TRIBUTES TO HON. TOM COBURN

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Tom Coburn

U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

TRIBUTES

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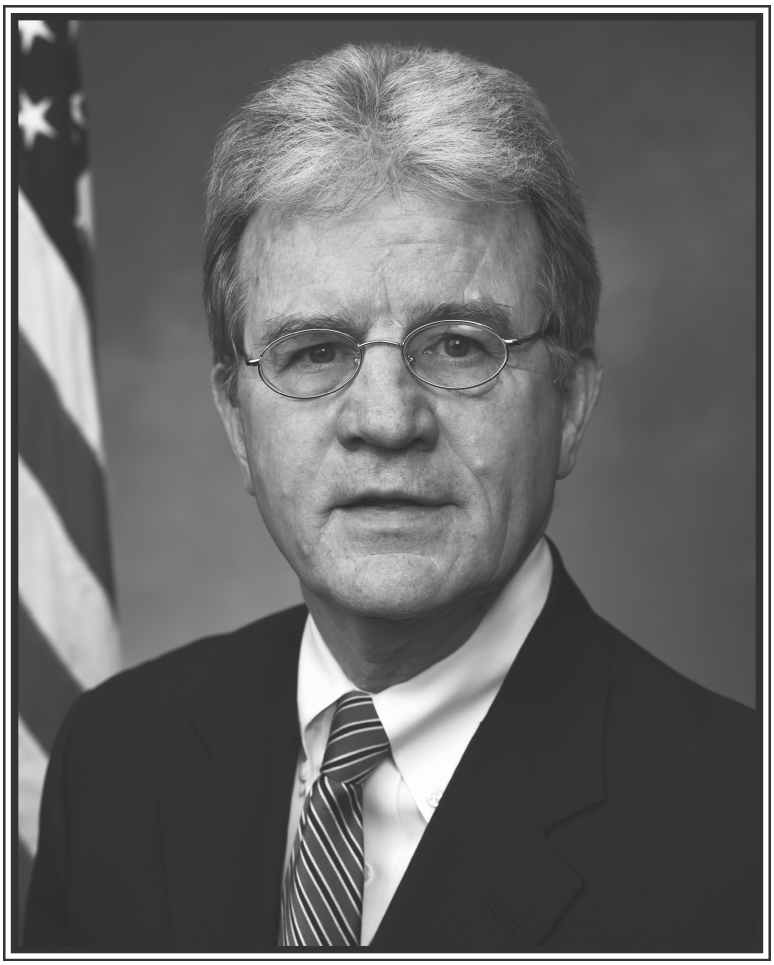

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Tom Coburn

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Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Tom Coburn

United States Congressman
1995–2001

United States Senator
2005–2015

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BIOGRAPHY

TOM COBURN, M.D., was elected to the U.S. Senate on November 2, 2004. Dