morning so that steelworkers could buy lunch before their morning shift. She delivered food to seniors and families when parts of her neighborhood were set on fire after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. At one point she even rode on the top of a tank to deliver the groceries.

Senator MIKULSKI's roots helped shape her role today as a mentor, fighter, and true public servant. She worked as a social worker for Catholic Charities, helping at-risk children and counseling seniors on Medicare. She had her start in politics as a community organizer and social worker.

In 1970—one side of BARBARA MIKULSKI her colleagues have certainly seen is her dogged determination—she organized Marylanders to stop a 16-lane highway project that would have threatened Fells Point and another neighborhood in Baltimore. She got the job done. Many people say that work helped to save Fells Point and the Inner Harbor, two of the showcase areas in the great city of Baltimore. She gave a speech at Catholic University to a Catholic conference on the ethnic American. It caught the attention not only of people in Baltimore but far beyond its reach as she talked about her family story and the story of millions just like her.

One year later, she ran for and won a seat on the Baltimore City Council—the first step in her now 41-year career in public service.

Over the course of the Senate's 223-year history, there have only been 38 female Members; the first, Rebecca Lati-

mer Felton, of Georgia, was appointed for political reasons to fill a vacancy, and she served only a single day in 1922.

Senator MIKULSKI has so many firsts in her story of public service. She was the first woman elected to the Senate in her own right—the first—and not because of a husband or father or someone who served before her in higher office. She was the first woman Democrat to serve in both Chambers of Congress—the first. Last year, she was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame for her trailblazing political career, including, with this recognition today, becoming the longest serving woman Senator in the history of our Nation.

Given her years of experience, it is no wonder other Members of Congress have turned to her for guidance, men and women alike.

I can recall so many meetings of our Democratic caucus when, after a long debate involving many people saying many things, BARBARA MIKULSKI would stand and, in a few terse words, get it right. At the end of the day people would say, “That is what we ought to do.” She has this insight based on her life experience and her ability to try to peel through the layers of the political onion and get to the heart of the issue.

Following the election of a number of esteemed women into the Senate, a lot of reporters deemed 1992 as the “Year of the Woman.” Senator MIKULSKI’s response was so typical and so right. This is what she said: “Calling 1992 the ‘year of the woman’ makes it sound like the ‘year of the caribou,’ or the ‘year of asparagus.’ We are not a fad, a fancy, or a year.”

That was typical BARBARA. Senator MIKULSKI rises above and beyond all that. From her first days in the Senate in 1987, she has fought an uphill battle to address the most important issues of national importance.

First and foremost for her is her family. Next is her great State of Maryland. She is a fearless advocate, and I know the Presiding Officer knows that better than most as her colleague from that great State.

She has supported educational initiatives, veterans causes, interstate commerce, access to health care and women’s health, and fair pay.

The Chair knows the answer to this question, but some of those listening to the debate might not. What was the first bill that the newly elected President Barack Obama signed in the White House with a public ceremony? It was a bill BARBARA MIKULSKI pushed hard for, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair

Pay Act, so women going to work all over the United States—not just in the Senate—would get a fair shake when it came to the compensation for the jobs they did. It was President Obama’s first bill. When he signed it, the very first pen he handed over to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. I was there and I saw it.

Championed by Senator MIKULSKI, the long-awaited and much needed bill clarifies time limits for workers to file unemployment discrimination lawsuits, making it easier for people to get the pay they deserve regardless of race, age, or gender.

I wish to start here—but I don’t know where I would end—to talk about the important issues she has worked for. Let me talk about health care for a minute. When we set out to pass this historic Affordable Health Care Act, BARBARA was assigned the job to make sure it connected with the families and workers across America in a very real way, to make sure that at the end of the day we weren’t talking to ourselves or engaged in political gibberish but passing a law that could literally change a life for the better. She led that effort and made invaluable contributions to the substance of that bill.

We knew those provisions would be important and that they would work because we knew where BARBARA MIKULSKI came from and we knew where her political heart resides. While it is a milestone to celebrate Senator MIKULSKI’s distinction as the longest serving woman in the Congress, there is a much greater cause for celebration; Senator MIKULSKI’s decades of service to this Nation is an admirable feat for any man or woman.

I extend my congratulations to my colleague and friend, Senator MIKULSKI for this milestone. Thank you for what you have done for the Senate, for the State of Maryland, and for our great Nation.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the hour of 2:30 having arrived, it is my honor and my pleasure to rise to honor a patriot, a pioneer, and now the longest serving woman in the Congress of the United States ever, and that is the senior Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI.

BARBARA and I served together in the House, and we came to the Senate together in 1986. I remember that day so well, when we had our first appearance in the Senate as new Senators. It was quite a moving event for me. But one of the

events I remember about that day is the presentation of Senator MIKULSKI.

We all said a word or two, and everything we said will be long forgotten. But what BARBARA MIKULSKI said, in the way she has of saying things, will not be forgotten.

Here is this woman who is not even as tall as my wife, who is 5 feet tall, but she said, "I slam-dunked Linda Chavez," her opponent. That said it all.

That was the beginning of my working closely with this good woman. She has been a friend, an inspiration to me in so many different ways in the time we have served together. When we got on the Environment and Public Works Committee, she was here, and I was here. She was always ahead of me in seniority because of her longer service in the House. On the Appropriations Committee, for more than two decades, I was here, she was here. She was always one ahead of me.

BARBARA was the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate in her own right. Last year, she surpassed the legendary Margaret Chase Smith of Maine as the longest serving woman in the history of the Senate. On Saturday, she officially surpassed Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, who, by the way, served in the House from 1925 to 1960 as the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress.

Senator MIKULSKI's service—and the service of many female Members of Congress—has paved the way for girls of today to know they can become Senators, they can become professional basketball players, and they can be engineers and doctors. The sky is the place they need to go, and that is where they believe they can go because of the work that has been done by BARBARA MIKULSKI.

When I came to the Senate with her, she was the only woman who served in the Senate as a Democrat. There was one other woman at the time, a Republican. Now, since then, Mr. President, I have watched very closely on this side of the aisle. Now we have 12 Democrats, and if the elections turn out the way I hope they do—and I am cautiously optimistic they will—we will have 17 women who are Democrats in the Senate.

She has been truly a trailblazer. We recognize BARBARA's achievements today and her outstanding record as a tireless advocate for the State of Maryland. She grew up in the Highlandtown neighborhood of East Baltimore. She learned the value of hard work by working with and watching her

dad, especially, open that family grocery store and work from early in the morning until night. He sold lunch to steelworkers and other people who came by that little grocery store.

In high school she was educated by the nuns at the Institute of Notre Dame. She credits the nuns with instilling in her faith and a thirst for justice. She went on to study at Mount Saint Agnes College, which is now part of Loyola College in Maryland. She earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Maryland.

BARBARA was a social worker and has always been proud of the fact that she has been a social worker. She was employed by Catholic Charities and the city of Baltimore's Department of Social Services. I can imagine what a dynamo she was—and she still is. There is no work harder than being a social worker. The problems one sees and has to deal with are extremely difficult.

During her years as a social worker, she was a powerful voice for children and seniors in need of an advocate. BARBARA MIKULSKI then and now is an advocate. It was there the spark for service and activism was lit, but it was a plan to build a 16-lane highway that fanned the flames that had been lit by her activism.

The highway would have gutted historic Fells Point, a neighborhood that she believed should have been protected. It would have uprooted homeowners in a majority African American neighborhood. She organized the residents of Fells Point and Baltimore's Inner Harbor and stopped the construction of that highway.

That is a testament to the power of democracy that she believes in with all her soul. Looking back on that triumph, Senator MIKULSKI said:

I got into politics fighting a highway. In other countries, they take dissidents and put them in jail. In the United States of America, because of the First Amendment, they put you in the U.S. Senate. God bless America.

She has always been an advocate for the disenfranchised and disadvantaged in this country, but she has also been an advocate for dissidents in other countries, of whom she has spoken so eloquently on so many occasions. Her family was Polish. She has heard all the Polish jokes, and she has withstood a little of the "barbs" when neighborhoods were different than they are now. But she took special pleasure and was so proud of her heritage.

BARBARA took a special interest in the plight of Polish people oppressed under communism. We know in 1980 the peo-

ple of Poland started a fledgling little group called Solidarity—a movement to engage in nonviolent resistance against communism and in support of social change.

Senator MIKULSKI and I had the wonderful pleasure of traveling under the guidance of a trip led by John Glenn—a world-famous man then and now. It was a wonderful trip for a couple of new Senators. The Iron Curtain was down, and it was down hard, but we went to Poland on a codel. I can remember we had the opportunity to meet with members of the Solidarity movement. We met in secret with them, in a secret location, and Senator Glenn talked, Senator Stevens, then a senior Member of the Senate at the time spoke, and I said I would like to hear from Senator MIKULSKI.

Now, Mr. President, I am not articulate enough to explain the presentation she made extemporaneously, but this powerful woman stood and talked about her heritage and her religion and what that meant to the people of America and what it should mean to the people of Poland. It was truly—and I have told her this personally over the years on several occasions to remind her—one of the most heart-warming, stirring speeches I have ever been present to listen to. She spoke to the people assembled there—there weren't many of them—as a fellow activist. She spoke as an American of Polish descent and a fellow Catholic. She spoke as one of them. When that presentation was completed, everyone knew she was one of them.

It took almost a decade for the Solidarity movement to strike victory in Poland, and I know Senator MIKULSKI's speech was not the reason, but I guarantee you it was one of the reasons they had the audacity and the courage to proceed as they did.

Remember, Poland was the only country behind the Iron Curtain where the Communists could not destroy their educational system, and that was because of the strength of the Catholic Church in Poland at that time. Solidarity's victory in Poland inspired a stream of peaceful anti-Communist revolutions that eventually caused the fall of communism entirely all over Eastern Europe.

BARBARA's Polish ancestry and the Polish community in which she grew up in Baltimore were very important to her, but I never knew it until that moment in Warsaw with those few members of Solidarity who were assembled to honor us.

Her great-grandmother had come here from Poland with just a few pennies in her pocket—literally—but she had a dream of a better life for her and her family. This is what

BARBARA MIKULSKI said about her great-grandmother: "She didn't even have the right to vote, and in this great country of ours, in three generations, I joined the U.S. Senate."

It was a remarkable feat for her. But, more important, it was a confirmation of the American dream. For BARBARA, what began as community activism, a fight against a highway, grew into a successful career in public service.

I want to add a sidenote, Mr. President, and talk about something very personal to me. When Senator David Pryor got sick, he was the Democratic conference secretary in the Senate. That opened up a spot in the Senate leadership. That was something I thought would be interesting to me. It was known who was interested in filling that spot, and I knew BARBARA was interested.

I went to BARBARA and said, "BARBARA, if you want it, it is yours." Two years later, Wendell Ford decided he was going to retire. He was the whip. I can still remember that morning walking from the Hart Building over to the Russell Building, in that long walkway there, and I saw BARBARA MIKULSKI. I didn't say a word to her.

She said, "I want to talk to you. You supported me when I wanted to be the conference secretary. You want to be the whip, I am supporting you." But for BARBARA MIKULSKI, I would not have had that leadership position. Once the Democratic caucus knew BARBARA MIKULSKI supported me, it was all over. I won. And I won because she came to me, as she did that morning.

So, Mr. President, my respect, admiration, and love for this woman is difficult for me to describe, but it is there. BARBARA MIKULSKI ran for Congress and won after serving on the city council of Baltimore for 5 years. She represented Maryland's Third District for 10 years before winning the seat in the Senate she now holds.

Again, I appreciate all she has done for me—so many different things she has done for me. As a very able member of the Appropriations Committee and somebody who loves this institution, I am in awe of the legislative record of this amazing woman.

She has been a dedicated representative not only for the State of Maryland but the State of Nevada. One thing she did for me—and there have been a lot of them—when we were new Senators and she was on one of the subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee concerning veterans benefits and affairs, as a favor to me she traveled to Reno, NV, to look at an old veterans hospital. She went through it and

said, "This is not the way a veterans hospital should be, and I, BARBARA MIKULSKI, am going to change it." And she did.

Through the appropriations process we renovated and improved that hospital so it was one of the better hospitals at the time. So I am grateful for this good woman, an advocate for parity for women on everything from salary to health care access. But for BARBARA MIKULSKI the National Institutes of Health would not have a center for women. She got a little upset when she learned they had done a study of the effect of aspirin on people's hearts and she realized they had tested 10,000 people and they were all men.

I had a situation that arose in Nevada at about the same time where three women came to me who had something called interstitial cystitis, a devastating, debilitating, painful disease that is described as running slivers of glass up and down your bladder. It was said to be a psychosomatic disease. These women had nowhere to go. I talked to BARBARA MIKULSKI about this, and now 40 percent of these women have medicine that takes away their symptoms totally.

I could go on here a long time, as everyone can see. But I do it because I congratulate BARBARA on this milestone, which is so important to me and the Senate, and to tell her how much Nevada appreciates her. It is not just for Maryland. She has done things for the entire country.

I wish her well for years to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is my honor to be here this afternoon to extend, on behalf of the Republican Conference of the U.S. Senate, our respect and admiration for the senior Senator from Maryland on achieving this important milestone.

I am sure she would be the first to tell you that becoming the longest serving woman in the Congress wasn't easy. A life in public service is filled with many highs and lows. But BARBARA is nothing if not both tough and resilient.

BARBARA would point to her upbringing as the daughter of a Baltimore grocer, where she learned first hand how hard work, honesty, and determination can lead to a successful and rewarding life. She later learned, while fighting a free-way that would have destroyed several Baltimore communities, including her own, that if you fought hard enough for something you believed in, you too can make a difference. So

if you knew BARBARA back then, it wouldn't surprise you we are honoring her today.

Last year, when Senator MIKULSKI became the longest serving female Senator, she said she never saw herself as a historical figure. To me, BARBARA said, "History is powdered wigs and Jane Adams and Abigail Adams, both pioneers in their own right."

However, BARBARA is a pioneer. She is only the second woman to be elected to both the Senate and the House. When first elected in 1986, she was only the 16th woman to serve. Today, in Congress, there are 76 women in the House and 17 in the Senate. As dean of the Senate women, she served as a role model and a mentor to many of these women. To put this in perspective: When she first arrived in the Senate, there weren't any natural mentors to teach her the ways of the Senate. At the time, even the Senate gym was off limits. A lot has changed since then, and BARBARA had a lot to do with it.

Later, as more women were elected to the Senate, BARBARA worked with them to help them understand the Senate and how best to be an effective Senator, both here and back home. She wanted to give back.

Most important, regardless of party or issue, BARBARA would push her female colleagues in the Senate to think differently, encouraging them to think of themselves as a force—a force of good and, oftentimes, a force for change. I know many are grateful not only for BARBARA's leadership and courage but for her willingness to take the time to share her experiences with them. "I don't want to just be a first," BARBARA once said. "I want to be the first of many."

In 35 years, nearly 13,000 days as a Member of Congress, BARBARA has been a champion of the space program, science research, welfare reform, major transportation, homeland security, and environmental issues in Maryland.

I wish to recognize BARBARA not only for the tremendous accomplishment as the longest serving female in the history of the United States in Congress but also for all of her many accomplishments in the House and the Senate. As she once said herself, "It is not how long you serve, but it is how well you serve."

I wish to recognize BARBARA for the pioneering model she has been to so many women in her distinguished career.

Congratulations, Senator MIKULSKI.

Mr. CARDIN. ... Let me first thank all of our colleagues who are here to pay honor to the senior Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI.

This is March Madness in basketball. Sweet 16 is starting. We are very proud in Maryland of our Lady Terps. They are in the Sweet 16. But I want you to know that we are all getting our fantasy teams, and I want Senator MIKULSKI on my fantasy basketball team because she is a true leader, she understands the importance of working together, and she is a winner.

We are proud of her roots in Maryland. She is the great-granddaughter of Polish immigrants who owned a bakery. She began her public service in high school, where she helped deliver groceries to seniors who were homebound in their apartments and she helped the seniors get the food they needed. She went to the University of Maryland School of Social Work because she wanted to be a social worker. She wanted to help other people. She knew that she was good at that and she could make a difference in people's lives. She worked for Catholic Charities and dealt with children at risk and helped seniors with Medicare.

As you have heard from several of my colleagues already, she gained her reputation by taking on a highway that was scheduled to be built that would have gone through Canton and Fells Point, disrupting a neighborhood in Baltimore. This was a 16-lane highway. It was considered to be a done deal; it was going to happen. The powers that be said we are going to have a highway coming through downtown Baltimore. The powers to be did not know BARBARA MIKULSKI. That highway never happened. Senator MIKULSKI stopped that highway from being built.

She then went on to serve in the Baltimore City Council with great distinction. Then in 1976 she was elected to the Congress for the Third Congressional District, a seat that was vacated by our esteemed colleague Paul Sarbanes, who then came into the Senate, and BARBARA MIKULSKI followed in the great tradition of Senator Paul Sarbanes. In 1986, when Senator "Mac" Mathias' seat became vacant, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI was elected to the Senate.

She has many firsts: The first female Democrat elected in her own right to serve the U.S. Senate. At the time she was elected to the Senate, she was only one of two female Senators. Today, we have 17 female Senators in large part because of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. I know the Presiding Officer was part of that expansion. You will hear how Sen-

ator MIKULSKI was not only a role model and an inspiration but an incredible help to get more women elected to the Senate.

Last year we joined in this body to celebrate Senator MIKULSKI becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the Senate, surpassing Margaret Chase Smith from the State of Maine. Then on this past Saturday, on St. Patrick's Day, she became the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress, replacing Edith Nourse Rogers from Massachusetts who served, as the majority leader pointed out, from 1925 to 1960.

Marylanders understand longevity records. We are very proud of Cal Ripken and the record he held in baseball. Senator MIKULSKI's, like Cal Ripken's, legacy is what she has done in office to make a difference, not the length of her service. She is a fierce and effective advocate for so many causes. We have heard about her accomplishments in education and health care, what she has done to advance sensible health care to improve quality for the people of this country. That was her mission in the Affordable Care Act, to make sure that we had the delivery systems in place that would deliver quality health care, and Senator MIKULSKI's leadership was critical in that regard.

She has been a leader in women's health care issues. I will never forget her reminder to all of us in the caucus: "Don't forget women's health care issues when you bring that bill to the floor." And we didn't. We put that in under Senator MIKULSKI's leadership. We talked about breast cancer and cervical cancer screenings. Senator MIKULSKI has been in the leadership on all those issues.

We in Maryland are proud to be where the National Institutes of Health is headquartered. Its growth in large measure has been the result of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. We are proud of HOPE VI and housing. Senator MIKULSKI has been in the forefront of that program, making it possible for many people in our community to have decent, affordable, and safe housing.

Senator MIKULSKI has been critically important to America's space program. I have been with her many times at Goddard and seen first hand the results of her advocacy and what it has meant. The Hubble space telescope is another legacy of which Senator MIKULSKI can be rightly proud.

We in Maryland are also proud to house NSA, the National Security Agency, with its new mission with the cybercommand located in Maryland. Senator MIKULSKI, as

Senator Feinstein pointed out, has been one of the real leaders on national security issues. We can't issue press releases on this. She is a member of the intelligence committee. She works behind closed doors to keep us safe. But we all know that she is one of the key leaders in this Nation on national security issues.

We know about pay equity and the Lilly Ledbetter law, the first bill signed by President Obama. It was Senator MIKULSKI's leadership that got that bill to the President's desk, recognizing that we are still not where we need to be on gender pay equity in America.

In our region, the Chesapeake Bay is central to our way of life and our economy. Senator MIKULSKI has been one of the real champions on water quality and the Chesapeake Bay. She understands the respect for State and local government, that we have to work together as a team. I know the Governor of Maryland, Governor O'Malley, would agree with me that there is no better friend to the people of Maryland working with the State than Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, getting the Federal Government on the same page as the State and local governments to get things done for the people of Maryland. That is true with what she has been able to do for all of us working across the Nation.

I think the *Baltimore Sun* put it best when it said:

There is nobody more feisty, more willing to take on big business, big government, or anyone when it is time to look out for the interests of her constituents.

I think all of us would agree.

On a personal note, I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her friendship, I thank her for being my buddy and my adviser. Whether she is with Presidents or Kings or the patrons at Jimmy's Restaurant in Fells Point, you get the same commonsense, the same down-to-earth person—you get Senator BARB. We are so proud of her.

Thank you, Senator BARB, for what you have done to make this Nation a better place to live. Thank you for being such a role model for young people, especially young women, to get involved, to make a difference. Thank you on behalf of my two granddaughters. Their future is much brighter, their opportunities are much greater because of you, Senator BARB.

Congratulations. Your colleagues here want to express our love and respect and admiration for your incredible service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Merkley). The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, what an incredible milestone Senator MIKULSKI has reached. The words of her colleagues and the love they feel for her are coming through. It is a wonderful thing for me to be part of this tribute. I don't know how many Senators would have the Governor of their State here—Your Honor; and the former distinguished, incredible Senator Paul Sarbanes is here. That in itself, Senator MIKULSKI, is testimony to your status among all of us.

So many of us are here in the Senate because BARBARA MIKULSKI knocked down the barriers one by one—the first Democratic woman ever elected to the Senate in her own right, the first woman to serve in both Chambers, the longest serving woman in the Senate. Now she has made history once again. This past Saturday, after 12,858 distinguished days of service, no other woman in history has served in Congress longer than Senator MIKULSKI—ever.

Some trailblazers make history, and they are content to stand proudly alone. “Aren't I great? I did it.” But not Senator MIKULSKI. She always made clear that she was honored to be the first Democratic woman, but she never wanted to be the last.

I will never forget her saying, “Some women stare out the window waiting for Prince Charming. I stare out the window waiting for more women Senators.”

Well, 17 women, Republicans and Democrats, now serve in the Senate. I know all of us have stories to tell about how Senator MIKULSKI helped us along the way, reaching out to mentor us, encourage us, lead us, and organize our regular meetings filled with folders and pens and pencils, and organizing dinners. She and Senator Hutchison teamed up. We are so fortunate to have them working together. We get together now and then. Just in the heat of debate, we sit down and break bread together.

When I considered running for the Senate in 1992, Senator MIKULSKI was the very first person I went to see, after my husband. I was conflicted. I had a good House seat. I was told I could hold it for as long as I wanted, and I was not sure I should give it up for the Senate. I was considered a long shot. Senator MIKULSKI told me the following: “If you run, and I want you to run,” she said, “it will be the toughest thing you will ever do and the best thing you will ever do.” And she was right.

Those of us of a certain age have probably seen the play or the movie "A Man for All Seasons." Today we celebrate a woman who is truly a Senator for all seasons. Some Members have passion, others have policy skills, some are brilliant negotiators, others great advocates for the least among us, some are very serious students of history, and others are flatout hilarious. But I do not think our country has ever seen so many incredible traits combined in one Senator. Whatever the issue, she will address it. Whatever the problem, she will solve it. Whatever the wrong, she will fix it. Whatever the need, she will meet it. Whenever and wherever people without a voice need a champion with a keen mind, a sharp wit, and an unparalleled ability to speak from the heart and get things done, BARBARA MIKULSKI is there. A lot of us have been there with her, and we have watched her and we love it and we marvel at her. And she does it with a sense of humor that is unparalleled. Anyone who has ever listened to a speech or interview with Senator MIKULSKI has heard her utter these incredible quips, which I fondly called "Mikulski-isms."

She has called us women into battle by asking us to go "earring to earring" with our opponents. She has challenged us to square our shoulders, suit up, put our lipstick on, and fight. She has said often that women do not want to talk about gender but an agenda that helps America's families.

When asked by *Glamour* magazine how she felt about being named *Glamour's* Woman of the Year along with singer Madonna, Senator MIKULSKI replied, "She's got her assets, I have mine, and we both make the best of what God has given us."

When asked about the different perspective women bring, she often says, "Women, we are not so much about macro-issues but, rather, the macaroni and cheese issues." Who else could say that better?

When discussing the challenges women face in politics with a group of female parliamentarians from around the world, this is what BARBARA MIKULSKI explained to them when they asked, "What is it like and is it tough?" She said:

Let's put it this way. In an election, if you are married, you are neglecting him; if you are single, you couldn't get him; if you are divorced, you couldn't keep him; and if you are widowed, you killed him.

Then there was one of my favorite MIKULSKI moments. This is a treasured moment. The women of the House still hadn't managed to integrate the House gym, so we were relegated to this tiny room with old-fashioned, hooded hair dry-

ers and hardly any room to move. There were very few of us, and we decided to make the most of it by having an aerobics class. Of course, coming from California, I organized it.

In came Geraldine Ferraro, Barbara Kennelly, Olympia Snowe, BARBARA MIKULSKI, and me. Our instructor started the class by asking us to stretch our arms way up, and we do.

Groans.

“Put your hands on your hips.”

More groans.

Now she says, “Bend from the waist.”

Suddenly, a voice bellows from the back of the room: “If I had a waist, I wouldn’t be here.”

We all turned around to see Senator MIKULSKI, and we just cracked up. Needless to say, that was the end of the aerobics class.

As funny as she can be, I can’t think of anyone more resilient than BARBARA MIKULSKI. I remember when she was mugged a few years back, one evening outside her home in Baltimore. A man pushed her to the ground and grabbed her purse. It was terrifying—for the mugger. He had no idea whom he was dealing with. At 4 feet 11 inches, Senator MIKULSKI fought back and defended herself, just like she defends the people she represents, just like she defends women and families, just like she defends equal pay and equal rights and civil rights and the health care of our citizens and the dignity of our seniors.

The truth is, the Senate used to be a very lonely place for women, but Senator MIKULSKI changed that. From the day she was first sworn in, she has carried the challenges, the hopes, and the dreams of millions of women with her. BARBARA MIKULSKI has inspired generations of young women everywhere. She has given them the confidence that they can do it, too, because even as we celebrate this incredible milestone, I know Senator MIKULSKI’s greatest hope is that a young girl growing up today will be inspired to follow in her footsteps and one day to break her record. When that happens, it will be because BARBARA MIKULSKI—our dean, our cherished leader, our Senator for all seasons—opened the doors of the Senate wide enough to let the women of America walk in.

Thank you, BARBARA MIKULSKI.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am pleased to stand and add my experiences with and admiration for Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. It is fitting that she is now the longest serving woman in the U.S. Congress.

When I first got here—I was elected in 1993—BARBARA MIKULSKI, as the dean of the women in the Senate, had a workshop the previous year for the newly elected Democratic women Senators. When I arrived in 1993, she expanded it to include all new women Senators, and her sort of opening comment was, civility starts with us.

Surely, she has carried through as the dean of the women of the Senate to ensure that all the new women get their bearings in the Senate, that they get the advice of the ones who have been here before. It has been a huge help and really a fun opportunity for us to get to know each other on a personal level as we have our women Senators' dinners.

From this came a book Senator MIKULSKI and I worked on together. The genesis of the book—which became “Nine and Counting,” the nine women Senators who were here in the year 2000—came from a meeting called by Senator MIKULSKI to meet with the women of Northern Ireland, along with the women of Ireland, when there was so much strife in that country. BARBARA MIKULSKI called all of the women Senators together, our nine, to give encouragement and advice to the women who were trying to bring the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland together so that there could be a peaceful conclusion to the conflicts in Northern Ireland. From that, as we were sharing our stories to show the women of Northern Ireland how much they could do, from our experiences and our overcoming of obstacles, BARBARA MIKULSKI and I sat down and said:

You know, I think we have a book here. If each of the nine women Senators could write a chapter about our obstacles and our beginnings in politics and help encourage other young women and girls to aspire to and be able to succeed in politics, then we ought to do it.

So we worked with a publisher. We got together and decided how we would lay it out. We then decided as a group that we would give all of the proceeds to the Girl Scouts of America because almost all of us had been a Girl Scout at one point.

So from that we put a book out, which is still being sold here in the Senate bookshop called “Nine and Counting.” It has given a lot of money to the Girl Scouts of America, to a leadership fund so that they can continue to create girls who will be leaders in our country. That started with the

meeting BARBARA put together for those of us who could maybe give advice and help these women of Northern Ireland.

When I came into the Senate in 1993, the first thing I wanted to do was give equal treatment to women who work at home in their ability to save for retirement as those who work outside the home. I had the experience, as a single working woman, of putting aside some money for my IRA, and then when I married my husband Ray, I found out I could put aside only \$250 in an IRA. I said, "Wait a minute. Why would someone working inside the home—a woman who is probably going to need retirement security more than any of us—not be able to save for her own retirement security if she is a married woman?"

So I authored the Homemaker IRA, and of course I wanted to have a Democrat lead because we had a Democratic Congress. So I asked Senator MIKULSKI, and she said she would absolutely sign on—as she always does—when it is something that is going to benefit women. So it became the Hutchison-Mikulski bill. I said to BARBARA, "I want this bill to pass. I don't care if my name is first. I would love to put your name first if you think that will help us get it through." She said, "Absolutely not. I would not take your name off that bill for anything because it was your idea." There are not very many people in this body who would make that gesture and also put her weight behind the passage of the bill.

Of all the things I have done and that we have done together, BARBARA, and of all the things that bill is going to do to affect the most people in our country, now we have the Homemaker IRA that passed in 1996. That law allows women—whether they are married and working at home or outside the home and single or married—to set aside the same amount. Fortunately, that amount has grown, and so it is not \$2,000, but it can be \$2,500 or \$3,000 or \$5,000, depending on their age. It is a wonderful thing we were able to do together.

Senator MIKULSKI and I also worked on behalf of Afghan women. When we started hearing the atrocities that were happening to the women of Afghanistan that were brought back by great women's organizations, such as Vital Voices, that told stories of not only unequal treatment of women in Afghanistan but inhumane treatment of women in Afghanistan, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator Clinton, and I introduced the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act, which was signed into law in December 2001, which authorized funding

for women in Afghanistan and Afghan refugee women. Political participation was supported for Afghan women, and we followed up with appropriations. I have to say our Republican President, President Bush, and our Democratic President, President Obama, have always said American money will go into Afghanistan or Iraq or anywhere else to support equally the education of girls and boys; that we would support women where they are not being treated as equals on a human rights basis. So our Presidents have stood and, of course, our bipartisanship in Congress has done the right thing. Again, Senator MIKULSKI is a leader in that area.

I cannot think of a stronger supporter in this Senate than BARBARA MIKULSKI in the area of NASA. I wish to say Senator Bill Nelson also has been such a strong supporter, as well as Senator Lamar Alexander, but Senator MIKULSKI is the chairman and I am the ranking Republican on the committee that is appropriating for NASA. We are also fortunate to have Chairman Jay Rockefeller on the authorizing and oversight committee for NASA. He, too, has been such a strong leader in assuring that we continue America's preeminence in space.

When the rubber hits the road in appropriations, Senator MIKULSKI has been there to say: "We are going to have the science in the Hubble telescope, which has given us so much information, as well as the James Webb telescope." Now, of course, we have the human space flight issues and BARBARA MIKULSKI has been right there saying, of course we are going to utilize the International Space Station, of course we are going to keep America's priorities in space because it has done so much for our economy and our jobs and our technology and our health care improvements, but it has also been a national security issue that BARBARA MIKULSKI recognizes, first and foremost.

I cannot match a lot of the stories about BARBARA MIKULSKI and her personality, but I can tell you I took BARBARA MIKULSKI to tour the Johnson Space Center in 2001, and we did a wonderful event at Baylor College of Medicine to talk about the research that is being done in the biomedical sciences and on the space station. I thought, I am going to bring BARBARA where we can show her a little bit of Texas.

We know Texas has a lot of personality and sometimes we are thought to have a little too much fun, but I will tell you what, BARBARA is one of us. I brought her to the Houston rodeo. During the month of the Houston rodeo, everybody is "Go Texas," and everybody dresses Texan, which means cow-

boy, and we have a great time. So I took BARBARA MIKULSKI into the steer auction, where just this past Saturday a steer was sold for \$460,000.

It is a grand champion steer, I might say. All of that money goes for scholarships for our young people to attend college.

BARBARA came into the steer auction, and she looked around. There were 2,000 people at the breakfast before all these people are going to go and bid on the steers so we can fund scholarships. We were all dressed appropriately for Texas, and she reached over to my ear and she whispered: "Now, Kay, if we were here on Monday morning and we went to a chamber of commerce meeting, do these people look like this?" I love to tell that story in Houston because it gets huge laughs. She won over everybody in Houston. They adored her from the beginning. She put on her cowboy hat, she rode in the grand entry on a buckboard and she became an honorary Texan in our hearts. So BARBARA MIKULSKI knows how to win over others.

Let me mention one of my early experiences when I first came into the Senate. There was an effort to have health care reform. A program was put forward and this particular program had some things that were good, but one of the things in it was that no health insurance coverage would be required for women to have mammograms if they were 40 or below. I will tell you something, the biggest eruption in the Senate was BARBARA MIKULSKI saying: "Are you kidding? I will not let this go by me in the Senate. We are not going to say that a woman who is 40 or under is not going to be eligible for insurance coverage for a mammogram. It is not going to happen." BARBARA MIKULSKI took the lead, and I am going to tell you, the first thing that was removed from that plan was that provision, and it will never be in a plan as long as BARBARA MIKULSKI is in the Senate. So I am just going to tell anybody who is looking at health care reform, take a little advice, don't mess with BARBARA MIKULSKI because we are going to have mammograms.

Not only that, BARBARA MIKULSKI came forward in the next month and passed unanimously in the Senate a mammogram standards bill. During this process she learned that there were varying degrees of standards of mammography. She was going to make sure there were standards that every clinic would have, that every piece of equipment would have and she led the effort. It is law today.

I will end with yet another accomplishment; that is, single-sex education in public schools. Senator Jack Danforth of Missouri started looking at the issue and said, "We need to allow our public schools to offer single-sex education—meaning girl schools and boy schools—because so many of us have seen that we have to adapt education for the needs of each individual child to the best of our ability." We know there are so many wonderful private schools for boys and girls, but we could hardly have a public school that would be single sex in this country in the 1990s.

So Jack Danforth started the effort, and when he left the Senate, I picked it up. The more I looked at it, the more I saw the benefits to boys and to girls—particularly in the middle and high school grades—were palpable. Senators Clinton, BARBARA MIKULSKI, Susan Collins, the three of them, had gone to all-girls schools. I had not, but they knew the benefits first hand of single-sex education. BARBARA was the product of single-sex education, having gone to a parochial school.

I first introduced the amendment in 1998, but it was in 2001—when the four of us came together—that we actually got the bill passed through an amendment and that amendment then not only made public single-sex education an option and legal, it also made it eligible for Federal funding grants similar to all our public schools.

I wish to say it has been one of the joys of my time in the Senate to work with Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, and I think this 4-foot-11-inch mighty-might has 10 times the impact. She has made an impact on Congress and an impact on America because she is relentless, she is reasonable, she understands an issue, and she understands the importance of listening as well as talking. She is effective and she is respected. If there is anyone in the Senate who doesn't like her, respect her, and work well with her, I have not met them. When one is the longest serving woman in the Senate and Congress, they have worked with a lot of people. She is unanimously so well regarded, I have never met an enemy of hers.

I will close by saying the people who know her best love her most, and I cannot think of a finer thing to say about any person.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to say what a pleasure it is to welcome Senator Sarbanes back. I had the pleasure of sitting beside him on the Foreign Relations Committee for 24 years. We miss his judgment and wisdom. We could use it these days.

I wish to welcome Governor O'Malley. I can't think of a time, when people have stood up to laud a fellow Senator, that a Governor of their State is sitting and listening. All of the comments to this moment and beyond will undoubtedly echo the remarkable affection that everybody has for BARBARA MIKULSKI and particularly the high regard in which she is held.

This is a very special celebration for the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress, 12,858 days today and counting. In that time—I recall when I first came here there was one woman serving, and that was Senator Nancy Kassebaum—it is fair to say BARBARA MIKULSKI has been one of the pivotal forces in creating and assembling what I would call a true “band of sisters”—the women with whom she has served in the Senate, each of whom makes extraordinary contributions to this institution.

We have heard from other colleagues that her career is filled with milestones, and it is. She is the first Democratic woman to serve in both Houses of Congress. She is the first Democratic woman elected to Senate leadership. She is the first woman elected to statewide office in Maryland. These are just a few.

When BARBARA came to the Senate in 1987 after 10 years in the House of Representatives, women were still, as she describes it—these are her words—“a bit of a novelty” in the Senate. Indeed, then, it was only BARBARA and Senator Nancy Kassebaum. But now BARBARA says, “We're not viewed as novelties. We're not viewed as celebrities. We're viewed as U.S. Senators.”

One of the reasons for that is that BARBARA MIKULSKI has demonstrated a seriousness of purpose, an ability to legislate, and an ability to make friends and bring people together that has defined her role as the dean of the women in the Senate.

Some of her women colleagues in the Senate call her Dean. Others call her Coach BARB. But no matter what they call her, she has brought them together in this bipartisan sisterhood, as we just heard from the Senator from Texas. She holds workshops and serves as a mentor to all newcomers and organizes regular monthly dinners. They don't always

agree on everything, but the dinners are what some of them have called a “zone of civility,” which is something the Senate could use a little more of these days. Again, it is BARBARA MIKULSKI’s example that helps point us in that direction.

But for all of her firsts, I would say to my colleagues that BARBARA MIKULSKI’s career has never been about gender as much as it has been about agenda. I have had the privilege of working with her enough on different issues of being what she calls one of her Galahads. I have seen her laser focus on what is right, on her conscience, on her gut, on her sense of what the people of Maryland want, and what she thinks is her duty as a Senator. That is why I wanted her on the Speaker’s platform in 2004 in Boston at the convention, and she delivered just the right message in her forceful and commanding way. She stood up there and declared, “When women seek power, we don’t seek it for ourselves; we seek it to make a difference in the lives of other people.”

There is no arguing, as we heard from a number of colleagues, about what an extraordinary difference BARBARA MIKULSKI has made in the lives of other people, not just Marylanders but all Americans. She has been an extraordinary advocate for the Goddard Space Center, for the Wallops Flight Facility, and for Johns Hopkins Applied Science Lab in Maryland, as well as the Port of Baltimore and Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts.

For decades, she proudly worked beside my colleague of 26 years Ted Kennedy. She loved Ted Kennedy and Ted Kennedy loved her. Together, on the Health Committee, they worked to make universal health care a reality. Her role when Senator Kennedy was sick was an extraordinary role of picking up that baton and helping to bring it across the finish line.

Along the way she became a leader on women’s health, fighting for equality in health research and making sure women get the quality of care they deserve. She was one of the chief sponsors of Medicaid financing of mammograms and Pap smears.

Personally, I will never forget how BARBARA reacted when the National Institutes of Health said it would not include women in trials of aspirin as a preventive for heart attacks because “their hormones present too many biological variables.” BARBARA fired back: “My hormones rage because of comments like that.”

Her proudest accomplishment, she says, is the Spousal Anti-Impoverishment Act, which helps to keep seniors from going bankrupt while paying for a spouse's nursing home care. Throughout her career, BARBARA MIKULSKI has fought to strengthen the safety net for children, for seniors, and for anyone who needed somebody to stand for them or push open a door for them.

That fight started in East Baltimore where her Polish immigrant grandparents ran a bakery and her father a grocery store. She says she often watched her father open the doors to his grocery store for local steelworkers so they could buy their lunches before the morning shift. She got it in her head at that time that she would rather be opening doors for others on the inside than knocking on doors from the outside.

So no surprise, after college she got a job as a social worker helping at-risk children and educating seniors about Medicare. She got involved in politics by organizing community groups to stop a highway from going through the Highlandtown neighborhood where she grew up. Let me tell my colleagues, nobody had ever seen anything like her. At one rally, she jumped up on a table and cried:

The British couldn't take Fells Point, the termites couldn't take Fells Point, and God damn if we'll let the State Roads Commission take Fells Point.

As they say on ESPN, the crowd went nuts, and the roads commission never knew what hit them. And I assure my colleagues, that was a nonprofane use of our Lord's name.

Again, no surprise, that led to her election to the Baltimore City Council. I think that explains a lot about just how good a politician she is—how well she knows the street. I think every one of her colleagues, all of us, are in awe of BARBARA's ability to focus on the street emotion, on the simplicity of an argument, and to be able to sum it up in a razor-like comment that just cuts to the quick and makes the rest of us who search around for the words seem pretty inept in the process. Whether it is at Camden Yards, Fells Point, the Eastern Shore, the Washington suburbs, or up along the Mason Dixon Line, BARBARA has her finger on the political pulse of Marylanders. She understands their concerns, shares their aspirations, and sums up their hopes and their dreams in a few short sentences that nobody else can parallel.

If anyone expected BARBARA MIKULSKI to accept being just a novelty or a celebrity in Congress, they obviously had no understanding of her deep roots as an immigrant, being an

American, and the values she learned about hard work in her family.

If anyone expects her to slow down just because she is now the longest serving woman in the history of Congress, they don't know BARBARA MIKULSKI. A couple of years ago, BARBARA and I talked—I think it was at one of our retreats—about how similar Maryland and Massachusetts are in certain ways, especially their rural and fishing histories which we actually both have.

She told me she wasn't much of a fisherman, but she liked to hunt. The only problem she cited was the recoil of the rifle given that she stands 4 feet 11 inches tall.

Well, it is clear from the record, clear from the comments of all of her colleagues, and clear from this extraordinary longest serving record in the Congress and all that she has accomplished that she stands as one of the tallest Senators and packs a punch way beyond her 4 feet 11 inches.

We are proud to have her as a colleague, and we are in awe of her ability to galvanize action, which is what this institution should be all about.

Mr. LEVIN. When you read over the long list of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI's accomplishments, one word keeps coming up, "first." First woman to be elected to the Senate from Maryland, first woman of her party to serve in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate, first woman to serve in the Senate leadership. Today we gather to honor Senator MIKULSKI, who in addition to her many firsts, now stands as the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress.

Senator MIKULSKI began her service in Congress in 1977, and in all her time here since, she has championed the causes dearest to her—causes dear to the needs of her constituents and to our Nation's most vulnerable citizens.

As chairwoman of the Children and Families Subcommittee, Senator MIKULSKI has been a determined champion of the young, the old, and the sick. She has fought for access to higher education for every child because she believes ours is a nation where every young boy and girl should have the chance to reach his or her true potential. She has fought for secure pensions for seniors because she believes ours is a nation where, after a lifetime of work, every person should have the chance to enjoy their retirement. And she has fought for preventive screening and treatment for every woman because she believes ours is a nation where no one

should lose a mother, daughter, or wife from a preventable illness.

As chairwoman of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator MIKULSKI has led the charge to promote economic development, equip our first responders, and invest in science and research. Senator MIKULSKI understands the importance of the private sector, particularly small businesses, in creating job opportunities. That is why she has fought for legislation making it easier for businesses to make investments and hire new workers. No one has fought harder to support our emergency first responders than BARBARA MIKULSKI, who said, “We must protect our protectors with more than just words—we must protect them with the best equipment, training and resources.”

Senator MIKULSKI is also committed to the promotion of scientific research and laying the groundwork for maintaining U.S. leadership in the area. She has advanced legislation to substantially increase the number of students earning degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math.

As a Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI understands the importance of the Federal workforce. Many of her constituents are responsible for the high quality of life many of us take for granted every day. Whether it’s food inspectors, air traffic controllers, or medical researchers, many Marylanders who make up the Federal workforce contribute to our Nation’s health and safety. Fortunately for them, and the rest of us, they have a powerful advocate in the Senate. Senator MIKULSKI said, “I want every Federal employee to know I am on their side.” Indeed she is—not only because it is in the interests of her State, but because she knows well that an effective Federal workforce is in the interests of every citizen in every State. Throughout her career, Senator MIKULSKI has fought off misguided efforts to privatize essential functions of the Federal workforce, and fought for fair pay and benefits for these committed public servants.

Fair pay has been a focus for Senator MIKULSKI, and women across the country can be grateful for that. In 2007, the Supreme Court considered the case of Lilly Ledbetter, a woman who for nearly 20 years had been paid less than her male coworkers for equal work. In its decision, the Court ruled that Ms. Ledbetter could not proceed with her case, not because it had no merit, it did; but because of a technicality. Once the Supreme Court rules against you, where can you turn? Just ask Ms. Ledbetter; she will tell you. Senator BAR-

BARA MIKULSKI introduced the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act to address the flawed Supreme Court decision; and on January 29, 2009, it was signed into law.

In the Book of Genesis, the first question asked of God is “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI has spent a lifetime and built a career in answer of that question. She said:

I feel that I am my brother’s keeper and my sister’s keeper. I think that’s why I am shaped by the words of Jesus himself: “Love thy neighbor.” And I took it seriously.

The Senate is better off because she did. The people of Maryland are better off. Our Nation is better off. I am grateful not just because she has become the longest serving woman in the history of Congress, but because she has served her Nation so well.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to offer my heartfelt congratulations to my esteemed colleague and dear friend, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, on becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. This milestone, reached on March 17, marks 12,858 days—more than 35 years—of dedicated service to her beloved State of Maryland and to our Nation.

A little more than a year ago, in January 2011, Senator MIKULSKI began her 25th year in the Senate, surpassing my personal role model in public service, Senator Margaret Chase Smith, the great lady from Maine. Adding in her 10 years in the House, Senator MIKULSKI now establishes the record for longevity in either Chamber, set by Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers, who represented Massachusetts but was born in Maine.

For me, the special meaning of this occasion goes far beyond such coincidences. Just as Congresswoman Rogers and Senator Smith inspired young women in the past to lives in public service, Senator MIKULSKI inspires the young women of today. As a new Senator in 1997, I was welcomed by her kindness and helped by her wisdom. She taught me the ropes of the appropriations process and instituted regular bipartisan dinners for the women of the Senate.

It has been a privilege to work with Senator MIKULSKI for 15 years. During that time, I have come to know her as a fighter and a trailblazer.

Senator MIKULSKI is, above all, a hard worker. Growing up in East Baltimore, she learned the value of hard work at her family’s grocery store. Her commitment to making a dif-

ference in her neighborhood led her to the path of service, first as social worker, then as a city councilor and as a Member of Congress.

Senator MIKULSKI's longevity is only the preface to her story of exceptional accomplishment. She has fought for increased access to higher education for our young people and for improved health care for our seniors. I am proud to have fought at her side on those issues, as well as for increased Alzheimer's research, improved women's health care, and enhanced educational opportunities for nurses.

As House colleagues during and after World War II, Margaret Chase Smith and Edith Nourse Rogers were instrumental in achieving full recognition for women in uniform. Senator MIKULSKI carries on that legacy as a determined advocate for all who serve our country. Working with her on the Appropriations Committee, I have witnessed first hand how seriously she takes her responsibility to the American taxpayers.

Throughout her life in public service, Senator MIKULSKI has lived by one guiding principle: to help our people meet the needs of today as she helps our Nation prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. It is an honor to congratulate Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for her many years of service, and to wish her many more.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is heartwarming to see such a spontaneous outpouring of respect and appreciation for the distinguished Senator from Maryland, Ms. MIKULSKI. It is certainly well deserved.

She is one of the hardest working and most effective Senators serving in the Senate today. It has been a great pleasure working closely with her on the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to our dear friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI. This week, Senator MIKULSKI became the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. That is quite a milestone, and I want to congratulate her on her many years of devoted service to the people of her home State.

Senator MIKULSKI is a Maryland native. Descended from Polish immigrants, she was born and raised in Baltimore. She attended college at both St. Agnes College in Baltimore and the University of Maryland.

After several years of working as a social worker in the Baltimore area, Senator MIKULSKI began her political career in 1971 when she was elected to the Baltimore City Council. She served there for 5 years before running for Congress in 1976. For 10 years, she represented the Third Congressional District of Maryland. Then, in 1986, she was elected to serve here in the Senate.

Although the milestone we are recognizing today is a significant one, it is not the first for Senator MIKULSKI. Indeed, throughout her time in the Senate she has been a pioneer for women in public service.

For example, Senator MIKULSKI was the first woman elected to statewide office in Maryland. She was also the first Democratic woman elected to a Senate seat that was not previously held by her husband. And, she was the first woman to serve in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

I have known Senator MIKULSKI a long time, having served with her in the Senate for over 25 years now. While she and I have often found ourselves on opposite sides of many issues, I have long admired her commitment to her principles and, most important, her devotion to the people of her home State. Indeed, she has been a stalwart and oftentimes fierce advocate for the interests of Marylanders.

I want to congratulate Senator MIKULSKI on this important milestone, and I am grateful for this opportunity to pay tribute to her and to her many years of public service.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I greatly appreciate having this opportunity to join my colleagues in expressing our congratulations to BARBARA MIKULSKI as she reaches another great milestone in her career of service to the people of Maryland in the U.S. Congress.

Senator MIKULSKI is now the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. Although outstanding in and of itself, it is an achievement that represents far more than the number of years she has served in the Nation's Capital. It is also a testament to her outstanding public service and her commitment to our future that has made it possible for her to help to make our great Nation both stronger and more secure.

Back home, Senator MIKULSKI's constituents have come to appreciate her more and more as they have seen how hard she works to represent them every day. That is why they always come out in such great numbers every election day to make sure she will continue to do so. They can see the dif-

ference she has made all around them, and they appreciate the way she has made their cities and towns better places to live.

I have often heard Senator MIKULSKI referred to as the dean of the Senate women, a title she has earned that was conferred upon her with the great admiration, affection, and appreciation of those with whom she has served. Over the years so many of them have acknowledged the difference she has made in their lives with her support, her encouragement, her guidance, and her direction. She has been such a great mentor to them because she has always led the best way—by example. It is another mark of distinction that has come to her as, each day, she has helped to write another chapter of the history of Maryland and this great Nation of ours.

Looking back, she has played an active role in a long list of changes that have come to our country over the years. Because she has been at the forefront of so many of them she has been a role model not only for those with whom she has served, but for those who have been watching her in action back home. I have no doubt, in the years to come, many more women will serve in the House and the Senate who will credit Senator MIKULSKI for first giving them the idea of serving in the Congress. Her own record of success then assured them that it would be possible for them to do the same if they were willing to work hard and take their case to the people for their consideration.

In the end, that is what our service in the Senate is all about—doing everything we can so that the current generation will have the tools they will need to succeed and then take their place as the next generation of our Nation's leaders. Thanks to good people like BARBARA MIKULSKI the people back home know that someone cares. She has given them a voice and it is heard clearly whenever she takes to the Senate floor to make their concerns known.

I have often heard it said that the meaning of public service is found in the definition of the word "service." That is why we are taking a moment today to thank Senator MIKULSKI for putting her principles and her beliefs into action all these many years for her beloved Maryland and the United States of America. If I may paraphrase the words of Abraham Lincoln, it isn't so much her years of service that matters so much as the service of her years. Through the years she has made a difference in so many ways that will be long remembered and celebrated.

Congratulations, BARBARA. You are setting a record pace here in the Senate. From this day on, you will be setting a new record every day. Thank you for your service, but most of all, thank you for your friendship. Diana and I have appreciated having the chance to come to know you and to work with you.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today in tribute to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland, who has just become the longest serving woman in Congress, and to applaud the pioneering role that she has played in the evolution of the Senate.

Things have certainly changed since 1986, when Senator MIKULSKI was elected to the Senate. When Senator MIKULSKI joined the Senate as the first Democratic woman elected in her right as opposed to filling the term of a spouse, the Senate looked very different. There was only one other woman Senator, Nancy Kassebaum, a Republican from Kansas. The Senate had just begun to televise its proceedings the year she was elected. And, obviously, there were no women in leadership positions in the Senate.

Senator MIKULSKI set out to change all that. She became the first woman in the Democratic leadership. She became the first woman to serve on the Appropriations Committee. And then she became the first woman to chair the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee.

Things certainly have changed. Now, in the 112th Congress, there are 17 women, both Republican and Democrat, in the Senate overall. There are seven women on the Appropriations Committee alone. Five women chair Senate committees. Women have had significant roles in both the Democratic and Republican Senate leadership.

While all of these changes were clearly not solely a function of Senator MIKULSKI's pioneering leadership, she blazed a trail as bright and as wide as anyone could possibly hope for. With her impassioned speeches, her plain-spoken delivery, and her commitment to fairness and justice, Senator MIKULSKI could not be ignored or pigeonholed. She stood up for what she believed in, and she would not allow her voice to be silenced.

Senator MIKULSKI cared deeply about health care issues, and women's health in particular. When she learned that many federally funded research protocols did not include women, she led the fight to insure that would never happen again. She established the Office of Women's Health at NIH

to ensure women would always have a voice in critical health issues.

One of her proudest accomplishments was working to pass the spousal impoverishment law, which changed the rules that forced elderly couples to spend all their assets and give up their home before the Government would help one member of the couple pay for a nursing home.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Senator MIKULSKI's efforts on behalf of her beloved State of Maryland. From the crabbers of the Chesapeake Bay to the steelworkers at Sparrows Point to the scientists at Goddard to all the other families all across the State, no one has worked harder to give them a voice on Capitol Hill than BARBARA MIKULSKI. On this historic day, I wish her the best, and I know that as long as she is a U.S. Senator, she will never stop fighting for what she believes is right.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, we mark March as Women's History Month, as a time of year for us to remember the valiant female leaders of our great Nation. One of them is very special to Montana. In 1916 Jeannette Rankin was the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress, 4 years before women were granted the right to vote.

As a Member of the House of Representatives, her daring and vocal stance on controversial issues such as war and peace brought critical recognition from the press. In every situation, the strength of her values persisted, even under the pressures of unanimous opposition to a war with Germany. Jeannette Rankin said, "I may be the first woman Member of Congress, but I won't be the last," and helped to pave the way for future generations of women leaders.

This past Saturday, March 17, 2012, marked a monumental day in American history. The Senator from Maryland, Ms. BARBARA MIKULSKI, celebrated her 35th year in the U.S. Congress.

That important accomplishment is a milestone for American culture and female leaders in Congress. Senator MIKULSKI is now the longest serving female in the Senate and in the history of the U.S. Congress. She spent her first 10 years in the House of Representatives, followed by the next 25 years here in the Senate. She has worked every day to make America a better place for the next generation.

When Senator MIKULSKI began her work in the House of Representatives, there were 18 female Members of the House and 3 female Members of the Senate. When she began her first term in the Senate, there were 23 female Members of

the House and only 1 other female Member of the Senate. Now, she is a leader among our 17 female Senators and 76 female Members of the House of Representatives.

Her strong sense of community and instinctive nature pertaining to the needs of Americans is exemplified by her action-oriented attitude. Even before her tenure in Congress, as a social worker for the people of Maryland, Ms. MIKULSKI was active in local issues in and around the Baltimore area and worked to help at-risk children and seniors. She continues working passionately to address those issues throughout her tenure in Congress.

Her advocacy for justice and contributions to social issues are evident with her work to fight for women's rights and improved access to health care, to better education, and to volunteering and national service opportunities. She offers tremendous leadership for the Senate both as the chairwoman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, and as the chairwoman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies.

Like Jeannette Rankin, Senator MIKULSKI has been a leader and an exemplar for strong and courageous women leaders in America.

Senator MIKULSKI gets things done, and I have enjoyed our friendship during our work together in the Senate. Her brave spirit is one that sets the bar for new and incoming Senators, both male and female. I congratulate Senator MIKULSKI on her special day and I look forward to continuing our work in the Senate together.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, first of all, let me say I am enormously touched and gratified by the warm words my colleagues have spoken on both sides of the aisle. I am particularly moved by the fact of the men of Maryland who are here today. I am moved by the wonderful words of Senator Cardin, my colleague. I am moved as well that Governor O'Malley is here today.

When I came to the Senate, Senator Paul Sarbanes was my senior colleague, and he is here today as well. Governor O'Malley and Senator Sarbanes are on the bench, but these men are certainly not back benchers. I must say about the Governor and Senator Sarbanes and Senator Cardin, they prove the old adage that men of quality will always support

good women who seek equality. I have enjoyed their support, their wise counsel, and their collegial efforts on behalf of the people of Maryland during my years in Maryland politics.

It is a great honor to be here today passing this significant benchmark of becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress, both in the House where I served for 10 years, and in the Senate. It is a great honor for me to be able to pass into the history books along with such an esteemed person as Senator Margaret Chase Smith. We spoke about that in January 2011 when I was sworn in. There were tributes that day and wonderful words from our two women Senators from Maine. Today—actually over the weekend—I surpassed the record of Edith Norse Rogers who was the longest serving woman in the House. Both of those women came from New England. They were both hardy, resilient, and fiercely independent. I, as I have read their histories, so admired them. They were known for devotion to constituent service, an unabashed sense of patriotism, and kind of telling it like it is. I hope that as I join them in the history books. I can only continue with the same spirit of devotion to duty and that fierce independence and patriotism.

I didn't start out wanting to be a historic figure. To the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" you don't say, "I want to be a historic figure." When I was growing up, it was about service. For me, it is not how long I serve, it is not about history. For me, history books were Jane Adams and Abigail Adams and powdered wigs. I just welcome a day when I have time to even powder my nose, let alone powder my wig. But the fact is, when I grew up, I wanted to be of service. I learned that in my home, in my family, in my community, and with the wonderful nuns who taught me.

Today my colleagues have spoken about my wonderful mother and father. I had a terrific mother and father. I am so happy my two sisters and my fantastic brothers-in-law are joining me today. I only wish my mother and father could be here with me because they worked so hard to see that my sisters and I had an education at significant sacrifice to them. They were really wonderful people where others saw them in a life of business. Every day my father would open his grocery store and say, "Good morning, can I help you?" When he did, he wanted to assure that his customers got a fair deal.

My father opened his grocery store during the New Deal because he believed in Roosevelt and because, as my father said, "BARB, I know Roosevelt believed in me."

I also had the benefit of the wonderful Catholic nuns who educated me. I had the benefit of going to a school called the Institute of Notre Dame and then Mount St. Agnes College, the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Mercy. These women, who concentrated their lives on the message of Christianity and the message of Jesus Christ, wanted to make sure that women in America could learn and be a part of our society. They didn't only teach us our three Rs, they taught us about leadership and service. They also taught us about other values—the values of love your neighbor, care for the sick, worry about the poor, and be hungry and thirsty for justice.

When I was at the Institute of Notre Dame, a school that Nancy Pelosi went to as well, there was something called the Christopher movement after St. Christopher. The motto was, "It is better to light one little candle than to curse the darkness." That is what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a social worker. I even thought about being a doctor. One time I even thought about being a Catholic nun, but that vow of obedience kind of slowed me down a little bit.

In this country wonderful things happen. When my great-grandmother came to this country, she had little money in her pocket but a big dream in her heart: that she could be part of the American dream, that she could own a home in her own name, in her own right; that she could have a job and so could the people in her own family; and that based on merit and hard work you could be something. Well, in three generations, I have become a Senator. Only in America the story of my family could have occurred—modest beginnings, hard work, effort, neighbor helping neighbor.

Much has been said about my fight for the highway. I was thinking about getting a doctorate in public health at Johns Hopkins. But they were going to run that highway through the neighborhoods, the older ethnic neighborhoods, the African American neighborhoods. We were viewed in some of those neighborhoods as the other side of the tracks. I wanted to fight to keep those neighborhoods on track. So I took on city hall, and I did fight them.

In this country, what happened? In another country, they would have taken a protester like me and put me in jail. Instead, in the United States of America, they sent me to the city council. I worked hard there, and 5 years later, when

Senator Paul Sarbanes, who was a Congressman, ran for the Senate, I ran for his House seat, and I got the job.

When I arrived in the House in 1976, only 19 women were serving: 14 Democrats and 5 Republicans; only 5 women of color. In 2012, there are 76 women in the House: 50 Democrats, 24 Republicans; 26 women of color. In the Senate, there are now 17 women serving: 12 Democrats, 5 Republicans. Today, we saw visiting us Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, a woman of color who served well while she was here.

Those are the numbers and those are the statistics. And though I join this long number of firsts, for me it is not how long I have served but how well I have served. When I came to Congress, I became a Member for the fabulous Third Congressional District of Maryland. My job was to represent a blue collar community that was in economic transition. What did we do? We were a community that built things here so we could ship them over there. We built cars. We built ships. We made steel. We knew if a country did not make something and build something, it could not make something of itself.

I fought for those blue collar people. I fought to keep those jobs in manufacturing. We fought for the Port of Baltimore, its dredging, so we could bring in the big ships so we could have exports. We worked again for those people in those manufacturing areas while we saw jobs go overseas. Then we worked very hard for cities to make sure our cities were safe, that we had great schools, and that they had a chance of making it.

I fought hard for health care. One of my greatest pieces of legislation was the Spousal Anti-Impoverishment Act, so that if one spouse went into a nursing home, the other spouse would not have to spend down their life's savings and lose their home. AARP tells me my legislation of so many years ago, that stands today, has kept 1 million people from losing their home or their family farm.

Those were the battles then. Those were the battles when I changed my address and I came to the Senate. Although I changed my address, the battles are still the same: jobs, social justice, opportunity based on hard work, peace in the world, and I continue to fight for this.

But for me, it is not only about issues. Issues are so abstract. Issues can be so bloodless when we talk about them. For me, issues are about people—the people I represent in

my own hometown, the people I represent in my State, and the people who live in the United States of America.

My favorite thing is being out there talking to the people, going into diners, going table to table, listening to their stories, holding roundtables with parents whose children have special needs, meeting with scientists who have discoveries they think will lead to new ideas and new products that will bring new jobs, meeting with universities that train our workforce. For me, it is about the people.

So as I pass this important benchmark, which I am so honored to do, I want people to know I am still that young girl who watched her father open that grocery store every day and say: "Good morning. Can I help you?" I am still that young girl who went to the Institute of Notre Dame and Mount St. Agnes College who said:

I am going to light one little candle. I do not want to curse the darkness. I want to continue to fight for a stronger economy, a safer America, the people of Maryland.

In conclusion, I want to say thanks. I am going to thank the Dear Lord for giving me the chance to be born in the greatest country in the world, to be able to work hard and serve in one of the greatest institutions in the United States of America. But nobody gets to be a "me" without a whole lot of "thee."

I thank my family. I thank the religious women who educated me. I thank all of my staff who have worked so hard to help me do a good job. And I thank the countless volunteers who believed in me and worked for my election when nobody else did. Most of all, I thank the people of the Third Congressional District and the State of Maryland for saying: "BARB, we are going to give you your shot. Don't ever forget this. Don't ever forget us." I want them to know, though I have now served in the Senate 12,858 days, I will never forget them. Every morning I am saying in my heart, "Good morning. Can I help you?"

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am so honored to join so many of my Senate colleagues and people from Maryland and across this country in recognizing and congratulating the amazing woman you just heard from, my good friend from Maryland Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who, as you

have just heard, has just become the longest serving female Member of Congress in the history of the United States.

This is an achievement that takes courage, it takes passion, and it takes commitment. Those are three attributes all of us who know her so well know she has in abundance. But my good friend, Senator MIKULSKI, has not just served long, she has served well.

The senior Senator from Maryland, over her 35 years in Congress, has established herself as a trailblazer, as a leader, and as a fighter for the people of her State. It is fitting that this milestone was reached during Women's History Month because Senator MIKULSKI has given so much of herself in support of other women in Congress. She has guided us, she has shown us how to stand and fight, and she has taken all of us under her wing.

Senator MIKULSKI realized when she arrived here that there was no rule book for women in Congress. So she took it upon herself to guide the way. She drew on her own experiences to make the transition easier for all of us.

She organized seminars that you have heard about. She taught us how to work together. She taught us about the legislative process, the rules on the floor, and the many more subtle rules off the floor.

In short, Senator MIKULSKI showed us the ropes, and she has done it every day I have been here for all the women who have come since she has been here. While she knows it is important and courageous to lead the charge, she also understands the first ones have to be responsible and successful so others can follow. It is because Senator MIKULSKI has done her job so well that other women have been able to follow in her footsteps.

She is here today as the longest serving woman in Congress, not by accident or by happenstance. She is here because she has earned it, because the people of her State know she is an indispensable champion of their causes, because she does work across party lines, and because she delivers results.

I know many years from now when women have achieved a larger, more representative role in our Nation's Capital, Senator MIKULSKI will be at the very top of the list of people to thank—the person who not only forged the path but who went back and guided so many of us down it.

I know many of my colleagues are on the floor today to thank Senator MIKULSKI. But I am here especially to thank her, as one of those women who have followed in her foot-

steps, for her more than 35 years of service to her State and to her country. Those of us who know her well know she is not even close to being finished.

So, Mr. President, my very best to my very good friend, Senator MIKULSKI. I wish her very well in her next 35 years. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President I too want to speak of my dear friend BARBARA MIKULSKI, who is just precious. She is precious to her family. She is precious to the people of the Third Congressional District that she represented for 10 years. She is precious to the people of Maryland, precious to the people of the United States, and precious to those of us who have the privilege of serving with her in this body.

She has been affectionately known as a few things: The dean of women; the breaker of the ceiling, as Patty Murray just said; setting the stage, setting the rule book—writing the rule book—for women in the Senate.

There will be 51 women in the Senate one day—there will be—and it will come much more quickly because BARBARA MIKULSKI was the first. There is no question about that. The Senate will be a better place for it in so many different ways.

She is also not only known as the dean of women. We love her. She is known as BARB. I love calling her on the phone late at night and having her say: “This is BARB. Please call me. Make sure you say the words and leave your phone number twice.”

Of course, when BARB says something, we all do it. So I always leave the phone number twice.

I admire so much about her. One of the things at the top of the list is who she is. She is the real deal. She knows where she came from. She has never forgotten where she came from. As I have told her personally, she has that internal gyroscope of who she is, what she should do, and how she should do it that guides her almost instinctively, and it is probably the most precious thing a politician can have. Not very many people have it, but hers is about the best I have ever witnessed.

It started from her upbringing and her faith, which she mentioned. We have talked about Willy. She has mentioned Willy. But you never forget how she reminds us because it is with her, and you can see it in her actions every day—how when people would come into the store that Willy had, the grocery store in East Baltimore, when they had lost their job

or someone was very sick and Willy would say: "Take the groceries and pay me later."

It reminded me of my grandfather Jake—we have talked about this—who was an exterminator, not quite the same as Willy and not providing the same services, but he would tell people: "If you have roaches and rats in your house and you can't pay, I will still exterminate. Pay me when you have the money." So I understood that instinctively.

I would have loved Willy to have met my grandfather Jake because I am sure they were kindred souls in a lot of ways. And the guidance of Willy and BARB's mom—you can see it every day in the way she acts.

I just want to say another thing about BARB. She got into public service as a community activist. There was a highway that was going to tear up an important and historic part of her community, and she got involved. Being schooled by her and many of my colleagues, many women believed, oh, they would be excluded from politics if they went into politics directly. But when you are a community activist and you take a lead because something is bothering you about your home or your neighborhood, politics just followed sort of naturally. It is a little bit like Patty Murray's story as well.

These days, because of what BARB has done, I think my daughters can aspire—I do not know if they do, but they can aspire to go into political life directly. In those days, it was much harder. But there she was. She led this fight. She went on to the city council, of course the Third Congressional District in Maryland, and now to this august Chamber. She has done so much. It has been cataloged by all my colleagues.

Medical research: There are probably millions of people alive today because of the 35 years she has pushed to make that happen. They do not know who they are, but they are there; and they are living happy and healthy because of BARB MIKULSKI.

How about veterans and health care needs? Again, literally tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of our veterans are living much better lives because they were able to get the health care that BARB MIKULSKI spearheaded, particularly in the earlier days when this was not a popular cause.

The list goes on and on. She has done so much. In our Chamber she is beloved. Beloved. People are sometimes afraid of her when she gets mad. People want her approval. But most of all, I think what most of us seek is her advice, because after so many years in politics, she has that gift to

understand what the average person needs and to talk directly to them. She does not talk through her colleagues or does not talk through the media or does not talk through some community leader or other politician. She still is talking to that family sitting in East Baltimore or in Hagerstown or in Annapolis. She almost has them in front of her eyes wherever she goes. That is why her speeches are so effective. She does not try to polish them. That is not her. She speaks from the heart directly to the people, and she cares so much about them that it comes through. It is an amazing trait.

I most admire people in political life who never forget where they came from. She is one of the most powerful people, not just women, one of the most powerful persons in America. I did not know BARB MIKULSKI when she was a community activist in East Baltimore, but my guess is she is exactly the same today. All the power and the accomplishments and the emoluments and the praise, all deserved, have not changed her a whit. That to me says an amazing thing about an individual.

BARB, I know my colleagues are waiting, but we love you. We cherish you. As Patty Murray said, "I will put it my own way, I am sure that BARBARA MIKULSKI, knowing her as well as I do, the best is yet to come."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I wish to join my colleagues in a tribute to Senator MIKULSKI.

I am delighted to join my colleagues in this tribute to perhaps our favorite colleague, BARBARA MIKULSKI, on her becoming the longest serving woman in congressional history. Her work in these Halls has made our country stronger. In a place where partisan rancor too often rules the day, she has established a legacy of service to her constituents and to all of us in this body that stands as an example to every one of us.

Her political career began in the late 1960s when she launched a campaign to stop the construction of a highway over a historic neighborhood she wanted to protect in Baltimore. She won that battle and went on to run for the Baltimore City Council in 1971. More than 40 years later and following a successful stint in the House of Representatives, BARBARA MIKULSKI continues to blaze an impressive trail.

During her 27 years in the Senate, she became the first woman to sit on the Senate Appropriations Committee, the first woman to chair an appropriations subcommittee, and the first Democratic woman elected to Senate leadership. Last year, we celebrated BARBARA as she became the longest serving female Senator. Now she has crossed yet another milestone, passing Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, having served in the Congress longer than any woman in history.

Of course, we do not just celebrate the quantity of BARBARA's service but its quality. No one is better at drilling down to the heart of an issue and expressing it in punchy, unforgettable terms. No one cheers us up more than BARBARA when she tells us to: Stand tall, square our shoulders, put on our lipstick, and rise to the occasion. We do not all put on lipstick, but we all get the message.

No one better combines the idealism of politics with the proactive abilities of government. She told me once with a twinkle in her eye, "I am a reformer, but I am a bit of a wardheeler too." Practicality and passion combined is what makes politics successful, and no one does it better than BARBARA.

When she was first elected to the House in 1977, she was 1 of 21 women in Congress; 18 in the House and, the following year, only 3 in the Senate. Today there are 93 women serving including 17 Senators. BARBARA has earned the distinction of dean of the Senate women. But she never forgot her roots as a champion for those who need a voice in this building.

In her years in the Senate, BARBARA MIKULSKI's dedication to her constituents and women's rights has been clear, from becoming a champion of women's health issues to organizing training seminars for women of both parties elected to the Senate, to sponsoring and pushing through with a force that we all remember the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009.

During my much shorter tenure as a Senator, I have had the great privilege and pleasure to work with BARBARA to pass landmark health care reform legislation out of the HELP Committee. I have also served with her on the Intelligence Committee, and worked closely with her on the Senate Intelligence Committee's cyber task force to evaluate cyberthreats and issue recommendations to the full committee. I have taken from those experiences great affection and respect for Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. These are issues that are complex, complicated, difficult, and abstruse, and

she brought to them the verve and the vigor and the vision to move on them. Those really are her hallmarks: verve, vigor, and vision.

I know all of us here in this Chamber are proud to call Senator BARB our colleague and friend as she makes history yet again. Her hard work and collegial spirit have enriched this Senate. I wish her all of the best in the accomplishments ahead. On behalf of all Rhode Islanders, Senator MIKULSKI, I congratulate you for this milestone in your history, the Senate's history, and our Nation's history.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I consider it an honor and a privilege to rise for a moment to pay tribute to Senator MIKULSKI from the State of Maryland. In so doing, I think it is only appropriate that I quote from a speech made on November 22 in 1922 by the first woman ever to serve in the Senate.

Rebecca Latimer Felton was the first woman Senator. She was appointed for 1 day. Governor Brown had run against Walter George for the Senate. Walter George won. And because of Ms. Felton's unending help to him in his race, he asked the Governor if he would appoint her for a day to his seat before he took it and was sworn in.

She came to Washington, DC, to serve for 1 day and she made one speech. In that speech she had a paragraph that to me exemplifies BARBARA MIKULSKI. She said:

Let me say, Mr. President, that when the women of the country come and sit with you, though there may be but very few in the next few years, I pledge you that you will get ability, you will get integrity of purpose, you will get exalted patriotism, and you will get unstinted usefulness.

That was Rebecca Felton in 1922. Today, in March 2012, we honor a Senator who has lived up to every one of those promises Ms. Felton made almost 100 years ago. I have had the privilege to serve on the HELP Committee with the Senator, worked very closely on the Alzheimer's legislation which she has been such a leader on, worked with her on many other projects, including one I am happy to remind her about, and that was the confirmation of Wendy Sherman a few months ago when, on the floor of the Senate, we worked together to see that she was appointed and named and confirmed Under Secretary of State for the United States of America, serving under Hillary Clinton.

On that night when we worked on getting that UC (unanimous consent) done, and it was not easy, I saw the tenacity, I saw the grace, I saw the patriotism, and I saw the integrity of BARBARA MIKULSKI. It is an honor for me to rise today and commend her on a great individual achievement, not just for herself but for all of the women who have gone before her and all the women who will come later on, and to my five granddaughters and my daughter.

She has led the life in the Senate exemplary of the contributions that all women can make to our society. I commend her on her service, her compassion, her integrity, and all that she has done for the State of Maryland, the United States of America, and peace on this Earth.

BARBARA, congratulations to you on a great achievement. It is an honor for me to be here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. Klobuchar). The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I am honored to follow my good friend and colleague from the State of Georgia in recognizing the remarkable contributions of Senator MIKULSKI, now the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress.

Today we have been joined by many great Marylanders. We have had Governor O'Malley and Senator Cardin, and former Senator Sarbanes, and Senator MIKULSKI's own family, her sisters and brother-in-law in attendance. I am also pleased that we have got two of her favorite constituents, my father and my brother, who are with us today as well. They live in Annapolis and they have known what I have known since childhood when I lived in the suburbs of Baltimore, that Senator MIKULSKI is a remarkable, a tireless, a passionate, and an effective Senator.

Reference has been made to her start as a community organizer, someone who saved Fells Point from a 16-lane superhighway, someone who was not afraid to get into the gritty issues of a local community and standing up for folks who did not have anyone to fight for them. We have also heard about her early years as a social worker, helping folks in need understand the programs available to them and then fighting for the programs that should have been available to them.

It is no surprise to any of us that the district she first represented in the House of Representatives, the Third, was known as the "steel district" where lots of men and women

worked in the Bethlehem Steel plant. It is no surprise that she has earned a reputation here in the Senate as a woman of steel, who fights for manufacturers, who fights for Federal workers, who fights for Western Maryland, who fights for poultry on the peninsula of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, who fights for her constituents day in and day out.

It is indeed just that in this Woman's History Month we would be recognizing Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who has stood up for Maryland each and every day. Though like me she comes up a little short every time she stands, she stands incredibly tall in the company of Senators throughout American history. She is someone who is passionate for people, who has determination to continue in the tradition of her father, that fair deal grocer, who asked every day that simple question: How can I help?, and then gets busy answering it.

She is a role model for me, for all of us, for my daughter, for my family, for our community. She is the only Senator I have heard say to me, fiercely, before going on a vote on the floor: "To the barricades." And she is the only person who could say that and mean it. For a lifetime, she has been at the barricades of justice. She has been at the barricades of service. She has been at the barricades of making a difference. And for that, we are all grateful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I too stand today to pay recognition to a friend, a colleague, and truly a woman who brings a smile to my face. Because for as many years as she has served her State of Maryland, for as many years as she has served in the Halls of Congress, she has the enthusiasm, the spontaneity, the excitement when she approaches an issue as a brand-new rookie freshman coming into this body.

That is quite remarkable because around here we can get kind of dragged down by the day-to-day politics, the partisan nature, and the conflicts that are inherent in this process.

BARBARA MIKULSKI is one who embraces life and the responsibilities that are put before her. She has an opportunity to represent her constituents, and she embraces it with an enthusiasm that should be a reminder to us all of why we are here to serve.

I have so many different stories and quips and quotes about Senator MIKULSKI, whose name sounds somewhat

similar to mine—Murkowski. Every now and again, we have an opportunity to share the same stage, the same podium, and the individual who is introducing us will trip on his or her tongue and refer to us wrongly. There was one occasion where we were being recognized by the National Geographic Society, and she pointed out to the individual making the introduction: “She is the vertical one, and I am the not so vertical one.”

This is just a recognition again that regardless of the situation, BARBARA MIKULSKI has a good comeback, a quick quip. She is a quipmeister if there ever was one. It speaks again to the enthusiasm and passion she brings to the job she has in front of her.

With names such as Murkowski and Mikulski, we clearly have a Polish heritage we look to with pride. She reminds me of mine because she is perhaps a little more connected to those Polish roots. Again, there is a sense of pride with whom she is, where she has come from, and what her family has done preceding her that allows her to go on and do so much for so many.

We have had the opportunity to work together on issues that, coming from different parts of the country—truly different ends of the country—and one would not think we would have as much commonality on some of the issues. As the chairmen on the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, we have worked closely on issues that relate to our fisheries, coastal issues, and judiciary issues. She is always reminding me that we have to take care of our fishermen out there and make sure our families who rely on our waters are appropriately cared for.

We have worked together on women’s health issues. We were recently at the Sister to Sister event. I do feel a kinship and a relationship with this Polish sister as we talk about those issues that are so important to women’s health.

We share the same concerns about how we do more for our first responders, our servicemembers, and our veterans. Just this past week, Senator—I almost called her Murkowski myself—Senator MIKULSKI was chairing a committee, and I brought up an issue as it related to the late Senator Ted Stevens and the Department of Justice investigation that failed so miserably—and we are now pursuing it, through different avenues, to make sure nobody should have to go through what Senator Stevens did—Senator MIKULSKI literally stopped the committee hearing to remind the Attorney General that, in fact, this was not a partisan issue; this was an

issue where we all should be concerned and that if there is no justice within the Department of Justice, what does that mean for us as a nation.

She is never hesitant to speak and stand and make very clear, when these issues are important to the Nation, it should know no bounds by party. BARBARA MIKULSKI has held true to that.

In many different ways, that makes this milestone we are recognizing even more important because I think there is a kind of a piling on of events that can happen in the Halls of Congress, where the weight of what we do on a daily basis gets to be a load. To a certain extent, one can get tired, one can get worn, but BARBARA has not let the weight of that responsibility bring her down.

I was joking with her a little bit ago when all the accolades were coming her way. I said, "BARBARA, with all these kind words that are being said about you, by the time the tributes are done, you are going to be 7 feet tall."

That woman is 7 feet tall in the minds of so many of us. She is a giant for the people of Maryland. She has proven herself to be a giant in so many ways as she works to do good for so many.

I am proud to stand with so many colleagues in recognizing her tenure, recognizing this historic place she has carved for herself within the Congress, and to call her my friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise to honor the service of one of our most distinguished and long-serving colleagues, the tireless, sometimes relentless, and often spirited senior Senator from Maryland, Ms. BARBARA MIKULSKI.

To say she is a trailblazer for women in politics is an understatement. She has blazed a bold trail not just for women in politics but for all women in every endeavor. She is a fighter, an advocate, someone whom one is hopefully on the same side with because she is a formidable opponent when one is on the opposite side. She is a role model for leadership and getting things done.

Her impressive list of accomplishments is far too long to recite in a few minutes or even a few hours. It would not adequately do justice to her incredible service to Maryland and the people of this Nation. Senator MIKULSKI has dedi-

cated her career to serving Marylanders and has dedicated her life to public service.

She began as a social worker in the neighborhoods of Baltimore, working every day on the street helping at-risk children find their way and giving seniors the help they needed.

She was not, and is not, a bleeding heart, but there is no one who has a fuller heart, a more open heart to the deepest needs of the least powerful among us than Senator MIKULSKI. She is someone one wants on their side.

Senator MIKULSKI came to public service with what I like to call the long view. She can see beyond herself to the needs of society as a whole, and she has fought for those needs and won on far more occasions than she has lost.

When she first ran for public office in 1971, I know she had in her heart the deep and abiding memories of those kids and seniors she met in Baltimore when she began her career. I know she carries those memories with her to this day. To this day, she has never forgotten the people of Maryland who need her the most and have had the wisdom to elect her time and time again.

Her political career has taken her from the Baltimore City Council to the House of Representatives and to this Chamber, where she has honorably served for the past 26 years. For 7 years, I have had the opportunity to work with her in this Chamber, and there has been no stronger, more knowledgeable, more committed colleague on this side of the aisle. She is an example for all her colleagues, determined to work across the aisle when possible and ready to fight for her beliefs when necessary.

She was the first woman elected to statewide office in Maryland, the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate in her own right, the first woman to serve in both Houses of Congress, and the longest serving female Member of the Senate.

As we all know, this past Saturday, Senator MIKULSKI became the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress, serving more than 35 years in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

It is only fitting that she achieve this milestone during Women's History Month because she has not only paved the way for women in politics but she has helped pave the way for women everywhere.

I had the opportunity to work with Senator MIKULSKI during the long and difficult debate and negotiations on health care reform. Her work was instrumental in ensuring that

women have access to the comprehensive health care they are now guaranteed under the law. During that debate, no one's voice was clearer, no one's voice was stronger, no one was more convincing than she in the fight for a woman's right to comprehensive health care coverage.

She fought for mandatory insurance coverage of essential services, such as mammograms and maternity care, services that many insurance companies refused to cover. She fought to end gender discrimination by insurance companies.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act and, in large measure because of Senator MIKULSKI's tireless efforts on behalf of women, being a woman is no longer a preexisting condition, as insurance companies used to say, that can be discriminated against.

Those insurance companies that routinely denied coverage of basic women's health services—essential services—are now required to cover those services under the comprehensive women's health services provision of the law.

Whenever there is a need in the Chamber for a strong voice for women, whenever there is a need for an advocate to stand for the powerless against the powerful, whenever there is a child who needs a friend or a senior citizen who needs a hand, BARBARA MIKULSKI is there.

I believe there are many times she comes to this floor remembering, as she said, her days back in Baltimore, and she is right there—an advocate's advocate—fighting for those children and seniors she met along the way.

The rest of us are better off because she comes here with a full heart, ready to do what is right, not just what is politically expedient.

Her bill, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, was signed into law by President Obama just days after his inauguration. I was proud to work with her on that bill and on so many other efforts as well that make a difference in the lives of average Americans.

Finally, Senator MIKULSKI has been a tireless advocate for something that is near and dear to my own heart—for those who suffer from Alzheimer's and their families.

As the son of a mother who battled Alzheimer's for 18 years and lost her life to it, I understand first hand the unique challenges of providing long-term care for a loved one. Senator MIKULSKI has come to this floor on countless occasions advocating for increased research, education, and programs for individuals with Alzheimer's. She has found support from her colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

It is estimated that 5.4 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's and millions more have been touched in some way by this debilitating disease.

I thank the Senator from the bottom of my heart for her passion for helping those who suffer from this disease. I look forward to continuing to work with her on this issue until we find a cure for Alzheimer's.

The bottom line: BARBARA MIKULSKI is a deeply committed public servant. The State of Maryland has rightly recognized her invaluable service for many years. Because of her efforts, those Maryland families know their interests are protected and their voices are heard.

It has been an honor to serve with her. All of us in this Chamber can only hope to serve our States with the same conviction, selflessness, and pride as Senator MIKULSKI has throughout her 35 years of service to the State of Maryland.

I am reminded of what Mother Teresa said when she got the Congressional Gold Medal, "It is not the awards and recognition that one receives in life that matter; it is how one has lived their life that matters."

In that respect, BARBARA MIKULSKI has lived an extraordinary life. We thank her for what she has done and not just for the people of Maryland but for all the people of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am proud to be able to join my colleagues on the floor this afternoon in honoring Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for her service to Maryland and for the endless contributions she has made to the people of this country.

It is very hard to adequately describe a political icon such as BARBARA MIKULSKI. For all of us women in politics, she is a model of what we can aspire to or what we would hope to aspire to. I just want to tell a simple story about BARB that I think reflects her ability to get along with people, her zest for life, as so many of my colleagues have described, and the connection she makes that makes a difference for people.

She and I were on a flight with four other Senators to the security forum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a couple of years ago, and the weather was bad, so our flight was diverted to Bangor, ME. It was winter in New England, and of course, when there is bad weather in New England in the winter, it sticks around for a while, so we were trapped overnight in Bangor.

Most of us just sort of sat there waiting to figure out what was going to be done while we waited for a flight the next day, but not BARBARA, because she doesn't sit still. She is never afraid to pick up the phone and take action, and that is exactly what she did. BARBARA dialed up her old friend and colleague—the colleague of all of us—Senator Susan Collins, and said, “Guess where I am.” And that is how those of us who were on that flight—the six Senators and the Secretary of Homeland Security—wound up joining Senator Collins and the legendary Troop Greeters of Bangor, ME, in welcoming troops at the airport as they returned home from overseas. So what had earlier seemed like an inconvenience turned into a fabulous opportunity to thank our brave men and women in uniform and to have a good time while we were doing it.

You find those kinds of things happening if you spend time with BARBARA MIKULSKI. It is a byproduct of her relentless energy, her drive to better her community and our Nation as a whole, her deep commitment to fighting for women's health, and her unfailing grace and gumption as a legislator, a colleague, and a friend.

As has been said, she got her start as a social worker trying to make the lives of men and women in her native Baltimore a little easier to bear. She was working in the service of values that were taught to her by her family, who owned the neighborhood grocery store. And as so many have commented, she often tells the story of her father opening the store early so that steelworkers coming in for the early morning shift would have time to buy their lunch. BARB has carried that spirit, those values she learned from her family in that grocery store here to the Senate, and often those values are sorely needed here.

As dean of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, she has built a sense of community within the caucus. Her bipartisan women's dinners are legendary. And, of course, what happens at those dinners stays at those dinners. Those are MIKULSKI's rules. But we really don't need to look any further than that wintry night in Maine to know how effective she has been in making things happen for people.

I look forward to more of her dinners, to more conversations with the Senator, to more chances to work with her as she fights on behalf of women and seniors and veterans and all those who don't have a voice in government and at the table. I thank the Senator for her friendship, for her leadership, and for her many years of service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I too am honored to be able to rise today to speak of our dear friend BARBARA MIKULSKI. So many good things have been said, so many accolades have been shared about what BARBARA has done and what she means to all of us. I can only tell you there is not a better ally, mentor, neighbor, and, most important, friend to have in the Senate than BARBARA MIKULSKI.

My State shares a border with BARBARA's State. Maryland and West Virginia have had a long and illustrious relationship. As Governor, I had always known of BARBARA and had met her a few times when I served the great State of West Virginia. But as a Senator, I have had the privilege of being her colleague and working with her and becoming friends, listening to her and watching how she works with her constituents, how she considers the issues, how she fights for issues. I don't think anyone has ever had to guess where BARBARA stands on an issue because we all know.

In the 15 months we have worked together, I can say it has been extremely rewarding to serve alongside her, whether it is her wisdom she shares on the train ride over to our sessions here or whether we talk about our both being raised in a grocery store. My grandfather had a little grocery store and, as you know, BARBARA was raised with her father in a grocery store. I think, basically, if you have retail in your blood, you understand the people of America.

Her sense of humor is something to behold. Every day I have the privilege of serving with her is a good day in the Senate.

I know colleagues have all shared their stories about BARBARA, and they have had more experience with her in the Senate. As a freshman, being here only a little over a year and a half, I have not had that many personal experiences, but I can tell you this: If there is a fight that breaks out, if there is something going wrong, you want BARBARA on your side. She is the person to have in that foxhole when the shooting starts. I have been so appreciative to have her as my friend and always count on her.

As we have all heard, she has been an advocate for women's health, the space program, and her most beloved State of Maryland, which she fights for every day.

Last year she became the first woman to reach the milestone of serving a quarter of a century in the Senate. Madam President, I have staffers who are younger than her years of service. But I also have young staffers, especially my female staffers, who have said they see a world of possibility because of the trail Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI has left for them. With all of that, she has blazed a trail for all of us. No one will be able to fill the shoes of BARBARA MIKULSKI. We will all be lucky enough to follow in her footsteps.

When she began serving on the Hill in 1977, there were 20 other women in all of Congress. She was among 17 who served in the House, while the following year there were 3 in the Senate. Today, 35 years later, there are 17 women serving in the Senate. If there is anything we can learn from Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, it is that 17 women is far too few. We need more women like you, BARBARA, and, just as important, we need more Senators like you.

I can honestly say that I know the State of Maryland is much better off because of BARBARA MIKULSKI, and I can tell you that the United States of America is a better country because of BARBARA MIKULSKI. So I say thank you to my dear friend BARBARA for her service to this great country and to all the constituents in Maryland who must be extremely proud of her and have a right to be so. I too am so proud to call her my friend and my neighbor.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, we have listened with interest and total accord as the life of BARBARA MIKULSKI in the Senate has been reviewed by so many people. We have heard the friendship and good will we all share toward her.

Her record is quite well known. She is determined to get things done. She never lets minutiae stand in the way or block an accomplishment. I have noticed one thing: When BARBARA MIKULSKI starts to talk during a debate, the noise around the room quiets down. If it doesn't, beware; BARBARA will call your attention to it and say it in a way that demands attention.

BARBARA and I arrived in the Senate in fairly close proximity. I came here in 1983 and BARBARA, who was elected in 1986, arrived in 1987, as I recall. We were both on the Appropriations Committee. I had some slight seniority over her,

and one of the things that were being dealt with was seniority. BARBARA asked for my help in the choice of subcommittee, and I tried to step out of the way and help BARBARA obtain the chairmanship of a subcommittee in Appropriations, which she managed so well and so effectively. She once called me her Galahad, and I was proud of the moniker because it was intended to be a compliment and a sign of friendship.

Strikingly, BARBARA MIKULSKI and I have backgrounds that are not dissimilar. I come from Polish heritage. My grandparents on my paternal side were born in Poland, as BARBARA's family was. They were immigrants. My parents were brought as children from Europe and went through the traditional immigrant absorption.

My folks found it very hard to make a living as they grew up here in America. My grandparents were essentially poor people with a kind of blue collar background. They had to resort to storekeeping to keep food on the table, a roof overhead, and clothes on their backs.

The one thing that threaded through those years for me—and I heard it coming from BARBARA MIKULSKI so many times when she spoke—was there was always dignity in the house, there was always a positive outlook.

As I heard, my parents, like hers, were not able to do much with presents and valuables. But they did something else, and you see it so fundamentally clear in BARBARA MIKULSKI's demeanor and her behavior: that what she learned at home, the same thing that I learned at home, was the meaning of values—not valuables—but values. Values included a character obligation for hard work and honesty and decency. They were the yardsticks by which we were measured as children and as adults.

I worked very closely with BARBARA. I left the Senate, as is known, for 2 years and my seniority slipped as a consequence. BARBARA's seniority continued to grow, and she is chairman of an appropriations subcommittee. BARBARA always brought a degree of strength and energy to the things that she said and to the things she did. Although BARBARA during a presentation wanted to make sure that she was heard, and heard correctly, she would also pop up with humor. She had a facility with words and a facility with expression that would have you engrossed in what she was saying and caught you off guard when a joke or a humorous statement would pop up.

When we note that BARBARA MIKULSKI, from this modest background, was always on the side of working people, it was never a mask; it was the truth and it was where she wanted to be. I must say that she, for me, was always a steadfast beacon that would remind us: Don't get carried away too much with your personal importance. Get carried away with the things you have to do in your responsibility as a Senator.

When BARBARA MIKULSKI came these years ago, as was noted, she was the first among the women to come to the Senate and ultimately, as we now know, became the longest serving and carried herself through all of the difficulties we have had. But always you could depend on BARBARA MIKULSKI. When BARBARA stood up, people stopped talking about things that were extraneous and they would listen carefully, because BARBARA MIKULSKI always made so much sense and she didn't let you get by without a challenge if she believed you were wrong.

We have heard about her record, we have heard about her accomplishments, and everybody had wonderful things to say about her. I listened carefully to the statements that were being made and thought about our days together and how wonderful it was to be able to hear BARBARA MIKULSKI make sense out of what often escaped that challenge. She would offer the challenge and she would offer solutions.

I, like our other colleagues, stand here in awe and respect and note that BARBARA MIKULSKI, the storekeeper's daughter, is so much like that which I saw in my own life and we have seen in America in the past century; and BARBARA MIKULSKI who, in all due modesty, without any impression of a smug satisfaction, is always ready to take up the battle for the people she serves, not only in the State of Maryland but across the country. She is an inspiration for women coming to government, and she serves so well as a demonstration of what could be.

I am delighted to be here, to stand here as a friend and an admirer of BARBARA MIKULSKI, and wish her many more years of service. I know that with BARBARA around, you can always count on sense and good judgment to result.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I associate myself with the remarks of my colleague, the Senator from New Jersey.

It is with great admiration that I rise today to join all of my colleagues who have spoken before me and who will continue to speak honoring the Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI, as the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress.

It has been such an honor to serve with Senator MIKULSKI. In my 3 years in the Senate, she has quickly become a dear friend and an invaluable mentor, as she has been for all of the other female colleagues as the dean of women Senators.

It wasn't until 1932 that Hattie Caraway became the first woman ever elected to the Senate, and it wasn't until a half century later in 1986 that, against all odds, BARBARA MIKULSKI became the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate. That is right. When she arrived in the Senate, she was just one of two women serving in this body. Now the longest serving woman in congressional history, Senator MIKULSKI is showing what is possible when you ignore conventional wisdom, never stop fighting for what is right, and honor our commitment to families who elect us every single day.

One of her hallmark battles has been the fight for equal pay for work for women. This is not only an issue of equality and justice but an economic imperative, because as we stand here today, with more dual income households than ever, women only make 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. For women of color, the disparity is even greater, African American women earn 62 cents on the dollar, and Latinas 53 cents on the dollar. I know Senator MIKULSKI won't give up until we correct this outrageous injustice, and I am honored to be fighting alongside her.

Senator MIKULSKI has also led the fight to strengthen our laws against domestic violence, and open access to health screenings and treatment that saves women's lives. Close to my heart, she was among the first to stand up to insurance companies that said that being a woman was a preexisting condition. You can always count on Senator MIKULSKI to lead the charge in drawing a line in the sand in the Senate when it comes to protecting women's health and a woman's right to choose. We saw it yet again when she stood up to the dangerous overreach of the Blunt amendment that would have denied women of this country the ability to choose which medications to take and leave that decision to their boss.

She embodies the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: "The battle for individual rights of women is one of long standing and none of us should countenance anything that undermines it."

It is that spirit—making your voice heard, never backing down in the face of injustice—that has made Senator MIKULSKI one of the strongest voices we have for women in this country and women around the world. Every single day she is paving the way for more women leaders in America by showing the young women and girls of this country that women's voices matter and are needed in our public debate.

I close by expressing my personal debt of gratitude to her for her vision, her leadership, and her pioneering spirit. I simply could not imagine working in this body without her leadership. She has taught me so much in such a short period of time. And, equally important, she has fostered an unbreakable bipartisan spirit among our colleagues that has resulted in important victories for the American public.

Thank you, Senator MIKULSKI, and congratulations on your historic achievement. It is an honor to serve with you, and I hope to continue to serve with you for many years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I am probably going to be the concluding remarks on celebrating Senator MIKULSKI, so I am going to proceed with that.

Madam President, we have been here now for almost 3 hours—I was down here when we started. Senator Feinstein started about 2 o'clock and we are approaching 5 o'clock now—for an incredible celebration of BARBARA MIKULSKI's career. I have listened to a lot of it both at my office and here on the floor, and it is pretty remarkable to hear the kinds of things she has done with her life and I rise today to honor my colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI.

As has been noted, this month Senator MIKULSKI becomes the longest serving woman in the history of Congress. With her perfect sense of timing, BARBARA reaches this historic milestone during Women's History Month. And it is for the history books. As BARBARA has said, "It is not how long I serve but how well I serve." She has served very well. She has served her beloved State of Maryland very well, and she served this country in a number of capacities on the Appro-

ropriations Committee and on various committees in the Congress.

We celebrate this historic occasion but, more deeply, we celebrate BARBARA's record of achievement—a record that transcends gender, a record that is rooted in a life dedicated to public service.

Since she was first elected to public office in 1971 to the Baltimore City Council, BARBARA has been setting milestones. Think about that for a minute—1971. This is 40 years plus of public service. As the Chair knows, this is pretty remarkable. She served in public service for a while. I have served for a while. But 41 years of public service is remarkable—the first woman elected to statewide office in Maryland; the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate in her own right; the first woman in the Senate Democratic leadership; and the first Democratic woman to serve in both Houses of Congress. Yet it is not her being first that is the most impressive; it is her commitment to putting others first. BARBARA has shown that commitment time and again.

In over 35 years in the Congress, she has never wavered in her service to our Nation and her dedication to the people of Maryland. She has fought for quality education. She has fought for American seniors. She has fought for women's health and for veterans. For women facing unequal pay, BARBARA championed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. For senior citizens facing bankruptcy because of a spouse's nursing home care, BARBARA wrote the Spousal Anti-Im impoverishment Act. Yes, she is a trailblazer, but she blazes those trails to help others—for young people who dream of going to college, for families facing devastating illness, for opportunity for all Americans. That has been her passion, that has been her true achievement, and that will be her greatest legacy.

When BARBARA was first elected to the Senate in 1986, there was only one other female Senator. Now there are 17. BARBARA is, rightly so, the dean of the women. She is a mentor to her female colleagues, but no less so she is an inspiration to all of us.

I admire BARBARA's remarkable determination and her tenacity, but also her ability to work with others to get things done. She will fight for what she believes, but she will sit down to dinner with her colleagues across the aisle. And she has never forgotten where she came from. The daughter of a Baltimore grocer, each night she returns home to Balti-

more. She has never forgotten the values she learned there: hard work, helping one's neighbor, patriotism.

She is diminutive in height only. That was evident early on. The story is well known how, as a young community activist, BARBARA stopped that 16-lane highway from coming through Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood. She is not afraid to stand up to power, and she is not afraid of speaking strongly to power. In all the ways that count, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI is a towering figure.

Albert Schweitzer once said:

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know for sure. The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

This BARBARA MIKULSKI has done. From her early days as a social worker to her years in Congress, she has served. She has served long and well.

Congratulations, BARBARA. It is an honor to be your colleague.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I couldn't be more pleased as well as privileged to join all of my colleagues today in congratulating a very good friend and colleague, the dean of the women of the Senate, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, on overtaking Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers as the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress.

As someone who has had the privilege of knowing Senator MIKULSKI since 1978 when I was first elected to the House of Representatives, for me, this milestone represents a watershed moment in the life of American politics.

For nearly 35 years, I have witnessed BARBARA MIKULSKI summon and harness a seemingly limitless reservoir of energy as a fierce advocate and a champion on behalf of the people of Maryland as well as the country. With equal parts vigor and vigilance, she has demonstrated a devotion to her constituents that has been unerring in its promise and iron-clad in its purpose.

It is precisely that caliber of service that the people of Maryland have rewarded time and time again.

As I stated on this very floor at the outset of this Congress when she surpassed the length of service of Maine's legendary Senator Margaret Chase Smith, Senator MIKULSKI is synonymous with "the special bond of trust which should exist between the governing and the governed." She has "rec-

ognized injustice and acted boldly to quell it ... giving a voice to the voiceless ... power to the powerless.”

What Senator Margaret Chase Smith and Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers exemplified as standard bearers in the last century for length of service, Senator MIKULSKI embodies in this century—that the commitment to advancing the common good is bound neither by geographic region nor political affiliation but, rather, by an undaunted desire to serve others.

A consummate role model and admired mentor, Senator MIKULSKI always stands as a shining example that the robust pursuit of policy and the willingness to hear and consider dissenting views are not mutually exclusive. As I have often said, Senator MIKULSKI knows only one speed, and that is full speed ahead. But by the same token, she only knows one way to govern—through what she aptly referred to as the zone of civility. That approach, so integral to making this institution work, is indisputably one of the hallmark measures of Senator MIKULSKI’s longstanding success in public life. Indeed, it is the blueprint for interaction that she has imbued in all of us who are women serving in the Senate. She has worked to establish a tone of respect that infuses our conversations, our collegiality, our collaboration. It is a personal cause to Senator MIKULSKI that is exemplified by the monthly dinners for women Senators that she initiated along with the Senator from Texas, Mrs. Hutchison, a tradition that has become a catalyst for camaraderie and central to what Senator MIKULSKI calls our “unbreakable bond.”

There has been no greater friend for women who have come to serve in the Senate, and I am sure it is a result of Senator MIKULSKI having arrived here as the second woman to serve in the Senate, along with the Senator from Kansas, Senator Kassebaum, as she said at the time—and that is why she was so willing to serve as a mentor for other women who arrived in the Senate, because she was only one of two women who were serving in this institution. As she said, “the Senate had a long tradition of every man for himself.” She was determined, she said, “that it would not be every woman for herself while she was in the Senate.”

As my colleagues also well know, when it comes to having an ally in the legislative foxhole, there is none more feisty, none more formidable, and certainly none better than Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. I have witnessed her tenacity first hand, having worked with her side by side over the decades, whether on matters of equity for women in the workplace,

ensuring gender-integrated training in the military, working on cybersecurity, working on every other issue where we are bringing justice to those who have borne the brunt of injustice.

Nowhere has her leadership been more unmistakable, of course, or more monumental than in the area of women's health. I well recall, when I arrived in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1979, I joined what was then known as the Congresswomen's Caucus on Women's Issues, which is where I ultimately became the cochair for a better part of the decade. Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, at that time being in the House of Representatives, served in that caucus as well.

When I arrived in the House of Representatives in 1979, there were only 16 women serving in that institution. That is why the Congresswomen's Caucus was formed, to focus on those issues that mattered to women and to family and to children. We recognized that it was our obligation and responsibility to work, to focus on those issues because otherwise they would languish on the back burner rather than being on the front burner. We also understood that if we did not focus on these issues, if we did not advance these issues, no one else would. So we began to tackle systematically many of the discriminatory laws or inequities that were embedded in Federal law that failed to recognize the dual role women were playing, both at home as well as in the workplace.

We began to work on these issues one by one because there were so many issues across the board that were affecting women, where they were ultimately bearing the burden and the consequences of these inequitable laws. We did that with respect to pensions, for example, where women discovered that after their husbands died, their pensions had been canceled.

We discovered it when it came to family and medical leave, which took us the better part of 7 years to enact that legislation. But, again, women were bearing the burden of taking care of their ailing parents or their children at home and paying the consequences in the workplace.

Then, of course, there was the issue we discovered of discriminatory treatment in our clinical study trials. Regrettably, at the time our National Institutes of Health were actually discriminating against women and minorities, excluding them from clinical study trials because it was too complicated to include women in these study trials because we

were biologically different. As a result, any of those treatments that were developed as a result of those trials could not be applied to women. Ultimately, this could make the difference between life and death because the kinds of procedures and treatments that were derived from these clinical study trials could not be applied to women.

When we discovered that these inequities and this discriminatory treatment existed, we set to work on how to redress this wrong. It is hard to believe there was a time in America where women and minorities were systematically excluded from these trials that, as I said, had lifesaving implications. Who would have thought that women's health would have been the missing page in America's medical textbooks or merely an afterthought.

So I, as a cochair along with Congresswoman Pat Schroeder in the House, on behalf of the caucus, and, of course, then-Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI in the Senate, teamed up in a close bipartisan, bicameral collaboration to establish the groundbreaking Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health so that never again would women be overlooked when it came to key clinical study trials that were underwritten by the Federal taxpayers and Federal funds. In fact, Senator MIKULSKI, as I well recall, launched the key panel of stakeholders at Bethesda to give this initiative critical national attention and momentum—as only she could—as well as fundamental policy changes that ultimately resulted from that panel that reverberate to this day, resulting as well in lifesaving medical discoveries for America's women.

That is the passion and power of Senator MIKULSKI that has led her to this historic day. BARBARA is not about legacy, she is about problem solving. As somebody described it, her ideology is grounded in the practical, and that is so true. It is not only the practical but giving power to the people and developing practical solutions in their everyday lives.

She is a guardian of the common good, a woman who redefines the word "trailblazer," a pioneer of public policy. Senator MIKULSKI continues to shape the landscape of our Nation for the better, with a force and a might and a stature, one of the giants of public service, not just in our time but for all time.

On the occasion of Senator MIKULSKI's recordbreaking service, we congratulate her, we salute her, and we are honored to be able to express a profound appreciation for her extraordinary and legendary tenure in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to celebrate BARBARA MIKULSKI's service to this country. I had the honor of presiding for the last hour and heard the statements of so many of my colleagues. I heard them talk about how, when she joined this Chamber in 1987, BARBARA MIKULSKI was the first woman elected to the Senate who was not preceded by a husband or a father, the first woman elected to the statewide office to serve the State of Maryland, and only the 16th woman to have served in the Senate ever.

Today she is truly the dean of women Senators. She is a mentor and a friend to the rest of us, and she has always set the bar high. This is a woman who took on city hall as a young social worker in Baltimore—and won. This is a woman who has championed landmark legislation that has touched the lives of millions on issues ranging from health care to education to civil rights. She has shattered glass ceilings, not just in the Senate but in the Congress as a whole.

If that is not enough, she has even graced the glossy pages of *Vogue* magazine. Most of you may not have seen the photos that were taken in front of the Capitol Building with a number of other women leaders, including Meryl Streep, who was in town for a screening of her film "The Iron Lady." So I think it is fitting, to borrow a phrase from the Iron Lady herself, Margaret Thatcher, who famously said, "In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman."

I don't think my male colleagues who are here today will take offense at that one since anyone who has ever worked with BARBARA MIKULSKI knows she is a force of nature. She may not be the tallest Member of the Senate, but she is certainly the most tenacious. She is a tireless advocate for the people of her State, and she has a fierce and enduring love for those she represents. She knows where to pick her battles, and we have seen her face some tough debates in the Senate over the past few years. Whether it was working to take C-sections off lists of preexisting conditions at insurance companies or fighting to ensure equal pay for equal work for women or promoting better educational opportunities for children with special needs or ensuring that our troops and families receive the benefits that they have earned and that

they deserve, she has never stopped working for fairness, justice, and decency.

The daughter of a small-town grocery store owner, she has made strengthening the middle class the centerpiece of her economic agenda because, as she always puts it, the women in the Senate understand issues not just at the macrolevel but also at the macaroni-and-cheese level.

When BARBARA MIKULSKI came to the Senate 26 years ago, she lit a torch that has brightened the path for so many of us, for the 16 other women Senators who serve today and for all the future generations of women leaders who will lead our country forward. I am humbled to call her a colleague and a friend, and I am honored to celebrate her incredible service to our country today.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, although I do not have prepared remarks, I wish to join with my colleagues in making a few comments about Senator MIKULSKI.

Senator MIKULSKI is a great Senator. She is a delight to work with, a formidable adversary, and a formidable ally in any important debate. She is someone whom all of us respect and admire. It surprises me she has been at this business so long. It doesn't seem as though it is possible. She certainly hasn't lost her enthusiasm for the job and she has played an important role in quite a number of issues with which the country has had to deal.

I remember her leadership on an important issue during the post-9/11 time, when we were wrestling with how to deal with security for our country. She spoke firmly and strongly in favor of firm action to defend America from attack.

Another issue I don't think has been mentioned but is exceedingly important—something I have observed her deal with and provide leadership on for some time—is space and NASA. She is one of the absolutely most knowledgeable and experienced Members of this Senate and the entire Congress in dealing with the complexities and the needs of NASA, and she is a champion and advocate for exploration of space. This is an area where America has led the world, and for all her time in the Senate, she has been a champion of advocating that the United States maintain this leadership because I think we share the view that America is a nation of explorers. We are a nation that leads the world in exploring, and it is part of our DNA. So I appreciate her leadership in that particular area, as I have watched her with great admiration in her activities.

I didn't realize this tribute would be going on this afternoon and I didn't have prepared remarks, but I wish to join with my colleagues to say how much I appreciate her efforts. We celebrate her great accomplishment in the Senate. I believe that as we go forward, we will find that on issue after issue she will play a critical and a positive role in making America a better place.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to follow my colleague from Alabama and speak for just a few minutes about our friend and colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, who celebrates a milestone through her public service to the people of Maryland.

I asked my staff to go to the Web page for Senator MIKULSKI, her Senate office, and I came across one paragraph which I wish to read to my colleagues, if I may. It says:

BARBARA MIKULSKI has never forgotten her roots. Throughout her career she has returned each night to her home State of Baltimore, Maryland. From community activist to U.S. Senator, she has never changed her view that all politics is indeed local and that her job is to serve the people in their day-to-day needs as well as prepare this country for the future.

Sometimes people have come to Congress over the years and they come understanding clearly that our job is to serve. Over time, somehow they lose that thought a little bit and it is less clear who is to be served and who is to be the servant. She has never forgotten who the servant is. She knows she came as a servant, and she will leave someday as a servant—hopefully, not anytime soon.

If we ask most people around here what are maybe one or two words that best describe BARBARA MIKULSKI, I think a lot of people would say she is a fighter. Let me just say, if someone is an advocate for a particular cause, she is the person one wants in the foxhole with them. There is no better advocate, and there is no better or more able opponent on an issue. It is a lot better to have her on your side than it is to have her against you.

I take the train home at night. I go through Baltimore on my way to Wilmington, DE. Along the route, we go by a place called Aberdeen. Sometimes the train stops there; sometimes it does not. We have seen Aberdeen Proving Grounds literally consolidated from around the country. Much of the important research activity the Army does is at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. The person more than any-

body else who has made that possible is BARBARA MIKULSKI. It is a vast facility, with tens of thousands of employees who I think are mostly civilian and a campus of over 100,000 acres that does great work, helping to provide for our defense against all kinds of attack, foreign and domestic. She is a great person to have on your side in leading that fight.

One of the other things I love about BARBARA is her devotion to first responders. There is a big national fire school in a town called Gaithersburg, MD. She has helped make that place possible to not only train folks who are first responders for the people of Maryland, but they train as well first responders for virtually every State in every corner of this Nation. People will go to bed tonight knowing that if there is a fire or a problem or an incident in their community, it will be responded to, and they can thank BARBARA MIKULSKI for helping to ensure the folks trained there are ready to do that.

As much as anybody I know, she is a person who values service. AmeriCorps is an organization that encourages young people—really people of all ages—to volunteer and to serve. Volunteers are the ages of our pages and a whole lot older and the ages of guys like me. We all have an obligation to serve and to bring that spirit of service, whether or not we are in public life.

I was struck by the fact that she often opened the store as a kid, beginning a lot of her days as her dad opened the family grocery store, early in the morning in East Baltimore. I was born in West Virginia in a town called Beckley. I lived there for about the first 6 years or so of my life, but I would go back many summers, and I had the opportunity to work there for a supermarket, a mom and pop supermarket, with my own grandfather who opened the store almost 6 days a week, and I had the opportunity to see him and his work and what he brought to that store every day as the butcher. I think I know more about serving by working my summers in that store than anything else I have ever done. I suspect one of the reasons BARBARA has adopted and retained the spirit of a servant is because of her childhood and growing up and seeing her own family, her own dad, in that particular store.

I mentioned my grandfather in West Virginia. His wife, my grandmother, suffered from Alzheimer's disease. My grandmother's mother suffered from Alzheimer's disease. My own mother suffered from Alzheimer's disease. I don't think there is anybody in this body who has done more to lead the fight to ensure that this scourge of our society—and the

scourge of people all over the world—is reined in and overcome. When that day comes, people will stand and say, “I did something about this.” Nobody in this body I think can take more credit for conquering Alzheimer’s disease and dementia than BARBARA MIKULSKI.

Finally, when people think of BARBARA, they think of a fighter, an advocate for volunteerism, and some of the other things I talked about. I don’t know that many people think of her as an athlete, but I will say that she is a very big advocate for leveling the playing field. She wants to make sure people not just in athletic endeavors have a level playing field in which to compete, but she wants to make sure young people coming from the most impoverished backgrounds have an opportunity and have a real shot at life to get a decent education as a child, the chance to go to college and to increase their potential to not just earn money and support their families but to live productive lives. Those are just some of the things I think about when I think of BARBARA MIKULSKI.

I will close by saying she had been in the House I think for 6 years when I arrived in 1982, 1983, and for all the time we served there together, she was always very encouraging of me, very supportive of me as her Delmarva buddy, as we shared the Delmarva Peninsula. Even to this day we work together to make sure we have a strong, vibrant poultry industry on the Delmarva Peninsula. I like to say we are still Delmarva buddies as we look out for the mutual concerns of our respective States.

With that having been said, let me yield back my time. I see Senator Cantwell is ready to speak. My guess is, she is going to say some more things about BARBARA. But those are some things I am glad I had a chance to say.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I do rise to celebrate the remarkable achievements of my colleague from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI.

Last January we celebrated an obvious achievement of her becoming the longest serving female Senator. Last Saturday that milestone entered another chapter, with her 12,858 days of serving the people of Maryland in Congress, which means she is now the longest serving female Member of Congress.

I know BARBARA MIKULSKI started her career fighting for Fells Point, a particular location in the Baltimore area that she thought deserved and needed to be protected, and that galvanized her to 35 years of service, where she has been a trailblazer on so many issues.

Many people have talked about those today—about being the first woman elected to statewide office in Maryland, the first Democratic woman to serve in both Houses of Congress; the first Democratic woman to sit in a Senate leadership position, and the first Democratic woman to be elected to the Senate in her own right.

Throughout her career, she has faithfully provided a very strong voice for the people of Maryland. But it is here in the Senate we have all gotten to see BARBARA MIKULSKI, the dean of the women Senators, and to see her incredible work as a trailblazer on so many important issues.

She has been a tireless champion on issues from pay equity to increasing access to college education, for women's health, for women's health care law, and time and time again she has proven she knows how to fight on the right side of the issues.

For the women of the Senate, she is an incredibly important ally. When it comes to each of us who comes to the U.S. Senate, to find our way and to make our own mark, BARBARA MIKULSKI is the Senator who is always there with you to make sure you can achieve what you want for the State you represent.

I know for me I am very excited—my colleague from Alabama was mentioning Senator MIKULSKI's love of NASA and space exploration—in that I can say Senator MIKULSKI is certainly interested also in sci-fi, and I would call her a “techie” Senator because she certainly has shown a great deal of interest in technology and science.

As the chair of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee, she was a key partner in the funding of key science and technology issues, and for us in the State of Washington, when we needed a new Doppler radar technology system, she was there to help ensure that those people who lived in coastal regions were going to have the appropriate protections they needed for understanding inclement weather.

She also has helped in prioritizing efforts such as the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland—something we in the Northwest relate to because we strive to have the same cleanup of Puget Sound.

We have worked together on important legislation, such as passing the Lilly Ledbetter legislation.

It is BARBARA MIKULSKI—when it comes to protecting women's access to health care or standing up to any attack on Medicare—who is the most articulate, the most determined, the most persevering advocate to make sure women's issues and their cause are understood in the U.S. Senate.

I was proud to stand with her when she went up against the House plan to defund critical women's health care access and there was a near shutdown of government. As people tried to pressure Planned Parenthood, she was there to make sure we continued important programs such as breast cancer screening.

So today I join my colleagues from the Senate to thank her for those years of service in the U.S. Congress, both in the House and the Senate. While she may represent Maryland, we all want to claim that we are better off as a country having BARBARA MIKULSKI in the U.S. Senate.

To my colleagues—or to the young people who are here with us on the Senate floor—to understand this moment and achievement, you have to understand that in the whole history of our country, there have only been 39 women Senators, and a good number of those women Senators only served a few days or a few years. So the fact that somebody has achieved not just a seat in the U.S. Senate but a leadership position in the U.S. Senate is an incredible achievement.

We are glad she has represented a time when women have ascended to leadership in the U.S. Senate, where she is considered one of the wise Members when it comes to strategy on so many policy issues.

We are better off as a body because BARBARA MIKULSKI has served with us, and we are looking forward to many more years of wisdom and, hopefully, many more women Senators joining the ranks of BARBARA MIKULSKI in their tenure.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today also to pay tribute to my colleague, the senior Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI.

As everyone has said, this is a landmark, this is a milestone: the longest serving woman Senator and Member of

Congress in the history of Congress, serving more than 35 years.

As a relatively junior Member of this body, I love BARBARA MIKULSKI. I love her because she calls me “Franken.” That is music to my ears. We are in the caucus lunch, I may be in her way, and she says: “Franken.”

I am not only a relatively junior Senator, I actually kind of recently was a comedian at one point. And she is really funny—BARBARA. I remember the first time I saw her speak—it was years ago; I cannot remember what the event was—and I am going to try to quote her joke. It was her joke, remember, about herself. She talked about her first campaign effort. I think it was for city council or something like that. She said, “I knocked on 7,387 doors, and I walked a total of 372 miles, and I didn’t lose a pound.”

So I love BARBARA. And she is a force of nature. Being the dean of women here is not her most commanding title. Her most commanding title is: a fighter. She is a fighter. When she commits herself to a cause, she is a true champion.

She is a true champion for America’s seniors, preserving pensions; of Medicare, defending Medicare—boy, do not attack Medicare around BARBARA MIKULSKI; and combating poverty. No one works harder for quality education, fighting to make sure every child has a quality education, so that child can pursue the American dream. She is committed to fulfilling our country’s promises to our veterans, which is so important, and to increasing community service and voluntarism.

As anyone who has watched proceedings here in the Senate knows, BARBARA MIKULSKI, as my colleague from Washington stated, is the greatest champion in the body for women’s health. Here is something that is pretty amazing to understand. I want the pages to hear this. She fought to include women in NIH clinical trials. Women were not included in the National Institutes of Health clinical trials until she made sure they were. This is hard to believe, isn’t it? But in your 16 years of life, you—at 16, you cannot conceive of this. This is how backward we were. Think of what she did. That is who we are talking about today.

She has improved access for women to mammograms and cancer screenings—for all women. She has fought for women to have their own say over their own body and reproductive system. Basically what I am saying is, when you have BARBARA MIKULSKI on your side, you have a strong voice in the U.S. Senate.

We have heard reference to her accomplishment on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. When advocating for this bill, Senator MIKULSKI said:

Women earn just 77 cents for every dollar [their] male counterparts make. Women of color get paid even less. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will empower women to fight for fair pay by once again making employers accountable for pay discrimination. I will fight on the Senate floor to get this bill passed.

And the bill was passed. It was the first bill President Obama signed in office.

Senator MIKULSKI and I share a number of passions. One of them is early childhood education. Increasing early childhood education—access to it—is one of my top priorities because we know over and over that the benefits of early childhood education have been demonstrated. And BARBARA knows this.

I wanted to have a hearing on just the economic benefits of early childhood education because a child who has a quality early childhood education is less likely to be a special ed kid, is less likely to be left back a grade, has better health outcomes; a girl is less likely to get pregnant before she graduates from high school, a child is more likely to graduate high school, more likely to go to college, more likely to graduate college, more likely to get a good-paying job and pay taxes, and much less likely to go to prison. It has been shown over and over that the cost-benefit is, for every \$1 spent, there is like \$16 in return.

I wanted to get a hearing just on this. Because we were talking about education, I thought this needed to be discussed, and we needed experts, economists who were credible on this. So I went to BARBARA and she, of course, said, “Oh, yeah. OK. Let’s do it.” She is chair of the Subcommittee on Children and Families. I thought that would be a good place to do it, except I am not on that subcommittee. I am on the HELP Committee, which this is a subcommittee of, but I am not on that subcommittee. She said, “OK, that doesn’t matter. You come anyway.” And not only that but: “Which witness do you want?”

She let me pick a witness, Art Rolnick, an expert in early childhood education—on the economics of it—who started out as an economist at the Federal Reserve in Minneapolis and got into the economic benefits of it.

She is a true ally. She is someone who used her resources as chairwoman of a committee to make sure something you felt strongly about would be aired, would be discussed.

You learn from BARBARA that what we do around here is not so much about policy, it is about people. For her, it is about the people of Maryland. She goes to bat for them time and time again. It is about kids. It is about women, who often have to be both the breadwinner and the caregiver, and who should have every right and every opportunity at work and in society that men have.

As both a Member of the Senate and as a father of a wonderful daughter, I am enormously grateful to Senator MIKULSKI for being a tremendous role model to women in this country, for having fought her way to the Senate, and for proving that legislating was not a man's job—or only a man's job—it is a man's job too.

This body is so much the richer for her, and Americans are so much better off as a result. But her work, our work is not over. Out of 100 Senators, there are still only 17 women. Our Nation is facing tremendously difficult challenges, and having more women like Senator MIKULSKI in the room will help us solve those problems. I am glad she is here leading the way.

With that, I would like to thank BARBARA for her leadership, her friendship, and for being such a fierce advocate. Congratulations, BARBARA, on your achievements thus far and on this milestone. I look forward to many years fighting alongside you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise, along with so many colleagues, to pay tribute to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, an extraordinary woman and Senator, someone who has become the longest serving woman in the history of the Senate, indeed, in the history of the Congress. She surpassed, on January 5, 2011, the record of Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith as the longest serving Senator. Just this Saturday, she became the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress, surpassing the tenure of Edith Nourse Rogers, a Republican Congresswoman from Massachusetts, who served in the House from 1925 to 1960.

In 1986, Senator MIKULSKI was the first female Democrat to be elected to the Senate in her own right. She is a woman of many firsts. She is indeed a dean of the Senate women—I would actually say the dean of the Senate, with her great energy, her great eloquence, and her great passion, particularly for those who are often overlooked in our society. She

comes at it honestly. She was a social worker in Baltimore, helping at-risk children and educating seniors about Medicare before being elected to the House of Representatives.

She has taken that concern for the vulnerable and a particular passion for the State of Maryland forward every day she has served in the House and Senate. She has served on numerous committees. She is a subcommittee chairperson on the Appropriations Committee—Commerce, Justice, and Science. She has devoted herself to those issues, and many more. She serves on the Select Committee on Intelligence and has been a key member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. She has left her mark on a broad range of programs that touch each and every American family. She has been particularly active in women's health, ensuring that women were included in NIH clinical trials, where in the past they were ignored.

Since one cannot ignore BARBARA MIKULSKI—which is virtually impossible—she made it a reality that they cannot ignore women in NIH clinical trials, requiring Federal standards for mammographies, ensuring uninsured women have access to screenings and treatment for breast and cervical cancer. She increased research dollars for Alzheimer's and enhanced the Older Americans Act.

She has been, since her first days in the House of Representatives, at the forefront in advocating for better health care and education particularly for the most vulnerable among us. She has been a champion of national service, understanding that in a great country one has to contribute as well as benefit.

She said one of the things she is most proud of—in her words:

Strengthening the safety net for seniors by passing the Spousal Anti-Im-poverishment Act. This important legislation helps keep seniors from going bankrupt while paying for a spouse's nursing home care.

That is a fitting and representative example of her service. Throughout her service, she has maintained national priorities but has never taken her eye off Maryland. She commutes every evening back to Baltimore. She works hard to ensure that the people in Maryland benefit because of her activities.

I also thank her for the kindness and help she has given me personally—her concern, for example, with the fishing community in Rhode Island, which is under her jurisdiction on the Appropriations Committee, and in other ways. She has been terribly important and kind to us. She was instru-

mental in helping us to secure funding for the HOPE VI Project in Newport, RI, which has created extraordinary beneficial housing for a mix of incomes in Newport. It is one of the most attractive as well as one of the most stable communities I think anyplace in the Nation. She has been there to help us constantly.

I could go on and on, as my colleagues have said. I simply want to say at this special moment in Senator MIKULSKI's career, we thank her, admire her, respect her, and she has set a great example for us. In the days ahead, she will not only continue to inspire and sustain us, she will continue to sustain and lead in her State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, some time ago, I was reading a book about the beginnings of the interstate highway system in our country. I came across a paragraph when the highway builders and the Federal Government were going to run the interstate highway through some stable middle-class, working-class neighborhoods of Baltimore. The highway administration was greeted by an organizer who, on behalf of citizens of this neighborhood, said this is not the place to put this highway. She was successful in convincing them that the highway should go elsewhere so it would not be disruptive of so many homes, well-established small businesses, and the cohesive community in that part of Baltimore. The woman who led that effort several decades ago was BARBARA MIKULSKI. She was not yet on the city council. She was a citizen who spoke for her neighbors and has continued to do that as a member of the city council and then as a Member of the House of Representatives and for many years—2½ decades—of the Senate.

We heard Senator Reid and others earlier today talk about Senator MIKULSKI being the first female Democrat to serve in both the House and Senate—to be elected to the Senate without succeeding a husband or a father and first to chair an appropriations subcommittee. Most important, she helped to blaze this path. In 1987, there were only two female Senators. One was the daughter of a Presidential nominee a generation earlier, and the other was BARBARA MIKULSKI. Today, there are 17 female Members of the Senate. It doesn't look like America yet. There is not anything close to the number of minority Members as a percentage of the population, but I hope that changes. I think it will. It doesn't

come close to representing the gender makeup of our society. But to go from 2 female Senators, when she first came, to 17 today—and if I can predict elections, which none of us can, and we certainly cannot try—I think there is a good chance there will be a number of additional women in this body this time next year.

I wish to say a couple more things about Senator MIKULSKI on a less serious note. I have been privileged to serve on two committees with Senator MIKULSKI—one being the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. During the health care legislation, she was so helpful to so many of the causes we care about and to justice in this country, and on the Appropriations Committee, where she cuts a wide swathe of involvement for Maryland and this country, she champions women's health, and many talked about this earlier. She cares so much about the National Institutes of Health, not just because it is located in Maryland but because it matters so much for scientific research, for curing a whole host of diseases and preventing diseases, and the number of jobs NIH creates, not just government jobs but the jobs that come out of commercialization of scientific research.

My State is one of the leaders; whether the jobs come out of Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Southwest Hospital, and where Case Western Reserve University is and its medical center around Cleveland, we see that kind of commercialization.

I often call her Coach B because she is someone who has been around here a long time and is always willing to advise newer and younger Members. She has been following, especially in my State, what is important, the issue of health care. My State has some of the leading health care institutions in America. Also, what she has done with the space program—the only NASA facility north of the Mason-Dixon line is in Cleveland, with a satellite in Sandusky, NASA Glenn, named after former Senator and astronaut, John Glenn. She has been one of the strongest advocates for the space program, and science, technology, and research and development. She has been particularly helpful to me as I fight for the kind of work NASA Glenn does in Cleveland, and I am appreciative of her for that.

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

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF TRIBUTES AND STATEMENTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there be printed as a Senate document a compilation of materials from the *Congressional Record* in tribute to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, and that Members have until Thursday, March 29, to submit such tributes.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I have been able to listen a bit over the last few hours to the wonderful tributes to Senator MIKULSKI. We all know of her wonderful service all these years, the record that is being shattered—a very special record.

As I listened to some of the comments, I was struck that tributes usually come in the Senate when one of our colleagues is leaving office or sometimes one of our colleagues passes away. And what I am struck by this afternoon is how glad I am and colleagues on both sides of the aisle are that Senator MIKULSKI is very much alive, and next week and next month and in the years ahead she is going to continue to bring this kind of wellspring of conscience and energy and passion and expertise to the Senate.

I am going to have more to say in terms of a lengthier speech, but she and I have had a special relationship for almost three decades. We served together in the other body on the Energy and Commerce Committee. We would often show up at meetings together, and this is still a tradition that continues now because we both have the honor of serving on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Senator MIKULSKI and I would walk in together, and she would smile and say, “Now the long and short of it are arriving.” And I guess that is true in a literal sense, but while Senator MIKULSKI may be modest in stature, she has one very large record on behalf of the public interest, and I am especially grateful for all she has done for people without power and people without clout.

When we think about what has so angered the American people—and I have heard the Senator from Colorado, the Presiding Officer, talk about this—it is that people feel so disconnected from government; that you can have a community meeting in Oregon or Colorado or Maryland or some other part of the country, and somehow there is this sense what goes on in Washington really has nothing to do with people in their home community.

Senator MIKULSKI doesn't practice public service that way. Senator MIKULSKI has always felt, since the days when she was a community organizer and they were dealing with those community problems and where are you going to locate a freeway or something of that nature, that public service and community service were always about being connected to people. She understood right away what people may say at a townhall meeting now in Colorado or Oregon about government being removed from their lives, and for decades she has practiced a very different kind of public service. She did it when she was a community organizer; she did it in the House of Representatives; and she continues to do it today.

Very often when we take the subway to a vote and I ask her what she has done over the weekend, she will talk about families. She knows I was codirector of the Gray Panthers for many years before I was elected to Congress, so we will talk about aging issues. And everybody knows what she has done in the aging field and her interest in fighting Alzheimer's. So it always comes back to people, and that connection she brings to public service that is so lacking from what Americans see is the big problem in government today, that much of what goes on here is simply disconnected from their lives.

What I see in BARBARA MIKULSKI is the real measure of what we want in a public servant. We want someone who is conscientious; we want someone who is smart; we want someone who has good values and someone who always tries to be a coalition builder.

I have watched Senator MIKULSKI in lots of instances. We had one just recently where Senator MIKULSKI was trying to find a balance on a difficult and contentious issue between industry and the environment, and I watched how she was trying to listen to both sides. Maryland has some communities where they have older plants, and if she can't take steps to protect those plants and have the workers keep their jobs, a lot of people are going to hurt, and Senator MIKULSKI always tries to keep that from happening. She has also said clean air and the environmental laws are important. And that last quality of trying to bring people together, which I have heard the Senator from Colorado talk about, is what Senator MIKULSKI's public service career has been all about.

So tonight and through the day we have heard colleagues pay tribute. I made mention of the fact that so often I hear these tributes when a colleague is leaving the Senate. I would like to close these brief remarks by saying that I am

especially grateful that the cause of good government is enhanced by the fact that Senator MIKULSKI is very much alive. This is not a tribute to someone who is leaving office, this is a tribute to someone who is going to be here next week, next month, and the years ahead, continuing to shatter those records as she advocates for people who don't have big lobbies, who don't have lots of political clout and can't go out and hire PR firms and well-paid and well-tailored advocates to walk the halls of the Senate. She is there for those people who don't have a voice. She has been there for those people ever since she was a community organizer in those early days in Baltimore.

When I think about trying to give public service a good name, I think about BARBARA MIKULSKI—our wonderful friend, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, the senior Senator from the State of Maryland. We thank her for giving public service a good name. We thank her for taking on the battles and the fights she has in the past. And we are all especially grateful that at the end of this tribute she will be back at her post a few seats from me, standing for those values and standing for those causes that are so important to the well-being of this country.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I may be the last speaker of the day, but I did not want to leave the Chamber or the building without taking a moment to come to the floor, as so many of our colleagues did today, to honor one of our own, one of our favorites. Not only is she a favorite to us but I am certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that she is one of the favorite Senators ever to represent the State of Maryland. She is respected, she is beloved, and she is admired by millions of her constituents from Maryland, but I can promise you that is true of constituents in Louisiana, potentially in your home State, Madam President, and throughout the world.

Last Saturday our friend and colleague Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland became the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress. I can only say that we have come a long way since the first woman was appointed, as I recall back in the 1920s. She was only allowed to serve 1 day and was not going to be given a paycheck but insisted that she be paid for her service. I think she might have been paid \$1 for her service.

Of course, the record of that 1 day on the floor speaks for itself. We have come a long way since that day. BARBARA

MIKULSKI was first elected to the House in 1976, and then to the Senate 10 years later. When she first entered this Chamber, there was only one other woman here, her friend and her good, strong, supportive colleague, Nancy Kassebaum, a Republican from Kansas. So a Democrat from Maryland and a Republican from Kansas, but the two of them were quite a team and BARBARA MIKULSKI speaks fondly of her days with Senator Nancy Kassebaum. Today there are 17 of us and proudly we continue that tradition of respect and bipartisanship set in large measure by 2 of the women we greatly admire.

The late Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, who served from 1925 to 1960, had previously held the record for the longest serving woman in Congress. Breaking this record is only one of the many milestones Senator MIKULSKI has accomplished during her tenure in the Senate. But, as she would so quickly say, it is not how long you serve but how well you serve. It is not the length of your service, as she said to us so many times, but the quality of your service. We could not have a better role model—in terms of effectiveness, strength, tenacity, courage, boldness—than in our own Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI.

She was the first female Democrat, the first in the history of our country, to serve in both Chambers of Congress, the first female Democrat to be elected to the Senate without succeeding a husband or a father, and the first female to chair an appropriations committee.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. It is one of the most powerful committees in our Congress. When I think about the fact that it took over 225 years for a woman to get the gavel on just 1 of the 14 subcommittees—that number has changed over the decades—but if you think about it, from the beginning of our country's history, those early days through the expansion out West, through the Civil War, post-Civil War history, the early part of the 1900s, World War I, World War II—never did a woman hold a gavel to write one budget for one committee in the entire country, until BARBARA MIKULSKI received one of those gavels.

I can tell you from personal experience serving with her on that committee, our country is a better place—in health, in welfare, our space program, our science and technology programs—because BARBARA MIKULSKI has used that gavel not to promote herself but to promote the people she serves and the principles for which she fights.

She is well respected for her wisdom, for her tenacity and her strength. She is respected by female and male peers who serve with her. As most of my female colleagues in the Senate have also experienced, Senator MIKULSKI took me under her wing when I was first sworn in as a Senator. She extended her hand to help me in every way possible, to help me find my footing here as a Senator and to navigate through the intricacies of the Senate process. She was never too busy to hold out a helping hand or for a pat on the shoulder. She was always willing to give that extra advice and, I might say, was always willing to suggest that you might have made a mistake—try it a little different way the next time—not one to mince words, but as a good Big Sister would take us under her wing and help us out as any good Big Sister would do.

In addition to that wonderful, helpful, and thoughtful gesture that she shared with me and so many, she has been an inspiration to many women, particularly young women who have looked up to her, trying to follow in her footsteps.

I can only say that this Senate and this Congress—the people of Maryland, the people of our country and women throughout the world—have been blessed by her leadership.

What has touched me the most about watching her is the fearlessness in which she serves. She does not back down. She knows herself, she is comfortable in her own skin, and she doesn't try to be someone she is not. She is very proud of her Polish-American background, always proud to talk about the bakery her parents owned, her immigrant background, and always so willing to share from her heart as well as her mind some of what she believes.

She has been nothing but an inspiration to me and to many. I am so glad I could come to the floor today, I am so glad. I think almost every one of our colleagues has made it to the floor to honor her. When God made BARBARA MIKULSKI, he threw away the mold. I don't think there will ever be another one like her. There most certainly isn't anyone in politics today who is like her. That is good, to be unique in that way. She will be long remembered. I hope she will serve here for many wonderful years to come.

I yield the floor.

THURSDAY, *March 22, 2012*

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, I rise today to join my colleagues in congratulating Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI from Maryland on becoming the longest serving woman in the history of Congress. Senator MIKULSKI has thus reinforced her distinctive mark on this institution and her unmistakable place in our Nation's history.

Those who have worked beside Senator MIKULSKI know her to be a dynamic force of nature. While she is not the tallest Senator, she reaches the greatest heights with her strong principles, indomitable spirit, and steely resolve.

From the neighborhoods of East Baltimore to the Halls of Congress, she has spent her career in the political trenches fighting for others—for women, for working Americans, and for her beloved Maryland. Senator MIKULSKI has been a practical leader for better women's health care. She fought to have women included in clinical trials and medical research at the National Institutes of Health and helped establish Federal standards for mammograms.

Her impact is not only felt in the lives of those she serves, but also in her relationships with those she serves with. At this time in our politics when the partisanship pulls us apart, when tribal instincts have coarsened our discourse and weakened our bonds, Senator MIKULSKI is a unifying force of comity in the Senate. She brings a sense of civility and a sense of humor to this institution at a time when both are sorely needed.

Women Senators fondly know Senator MIKULSKI as their dean. She hosts regular bipartisan dinners for them and is a trusted mentor. She understands that while many of us come to Congress with competing goals, at the end of the day, we are colleagues. We have to work together. Unless we can affirm our bonds as colleagues and fellow humans, the work we are tasked with by the American people will not get done, and the public interest will suffer as a result.

Senator MIKULSKI's remarkable career continues to inspire women across our country on the nobility of public service and the ability for one person to bring about positive change in the lives of others. It is a pleasure to serve beside her, and I wish her my very best for many more productive years here in the Senate.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, today I want to honor Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who has represented the people of Maryland for more than 35 years, and who earlier this

week became the longest serving female Member of Congress. Senator MIKULSKI is a fighter, a fearless leader, and a role model for women and young girls everywhere, including my three daughters, Caroline, Halina, and Anne.

During the course of her distinguished career, Senator MIKULSKI has been an incredibly effective advocate, and in particular has taken a leadership role in mentoring other women as they follow in her footsteps to the Halls of Congress. She has represented Maryland exceptionally well—on issues ranging from civil rights and the environment, to issues affecting working families and our criminal justice system.

Tracking Senator MIKULSKI's career is also a good way to follow the progress of women in our country. When first elected to Congress for Maryland's Third District in 1976, Senator MIKULSKI was 1 of 21 women serving in Congress. Today there are 93 women serving, thanks in large part to the trailblazing efforts of Senator MIKULSKI.

Through her work in an array of roles, from the women's amendment in the Affordable Care Act to her leadership on the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families, Senator MIKULSKI is known as a coalition builder. This role has led her to cultivate personal and professional partnerships among the Members of the Senate. Likely some of the country's most important work is done during the bipartisan dinners she frequently hosts for her female Senate colleagues.

I am proud that my first vote as a Senator in January 2009 was in favor of one of Senator MIKULSKI's bills, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which guarantees women equal pay for equal work. And I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her in the Senate HELP Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization and passage of the Affordable Care Act. I look forward to continuing to work with Senator MIKULSKI on these and other important issues in the Senate.

March is Women's History Month, and I can think of no better time to honor and reflect on what Senator MIKULSKI's work has meant to the U.S. Senate and to her constituents in Maryland. Let us follow the leadership of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI and continue to fight for a better America.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I want to join my colleagues in today's well-deserved accolades for my friend, BARBARA MIKULSKI.

The other day, as often happens to most of us here, I found myself temporarily waylaid by an informal scrum of report-

ers in one of the Capitol hallways. And, unknown to me, I was blocking Senator MIKULSKI's path. She made me aware of that fact in her distinctive and typically endearing way: "Hey, Tall and Lanky—make way for Short and Stocky!" she said.

But it is not just that humor and good nature that makes BARBARA MIKULSKI such a great colleague and friend. As a resident and colleague from an adjoining State, I respect all she has done at the local level, in the U.S. House and now in the Senate, to move the National Capital Region forward in terms of the regional ties that join together this special region where we live and work.

You see, Virginia and Maryland share more than just a common border. Our two States are home to hundreds of thousands of hard-working and under-appreciated Federal workers and retirees. Our States share safety and funding concerns related to Metro. We each have a shared responsibility in our stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay. Maryland and Virginia also share world-class NASA facilities on the Eastern Shore.

As a friend, I appreciate her leadership role in helping this first-time legislator—and recovering former Governor—make the sometimes difficult adjustment to this body. As the father of three daughters, I am grateful for the doors Senator MIKULSKI has opened—and sometimes kicked-open—for young women.

Senator MIKULSKI truly is a force of nature. She is tough, focused, and extremely effective. And as these testimonials demonstrate, Senator MIKULSKI is widely respected and loved by current and former Members of this body.

I am pleased to join these colleagues in thanking Senator MIKULSKI for her service, her leadership, and her friendship.

MONDAY, *March 26, 2012*

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I join with the entire Senate family in congratulating my great friend, the distinguished senior Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI, on becoming the longest serving female Member of Congress in our Nation's history. She reached that milestone recently, having served in Congress for 12,858 days—more than 35 years—surpassing the previous longest serving Member of Congress, the late Representative Edith Nourse Rogers.

Representative Rogers famously quipped, “The first 30 years are the hardest.” But I dare say that Senator MIKULSKI has had a somewhat different experience. As with other pathbreaking women, she has encountered sexism and discrimination. But from her first day in the House in 1977 right up to today, in her much respected role as dean of women Senators, BARBARA MIKULSKI has been a singularly formidable and forceful public servant. Pity the Representative or Senator who has made the mistake of in any way underestimating this remarkable person.

For three-and-a-half decades in Congress, BARBARA MIKULSKI has been an outspoken and proud progressive—a tireless advocate for quality public education, access to health care, and a strong safety net for those she calls “the least of these our sisters and brothers”—including the elderly, people with disabilities, and the poor. Her passion for social and economic justice was nurtured by the nuns who taught her at Catholic school in working-class East Baltimore.

Senator MIKULSKI’s legislative accomplishments are too numerous to cite here. I am particularly grateful for the lead role that she played in early 2009 in passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act—the very first bill signed into law by President Obama. This law reversed an outrageous Supreme Court decision that allowed discrimination against women to go unpunished. But, as Senator MIKULSKI knows all too well, even the Lilly Ledbetter Act leaves in place an outrageous status quo where women are paid only 77 cents for every dollar that their male counterparts are paid. That is why she and I have continued to work closely together to advance the cause of equal pay. We are the respective leads on the two Democratic equal pay bills in the Senate.

As chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, I want to pay special tribute to the extraordinary role she has long played on our committee.

Senator MIKULSKI’s legislative skills and leadership were critically important in crafting and passing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act 2 years ago—an achievement that she calls one of the “greatest social justice initiatives” of our time. She led the team that wrote the quality title in the bill, insisting that higher quality care does not have to be higher cost care. Thanks to Senator MIKULSKI, the health care reform law includes a whole range of provisions that shift the emphasis—rewarding providers not for quantity of service but for quality of service. I would add

that throughout the debate on health care reform and during the many months the bill was being written, Senator MIKULSKI was a fierce advocate for women's health and for ending the brazen discrimination against women by health insurance companies.

On the HELP Committee, and also in her role as chair of the appropriations subcommittee that funds the Legal Services Corporation, Senator MIKULSKI has been a great leader on another issue near and dear to my heart: legal services for the poor. She has fought hard—and it has always been an uphill struggle—to provide adequate funding so that people without resources are not barred from the courthouse door.

Of course, Senator MIKULSKI has also been one of the Senate's leading proponents of national and community service. In 2009, she was the Senate manager for the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which retooled our national service programs for the 21st century and provided expanded opportunities for young people to gain valuable skills and experience by helping neighbors in need.

Let me share a brief anecdote that illustrates the remarkable role that Senator MIKULSKI plays in the body and the respect that she commands among her colleagues. We all remember the debate, in late February, on the Blunt amendment, which would have allowed employers to deny health insurance coverage for contraception. In my role as chair of the HELP Committee, I was invited to attend a press conference in the LBJ Room of the Capitol organized by Senator MIKULSKI to speak out against the amendment. Let me tell you, this was a remarkable event. Senator MIKULSKI spoke first, with tremendous power and passion. One by one, other Senators spoke—women who, over the decades, have been counseled and mentored by Senator MIKULSKI: Senator Patty Murray of Washington, Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein of California, and Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire. Senator MIKULSKI's message, echoed by the other Senators, was characteristically loud and clear: Decisions about medical care should be made by a woman and her doctor, not a woman and her boss. Needless to say, Senator MIKULSKI carried the day; the amendment was defeated.

Other Senators have noted Senator MIKULSKI's many firsts, including the first woman elevated to a leadership position in the Senate. I would simply add that BARBARA MIKULSKI is also first when it comes to a Senator being true to her roots, a fierce and effective champion for her State and

passionate fighter for social and economic justice. Again, I salute the Senator on reaching the historic milestone as the longest serving female Member of Congress, and I wish her many more years of distinguished service to our Nation.

TUESDAY, *March 27, 2012*

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, with all of the very well-deserved statements that have been made about our colleague Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, I wanted to raise my voice in support of the milestone she recently achieved as the longest serving woman in congressional history.

A personal word I want to add about Senator MIKULSKI is that she has been so supportive and such a leader of our Nation's space program. As the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, she has to be intimately familiar with the details and the appropriate way to allocate funds that are vital for our civilian program to go forward in the visionary and frontier breaking manner that it always has, and I am grateful for her leadership. I wanted to add this to the accolades that she so well deserves and has already heard from so many of our colleagues.

Senator MIKULSKI began her tenure in Congress in 1977 as a Member of the House of Representatives. She represented Maryland's Third District for 10 years before moving to the Senate in 1986.

During her time in the Senate, Senator MIKULSKI has been a champion for many of the issues that are particularly important to my fellow Floridians and me. She is a strong supporter of veterans' and seniors' issues.

Senator MIKULSKI has also worked to protect our oceans by supporting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, especially during one of the worst environmental disasters we've seen. In 2010 she conducted a subcommittee hearing to explore the use of dispersants in response to the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf, helping us to better understand the long-term consequences of that environmental tragedy.

Senator MIKULSKI also serves as chairman for the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Children and Families. In December, she chaired a hearing on child abuse, casting light on this issue and urging her colleagues to take greater steps to combat it.

I am honored to have served with Senator MIKULSKI for the past decade, and I look forward to continuing to work with her on matters of great importance to Maryland, Florida, and the rest of the country.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in honoring the service of the Senator from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI, on becoming the longest serving woman in the history of Congress. She is an inspiration, a mentor, and a friend, and I congratulate her on achieving this historic milestone.

The story of BARBARA MIKULSKI is the story of the American dream. The daughter of a grocer in Baltimore, she learned what it meant to do a hard day's work. She got good grades, went to college, and eventually got her master's degree in social work.

When she was in her twenties, she got involved in a fight to stop a highway proposal that would have cut through a working class neighborhood. She stopped that highway and saved the homes of the families who lived there.

Those families saw something that day that all of us would recognize today: a woman of passion, hard work, and determination.

Throughout her years of service, she has reflected these values day in and day out as she has fought for America's working families. She understands that our country needs to make things and grow things if we are going to have a middle class and an American dream. She understands the dignity of work, and how important that is to families who want to create a better future for their children, just as BARBARA's family did for her.

In her many years of leadership and service, she has been fighting every day to create a better future for every little girl and boy in Maryland. She did not come here for the power; she came here to serve. I think that is why the people of Maryland have chosen her, time and time again, to be their champion in the U.S. Senate.

In the whole history of the United States, 1,931 people have served in the U.S. Senate. Of those, 39 were women. And of those, 17 are serving right now. And of those, only one—Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI—is our dean and our mentor.

I want to thank my friend, Senator MIKULSKI, for all she has done for me and for all the women who will follow in her footsteps in the years to come.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, the Senate is in the midst of recognizing a very important milestone in our history. I would like to join my Senate colleagues in congratulating Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI as the longest serving female Member of Congress.

As we all know, Senator MIKULSKI has dedicated her life to public service. Before running for public office, Senator MIKULSKI served as a social worker helping at-risk children and educating seniors on Medicare. In 1971, she successfully ran for her first public office and was elected to serve in the Baltimore City Council, where she served for 5 years.

Senator MIKULSKI first ran for Congress in 1976, seeking to represent Maryland's Third District. She won that race and went on to hold the seat for a decade. In 1986 she decided to run for the U.S. Senate, and she has been serving here ever since. The Senate was a very different place when she first arrived as one of two women Senators. She not only had to learn how the Senate functioned but had a quick lesson in bipartisanship—as the other woman, Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, was a Republican from Kansas. Today, we have 17 women in the Senate and 76 women serving in the House of Representatives.

Senator MIKULSKI has been an outspoken advocate for working people everywhere. Due in large part to her leadership and strong advocacy on behalf of women, our daughters and granddaughters will have opportunities that were not available to many women in the past. She is a wonderful role model through her dedication to public service, as she fights passionately every day for the people of Maryland that she is here to represent.

I want to add my voice to those praising Senator MIKULSKI as she reaches this important milestone. She is a true pioneer, a strong example of a smart legislator, and an outspoken voice for working people. I have great respect for the journey she has taken, and I am proud to serve alongside her.

WEDNESDAY, *March 28, 2012*

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to add my voice to those of my colleagues paying tribute to the senior Senator from Maryland, who recently became the longest serving female Member of Congress in American history.

Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI and I were first elected to the Senate at the same time. Over the past 26 years she has been a colleague, a legislative partner, and a friend. Courageous, determined, and honorable are only a few of the words I use when describing Senator MIKULSKI.

Senator MIKULSKI has devoted her life to public service. She began her career as a social worker in Baltimore, where she worked with high-risk children and educated seniors about Medicare. In 1971, she transitioned into politics by attaining a seat on the Baltimore City Council. As a council member, she continued to advocate for those in need. In 1976, she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where she became the first woman ever to sit on the influential Energy and Commerce Committee. As a Member of the House, she worked on a variety of important legislation, including funding for shelters for battered spouses.

Issues concerning women have always been a passion of Senator MIKULSKI's. From sponsoring the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act to being a leader in women's health issues, she has been a champion for women's rights.

Senator MIKULSKI was particularly helpful to me during the Grand Forks flooding in 1997. When our third largest city was devastated by flooding and fire, Senator MIKULSKI stood with Grand Forks residents every step of the way as we fought for Community Development Block Grant funding to recover and rebuild. Her support was critical. More recently, Senator MIKULSKI joined me in pushing for comparative effectiveness research as part of health reform, so that patients and doctors can have better information on which treatments and medical interventions are most effective and which amount to wasteful spending.

Senator MIKULSKI is a fierce advocate for her constituents—and for working men and women everywhere. She will never back down from a cause she believes in, and she has compiled an impressive record of results. I congratulate her on being the longest serving female Member of Congress.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a true trailblazer, my colleague Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. Earlier this month, she crossed a major milestone by becoming the longest serving woman in Congress.

Before she set her sights on Congress, Senator MIKULSKI worked as a community activist, social worker, and a member of the Baltimore City Council. In 1977, she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland's Third

Congressional District. At that time, she was 1 of only 21 women serving in Congress.

She never let any misguided stereotypes or long odds slow her down. Ten years later, she won her first race for the U.S. Senate and in the process became the first Democratic woman elected to this Chamber from the State of Maryland. She immediately lent her voice to issues like education, health care, and national service.

Along the way, she has given a voice not only to families and the middle class but also sent a powerful message to women all across this Nation. If there were ever any doubt, they now know for sure that they deserve a seat at the table in Congress. Her message is being heard. Since Senator MIKULSKI was first elected to the House of Representatives, the number of women serving in Congress today has increased to 93.

I have gotten to know BARBARA well, especially through our work on the Senate Appropriations Committee. I know she would rather we focus on her accomplishments regardless of her gender, but Senator MIKULSKI has blazed an important path. Along the way, she has never forgotten the value of hard work that was instilled in her from an early age. She has also built the kind of working relationships you need to get things done.

There is a reason the people of Maryland have sent BARBARA MIKULSKI back to the Congress time and again. She is telling their story and making sure that every voice has a chance to be heard. I want to congratulate her on this milestone. It is an important one for her and her family, and I believe it is symbolic of the gains we have seen our Nation make since she first was elected to Congress more than 35 years ago.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, in 1977, Jimmy Carter became our Nation's President, Elvis Presley died, and "Rocky" won the Oscar as best picture.

It was also the year my colleague, BARBARA MIKULSKI, came to Congress. She has served since then, for 10 years in the House and since 1987 in the Senate, with exemplary dedication to our Nation and its working families. Those of us who have had the pleasure to serve with her in the Senate and all the citizens of Maryland who have elected her to represent them celebrate this moment, for Senator MIKULSKI has become the longest serving female Member of Congress in our Nation's history.

BARBARA MIKULSKI is the first female Democrat to have served in both the House and the Senate, as well as being the first Democratic woman to be elected to the Senate without succeeding a spouse or father. She is, among all of us, truly a pathbreaker.

When she entered the Senate, there was only one other female Member of this body. Today, there are 17. BARBARA MIKULSKI has served as an inspiration, a leader, and a mentor to generations of women seeking to secure their rightful place as Members of our Nation's highest legislative bodies.

Throughout her time in both the House and Senate, she has worked tirelessly on behalf of the elderly, veterans, the poor, hard-pressed families, and our Nation's children. Daughter of a grocer, her roots are in Baltimore. She may have come a long way to play her important role here in Washington, but what makes her such a vital voice in Congress is that she has never lost touch with the values and needs of the blue collar neighborhood of Highlandtown where she grew up.

BARBARA MIKULSKI entered politics as an activist and a populist, and she has remained true to that initial motivation. BARBARA MIKULSKI genuinely cares about the people of our Nation—about all the people, not just the wealthy or the famous or the influential.

She understands the difficulties faced by working families as their incomes have been stagnant, as unions have declined, as disparities in wealth and income have widened dramatically. She is passionately committed to the importance of education for our young people, just as she respects and fights for our Nation's elderly and their security as they negotiate the later years of life.

We serve together on the HELP Committee, on which she has long been a leader. No one better exemplifies the values of caring for those who are all too easy to forget—working families, the elderly, the poor, the children, than BARBARA MIKULSKI. Having worked with them both, I know how completely she has taken on the mantle of her friend Ted Kennedy and kept our committee focused on those whose needs are greatest.

As we celebrate the inspiration BARBARA MIKULSKI has been for the women of the Senate, Maryland, and the country, let's not forget that she has also been an inspiration to all of us. She has shown us how to fight for the powerless and how to cast votes based on ethical values and a deep

commitment to our fellow men and women, not based on political expediency.

For that leadership, both as a great female legislator and as an accomplished legislator with a lifelong commitment to improving the lives of all Americans, we honor her.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to my esteemed colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI from the great State of Maryland. I am honored to recognize the historic achievements of my fellow Senator. On Saturday she became the longest serving woman in congressional history after serving more than 35 years in both the House and Senate. Originally a social worker and community organizer in Baltimore, Senator MIKULSKI's congressional legacy began in 1976 when she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Ten years later with her election into the U.S. Senate she became the first female Senator from Maryland as well as the first woman to be elected to both the House and Senate. Senator MIKULSKI deserves great honor and reverence for her dedication to the people of Maryland, the United States, and to the institution of the Senate.

Three years ago I entered these Chambers as a freshman from a faraway State. Senator MIKULSKI was already known as a legend, to me and so many of my constituents. Since then, she has been an inspiration—and, to no one's surprise, a straight shooter and passionate advocate of her issues. More than once, when I have not yet signed onto one of her bills—usually something near and dear to her, like child abuse prevention—she has cornered me. And in a tough stance, all 4 feet 11 inches of her, she'll tell me why it is my duty to sign the bill. She is always right, and I am happy to follow her lead on such issues.

Throughout her time in Congress Senator MIKULSKI has been a champion for civil rights, fighting to end discrimination of all kinds. As the chairwoman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions she has continually fought to end discrimination in the workplace. In 2011 she was a sponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which ensures equal pay, regardless of gender.

She has also defended our Nation's teachers and students by fighting for more affordable and accessible education and supporting the needs of rural school districts. Just this year she introduced legislation that would ensure veterans who receive educational assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs also receive adequate counseling when considering their educational options.

Senator MIKULSKI's accomplishments are numerous and diverse, from the day-to-day needs of workers, business owners, and students to the strengthening of scientific innovation and research. Senator MIKULSKI deserves great honor and esteem for her dedication to fighting for the good of the people of Maryland and the Nation.

I am honored to serve alongside such a devoted advocate, and I look forward to her continued service in the U.S. Senate. She began her tenure in 1977 as 1 of 19 women serving in Congress and today is 1 of 17 women in the Senate. She has helped pave the way for future generations. Yet she likely would not agree that women have come a long way over those years; instead she will say there is a long way to go.

Today I congratulate and pay homage to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. She is a friend, a mentor, and—so very often—the good conscience of the U.S. Senate.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak in honor of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. I join my colleagues in recognizing her for becoming the longest serving female Member of Congress in our Nation's history.

I know Senator MIKULSKI is more interested in results than milestones, but this is an appropriate moment to congratulate her for all that she has accomplished. She is both a tenacious fighter and gracious colleague.

The true measure of a society is how we treat people in the dawn and twilight years of their lives. By that standard, Senator MIKULSKI's career has been extraordinary.

From the start of her career in public service as a Baltimore social worker helping at-risk kids and seniors to today, she has been a champion for children and the elderly. She has been a champion for education, research, and veterans, and she has been an unflinching champion for Maryland.

Senator MIKULSKI has also been a friend since my first days in the Senate. Early on she reached out to me to explain the appropriations process in the Senate. My father, who spent his entire career in the U.S. House of Representatives, was always suspicious of the Senate. So to a freshman Senator making the transition from the House, hers was a welcome and reassuring gesture, kind of like the folksy gesture of calling me "cowboy," which always brings a smile to my face.

Senator MIKULSKI's style is a powerful counter to the old Washington joke that there are actually three political parties: Democrats, Republicans, and appropriators. She always values the input of other Senators and strives to balance the

many competing priorities of all the Members of this body. For example, we have worked together on the Joint Polar Satellite System. This program is over budget and behind schedule, but it is also indispensable to public safety and our economy. As an appropriator, she has the unenviable challenge of striving to continually put this program on firm financial footing. In the process, she has repeatedly asked for my perspective and welcomed me into the process. This is above and beyond the call of duty but is so typical of BARBARA MIKULSKI.

Many have compared Senator MIKULSKI's streak to another famous Marylander's—Cal Ripken, Jr. I think Cal would agree with BARBARA when she said, "It's not only how long I serve, but how well I serve."

She has undoubtedly served this institution, this country, and Maryland very well.

I commend Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for her 35 years of service in Congress and look forward to her future successes.

THURSDAY, *March 29, 2012*

Mrs. HAGAN. Madam President, I come here today to pay tribute to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI on becoming the longest serving woman in the history of Congress.

First and foremost, I feel deeply privileged to be able to serve alongside Senator MIKULSKI. She blazed a path that allowed the rest of us, and people like me, to be here today. Along the way, she distinguished herself as not only a leader and tenacious advocate for the people of Maryland but for all Americans.

Senator MIKULSKI's path to the U.S. Senate prepared her well to be an effective fighter for her constituents. Ever the dedicated public servant, Senator MIKULSKI worked as a Baltimore social worker, community activist, and as a city council member. She brought an urgency and an unrelenting commitment to service to her work and the people she represented. It can be seen in the legislation she has fought for and the causes she has championed during her 25 years in the Senate.

I am proud to say the first bill I cosponsored when I came to the Senate 3 years ago was one of Senator MIKULSKI's—the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. This bill—which ensures that no matter your gender, race, national origin, religion, age, or disability, you will receive equal pay for equal work—

the fight to get it signed into law is a perfect example of the tenacity and sense of fairness that drives BARBARA MIKULSKI.

I am particularly grateful to her for her mentorship. On the day I was sworn in to the Senate, I was standing in the back of the Chamber waiting to walk down to the well. My colleague from North Carolina, Senator Burr, was with me. Senator MIKULSKI came up to me and asked who was going to escort me to the well to be sworn in. I, obviously, said, "My colleague from North Carolina." She said, "Well, you need a woman too." And with that, I was both humbled and honored to have her escort me down the Chamber aisle to be sworn in as a U.S. Senator.

Her generosity in sharing her experience and her expertise did not stop on that day. She is always encouraging, supportive, and eager to foster a spirit of teamwork. I especially appreciate that Senator MIKULSKI embraces the need for bipartisanship, which no doubt is why she is and has been so effective, accomplished, and widely respected.

Everyone knows well and respects Senator MIKULSKI for her advocacy on behalf of women and families. In this regard, she is truly a role model. During the debate on health care reform, her tireless fight to ensure that women's preventive services, including screenings for breast cancer and cervical cancer, would be covered with no out-of-pocket expenses is legendary.

Her ability to see and understand people's needs is clearly reflected in her Spousal Anti-Impoverishment Act, which protects seniors across the country from going bankrupt while paying for a spouse's nursing home care. It is no wonder she is beloved, not only in the Third District, which she represented for 10 years in the House, but by all the people of Maryland whose interests she fights for every single day.

As 1 of the 17 women now serving in the Senate, it is hard to imagine what it must have been like when she arrived here 25 years ago as 1 of 2 women. I am grateful she and the other female Senators have paved the way.

BARBARA MIKULSKI is the dean of the women Senators, and her bipartisan women's dinners are among my favorite Senate traditions. I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership and strong belief in the empowerment of women in our communities and in public office. For those of us who came to Washington to make a difference, BARBARA MIKULSKI has set a very high bar.

I congratulate Senator MIKULSKI for this extraordinary and historic accomplishment. I look forward to many more years of serving alongside her.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in light of last week's celebration here in the Senate, to recognize the truly historic and remarkable accomplishment of my good friend and colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI.

As we all know, Senator MIKULSKI just last week achieved another stunning milestone as she became the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress, surpassing Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers. Of course, it was at the outset of this 112th Congress that Senator MIKULSKI overtook Maine's legendary Senator Margaret Chase Smith. To say it's been quite a Congress for the gentlelady from Maryland is the height of understatement indeed. . . .

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for recently becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. However, in doing so, I am reminded that this milestone does not define her legacy. Rather, her legacy as a coalition builder and a tenacious advocate of the marginalized defines Senator MIKULSKI's tenure as a public servant for the people of Maryland.

Throughout her career, Senator MIKULSKI pioneered the role women play in today's Congress. When she joined the Senate in 1987, Senator MIKULSKI became one of two female Senators and the first Democratic woman ever to join the Upper Chamber. These achievements were not due to a famous husband or father; Senator MIKULSKI was elected because of her integrity and her fiery and compassionate character. Her personal and professional experiences over the past 35 years make Senator MIKULSKI an excellent mentor for first-term female Members, leading to the appropriate title: "Dean of Women." I was recently reminded of the "Dean's" ability to rally the support of female colleagues as Senator MIKULSKI and 7 of 17 female Senators lent their support for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act on the floor of the Senate. Her efforts are emblematic of a unique ability to orchestrate voices in defense of the voiceless.

Just as the Violence Against Women Act provides support to both male and female victims of domestic abuse, Senator MIKULSKI's legacy as a champion of the exploited transcends the concept of gender. From her roots as a social worker and

community organizer, Senator MIKULSKI has constantly stood for social justice. She was a driving force in the landmark Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which furthered protections for women and others faced with discrimination in the workplace. Equal pay for equal work is a principle that Senator MIKULSKI will continue to defend. From the young lady who delivered groceries to seniors, to a passionate defender of the ethnic American, Senator MIKULSKI continues to stand in solidarity with those forced to live at the margins.

I have been proud to serve in the Senate with Senator MIKULSKI for over two decades, and I have enjoyed working with her on many issues, in addition to our time serving together on the Subcommittee on the Department of State and Foreign Operations for many years. Perhaps most memorable is a codel we took to sub-Saharan Africa in 1990.

While my colleagues and I applaud Senator MIKULSKI on the longevity of her career, we more importantly take this moment to celebrate the leadership and achievements that characterize her 35 years of service. How long she has served bears witness to how well she has represented the people of Maryland.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to my colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who is now the longest serving woman in the history of the Congress and congratulate her on reaching this important milestone. Senator MIKULSKI is an inspiration to us all. She had broken down not only multiple gender barriers, but legislative, economic, and societal barriers as well.

Throughout her career, Senator MIKULSKI has been a champion for those who are often forgotten. Hubert Humphrey once said the moral test of government is how it treats those in the dawn of life, the twilight of life, and the shadows of life. Senator MIKULSKI took this message to heart. Her life has been a life of service. She spent her career as a tireless advocate, first as a social worker in Baltimore on the city council and then in the House of Representatives where she served 10 years before coming to the Senate. For the past 25 years she has continued this advocacy and has been a strong voice on the Senate floor, as well as on the HELP Committee. I have been fortunate to serve on the HELP Committee with Senator MIKULSKI since 2009.

One of the things Senator MIKULSKI is best known for is providing good constituent services. This is something all Senate offices do and it often gets overlooked by the national

and international issues of the day. But this speaks to one of the most important duties of a Senator. When your constituent's mother dies in a country halfway around the world and you suddenly need a passport or a visa, when a veteran is not getting the benefits he is entitled to, or when an older citizen cannot afford to heat their home, they can turn to their Senator's local office for help. Senator MIKULSKI makes sure she and her staff provide help to that family, or veteran, or older citizen.

BARBARA MIKULSKI knows, and her work demonstrates, that the job of a Senator is not only about numbers and budgets, it is about helping people, especially the vulnerable and those without a voice or a lobbyist.

Again, I congratulate BARBARA on her accomplishment and I look forward to working with her and continuing to fight for our children, our workers, and our families with her in the years ahead.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President. I come to the floor today to celebrate the service of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, one of the most tenacious and effective Senators to serve in the U.S. Senate. This month, following 41 years of public service, Senator MIKULSKI has reached a new milestone in serving in the U.S. Congress longer than any woman in history. But as she has said, "It's not how long you serve, but how well you serve." Both the State of Maryland and the entire Nation have benefited from Senator MIKULSKI's stamina as well her energy, intellect, and compassion. Today, we can see the difference she has made in our schools, health care, paychecks, and workplaces.

Senator MIKULSKI follows in the footsteps of the legendary Hattie Caraway of Arkansas. As the wife of Thaddeus Caraway, a former Congressman and U.S. Senator for Arkansas, Hattie assumed her husband's place in the Senate following his death in 1931. She once said, "The time has passed when a woman should be placed in a position and kept there only while someone else is being groomed for the job." A year later, she ran for reelection, becoming the first woman elected to a 6-year term. She surpassed several milestones, including serving as the first female Senator to preside over the Senate and the first woman to serve as the chairwoman of a committee.

It would take 74 more years until a woman Senator chaired a subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Senator MIKULSKI, now at the reins of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, has shown

great leadership and vision as chairwoman, and it has been a privilege to work with her. While we share many interests, we have worked most closely to advance the growth of science parks, strengthen law enforcement, and ensure U.S. companies can compete in the 21st century. I look forward to a continued partnership, congratulate Senator MIKULSKI on this historic achievement, and express my deep appreciation for all that she has done.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to honor and extend my warmest *aloha* to my longtime colleague, a fellow member of the House freshman class of 1977, and very dear friend, Senator BARBARA A. MIKULSKI, for setting a new benchmark in her career and a significant milestone in this institution: becoming the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress. With each of her many accomplishments, she inspires the next generation of young American women, and she makes their dreams that much more attainable.

My colleague from Maryland has been a true trailblazer for women in Congress. In 1987, she earned the distinction of becoming the first-ever woman U.S. Senator from Maryland, as well as the first woman Democrat to serve in both the House and the Senate. Last year, she also became the longest serving female in Senate history.

BARBARA has not only witnessed the number of females climb from just 21 when she first came to Congress in 1977 to the 93 female members serving today. Her actions and spirit helped to make that feat possible. She continues to be a distinguished leader, mentor, and friend to all of her colleagues in Congress, not just the women. Although we have more work to do to eliminate gender bias and discrimination, I am glad to see that Congress has become more representative of the United States.

Throughout her over 35 years in Congress, BARBARA has remained a fearless advocate for women, working-class Americans, and Federal workers across the country, a steadfast protector of the environment, and a relentless champion of civil rights in this country.

Raised by Polish-American small business owners, she has been a longtime defender of labor rights and a fierce proponent of establishing fair and equal working conditions for all Americans regardless of race, sex, or disability. This cause led her to author the landmark women's and worker's rights legislation, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which I cosponsored, to guarantee women equal pay for equal work.

Being from a State that, like Maryland, has a large population of Federal workers, I have worked very closely with BARBARA on many issues to support our Government employees. From the time that we entered the House together, she has always been a strong partner and stalwart champion for the rights of our Nation's Federal workforce, including fair pay and benefits for the dedicated men and women who make our Government more secure, effective, and efficient.

BARBARA is an embodiment of the democratic spirit and continues to be a leader. She uses her great wit, humor, and boundless energy to urge Congress to take up important issues and then works with Members on both sides of the aisle to resolve differences and come together to achieve real solutions that help real working Americans every day. This is a testament to the fact that as she became the longest serving woman in the history of Congress, she has never forgotten her purpose—to make America better.

I again want to extend my *aloha* and my congratulations to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for this amazing achievement. It is a pleasure to serve with you. Thank you for your many years of outstanding service and genuine friendship, and I wish you the best as you continue your important work here in Congress.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my colleague and mentor, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, and to celebrate her legacy as the longest serving woman in Congress. For over 35 years, Senator MIKULSKI has proudly served the people of Maryland as a tireless advocate and a selfless public servant. It is my privilege to honor her today.

The great-granddaughter of Polish immigrants, Senator MIKULSKI grew up appreciating the value of hard work and service. On the weekends she worked in her parents' East Baltimore grocery store delivering groceries to homebound elderly. It was then that BARBARA developed her deep passion for helping others.

After earning her master's degree in social work from the University of Maryland, BARBARA started a career as a social worker with Catholic Charities and Baltimore's Department of Social Services. An outspoken advocate for at-risk youth and the elderly, she quickly earned a reputation as a fighter and was elected to the Baltimore City Council in 1971. After 5 years on the city council, BARBARA ran for Congress.

In 1976, BARBARA began her first term representing Maryland's Third Congressional District. As 1 of only 18 women in the House of Representatives, BARBARA was a member of

a small but mighty group. During her 10 years in the House, she gained a reputation as a fighter, and in 1986 the people of Maryland again chose her to represent them, but this time in the Senate.

As one of only two female Senators, and the first woman elected to the Senate in her own right, Senator MIKULSKI was met with much skepticism. While outnumbered, BARBARA's determination and dedication to her constituents shined through. BARBARA is a steadfast proponent of greater access to higher education, a leader on the front of women's health, and an unwavering supporter of America's veterans. She is determined to stand up for those who are often forgotten.

A few weeks ago, BARBARA shared a touching story that I think exemplifies her character.

When BARBARA first ran for the Senate in 1986, she had the opportunity to get to know Harriet Woods, who was campaigning as a Democrat for the Missouri Senate seat. BARBARA saw the significance of having two female candidates for Senate, and she was certain both of them would win. Unfortunately, it wasn't meant to be for Harriet Woods, who lost to Republican John Danforth.

On BARBARA's first day she was shown her desk on the Senate floor—she opened it and saw Harry Truman's autograph. She had Harry Truman's desk. While she was delighted to have that desk, she knew that it really belonged to the Senator from Missouri and relinquished it. She said that for years she thought about that desk and hoped that it would someday be returned to a Democrat from Missouri.

Twenty years later, on election night in 2006, BARBARA watched the election results come in from around the country—and in Missouri, in particular. She said she stayed up late in the night waiting for the final result. Once she learned of the results from Missouri, she knew that the desk that had been accidentally given to her all of those years ago would finally be returned where it belonged. I am so pleased to know that the Truman desk was shared, if only briefly, with my friend BARBARA MIKULSKI.

BARBARA MIKULSKI is a trailblazer, a role model, and an advisor to the other women in the Senate. Today there are 17 women in the Senate, and much of that progress can be attributed to Senator MIKULSKI's leadership.

Mr. President, I ask that the Senate join me in congratulating Senator MIKULSKI on this milestone and thank her for her 35 years of leadership, friendship, and service.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I would like to honor Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI's amazing life and career as she becomes the Senate's longest serving woman Senator. She has been a role model and inspiration to women across the country as she broke barriers in public life. When she first came to the Senate she was one of only a handful of women ever to serve in the U.S. Senate and now she is 1 of 17 women here on the Senate floor. Her service has made it easier for girls to dream about one day being a Senator—or President.

Senator MIKULSKI and I shared a similar experience growing up: her parents, William and Christine, opened and operated Willy's Market, a small grocery store in their working class neighborhood in East Baltimore. My parents also opened a small grocery store in Milwaukee—the first of what would become the Kohl's Food Stores and then Kohl's Department Stores.

As we have already heard here on the floor, her father would frequently open the store early so local steelworkers could buy their lunches before their shift began. He would also extend credit to help customers who were having a hard time making ends meet. William Mikulski's neighbors didn't go hungry with him as their grocer. BARBARA worked at the store, and helped deliver groceries to homebound seniors in their neighborhood. She got to know her neighbors well, and she understood the important issues facing her community.

Much of what we both experienced working in our family stores and watching our parents work so hard to provide superior service to their customers, ensuring their children understood the value of hard work, treating others fairly and with dignity, and giving back to the community, influenced our views on customer service. Those views have translated into Senator MIKULSKI's constituent service here in the Senate.

BARBARA's enthusiasm and commitment to serving the people of Maryland has resulted in too many victories to mention here, but I do want to point out a few of the projects we have worked on together on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

Senator MIKULSKI and I have worked closely over the years to protect USDA agriculture research in Beltsville, MD. Beltsville is a historic and crucial part of the USDA's research arm. In fact, it is the largest agriculture research facility in the world and does valuable work developing the next generation of crops and farming methods that will feed a growing planet. We've also worked together on increasing

funding for the Food and Drug Administration, ensuring that the food we eat and medicine we rely upon is safe.

In my work as chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, I have been especially thankful for the times when BARBARA has spoken passionately about the important programs we fund through the subcommittee. She has been a stalwart supporter of farmers throughout Maryland and across the country, and a true friend here in the Senate. It has been an honor to serve with her.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, my late friend Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," lived his life by the motto "Find the good and praise it." That is an easy thing to do when talking about BARBARA MIKULSKI, a friend and colleague with whom I have worked closely since I joined the Senate.

I would like to add my congratulations to those of my colleagues on Senator MIKULSKI reaching the milestone of becoming the longest serving woman in Congress. This is a remarkable achievement for a remarkable woman. For over 35 years, that is almost 13,000 days, BARBARA MIKULSKI has dedicated herself to serving the people of Maryland and representing them here in Congress.

Although Senator MIKULSKI is a proud partisan, she is one of the best advocates of bipartisanship. She understands the need to work together, to learn from one another's point of view, and to strike a deal so that each side can get something of value and move forward.

I have found that when you have BARBARA MIKULSKI by your side in a debate you always seem to win. She brings passion and dedication and tenacity to every issue she works on. Her love of the Senate, Congress in general, and the American people is infectious.

When Senator MIKULSKI and I have worked together it has always been a delightful experience. Whether authorizing the Teach for America Program to allow college graduates to become teachers in our Nation's worst schools; passing America COMPETES, where we improved our energy research programs and STEM education initiatives; or working on higher education where we share a passion for eliminating costly and unnecessary Federal regulations, BARBARA MIKULSKI is a tireless friend and ally.

Congratulations, Senator MIKULSKI. The Senate is proud of you, Maryland is proud of you, and the country is proud of you.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to offer congratulations to my friend and colleague, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, on becoming the longest serving woman Senator in American history.

As Senator MIKULSKI has said, "It's not only how long I serve, but how well I serve." And she has served very well. Not only does Senator MIKULSKI serve in the best interests of the people of her native Maryland, but her service continues to improve the lives of Americans from coast to coast.

This comes as no surprise for a person who began her career helping at-risk children and seniors as a social worker in Baltimore. Senator MIKULSKI's nightly commute home from Washington ensures that she will not forget who she works for or where she comes from. The truth is, she never left.

Her commitment and connection to her constituents benefits us all. Her advocacy for access to better health care, improving the quality of education, investing in innovation, and protecting human dignity are not bound by the borders of Maryland. Her service benefits the people of Baltimore, MD, but also the people of Broken Bow, NE.

It is an honor to serve with Senator MIKULSKI. I enjoy her company, I respect her strength, and I admire her commitment.

Congratulations to Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI on her record-setting service. We are all the better for it.

MONDAY, *April 16, 2012*

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I join my fellow Senators in paying tribute to my dear colleague and friend Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI for the tremendous landmark she has reached as of March 17, 2012. She is now the longest serving female Member of our Congress. But the number of years is inadequate as a measure or metric. More telling are her monumental accomplishments and record of successfully tackling tough problems and making a real difference in lives. Senator MIKULSKI is unquestionably one of the most dedicated, inspiring, and influential public servants in our Nation's history.

Her generous spirit, flair, and eloquence as a speaker make her both loved and powerful as an advocate. Her standard of intellect and integrity has motivated me and inspired countless others. Like Senator MIKULSKI, I am hum-

bled and driven by the legacy of members of my family who emigrated from Europe, striving for the American dream with a strong work ethic and a firm belief in progress. I am especially drawn to Senator MIKULSKI's determination to fight for her constituents and her deep sense of caring. She is an excellent role model for women and girls around the globe—and for anyone, whether a freshman Senator such as myself or a veteran legislator—devoted to a life of public service.

I am proud to work with Senator MIKULSKI on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, joining her, for example, as a cosponsor of her Paycheck Fairness Act to continue the civil rights debate that started decades ago and is unfortunately still unresolved. We must, once and for all, secure protections for women in the workforce, reaching pay equity and ending all instances of sex discrimination.

I respect Senator MIKULSKI's efforts to reduce costs while furthering innovation and am a strong supporter of her focus on research and drug development for chronic conditions, as laid out in her SPRINT Act. Her advocacy for America's seniors and success leading immigration reform are equally inspiring, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of her Visa Waiver Program Enhanced Security and Reform Act.

I especially enjoyed partnering with Senator MIKULSKI to advance the education we provide to our Nation's students. We offered an amendment together in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to increase funding and research to meet the unique needs of gifted and talented students.

Special recognition is past due for Senator MIKULSKI, who makes the time to recognize others, most recently sponsoring S. Res. 310, designating 2012 as "Year of the Girl" and congratulating the Girl Scouts for its centennial.

Senator MIKULSKI has been an extraordinary mentor and model for countless men and women who emulate her dedication and drive, her commitment and common sense. She leads by her example, particularly for women who endeavor to hold public office. When considering the opportunity to run, they can look to the legacy she has built and the path she has traveled from social worker to city council member to a national figure in the Halls of Congress.

I look forward with pleasure and pride to serving alongside Senator MIKULSKI for years to come. I congratulate her on making history and giving her colleagues, fellow public servants, constituents, and the American people the opportunity to engage in historymaking for the good of our Nation.

Proceedings in the House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, *March 21, 2012*

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an accomplished and distinguished Member of the U.S. Senate who is achieving a milestone worthy of recognition in this body.

Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI is the longest serving woman in congressional history. Before being sworn into the Senate in 1986, Senator MIKULSKI served in this Chamber for five terms. She has now served the people of Maryland for more than 35 years.

Senator MIKULSKI is the daughter of Polish American small business owners, who taught her the meaning of hard work. She attended Mount Saint Agnes College and the University of Maryland, where she earned a degree in social work. The inequities she observed during those years are what drove her to become a voice for her community. An activist, she organized community members to stand up against a local plan to build a 16-lane highway through neighborhoods in Baltimore. Indeed she was successful.

Her career as a government leader began in 1971, when she was elected a member of Baltimore's City Council. Prior to becoming the first Democratic woman sworn into the Senate in 1986, she served 10 years as a Representative of Maryland's Third Congressional District.

Without a doubt, Senator MIKULSKI's admirable leadership trajectory is reflected through the varied roles she has held in Congress. She has advanced initiatives involving women's reproductive rights and women's health issues. She is currently a senior member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Children and Families. She is also a senior member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and chairwoman of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee. In my work as the House CJS Subcommittee's leading Democrat, I have

been grateful for the partnership of my companion in the other Chamber.

Senator MIKULSKI is a pioneer who has paved the way for many women. Throughout her career she has served as a mentor for women in congressional leadership and continues to create partnerships to focus the spotlight on women.

Her contributions go beyond the walls of Congress and she continues to be an integral part of her community, greeting constituents and lending a hand to empower and help make a difference. She continues to fight to give Maryland the resources necessary to compete in a global economy.

I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring this notable woman who is making history and extend our gratitude for her service and wish the senior Senator from the State of Maryland good health and good times.

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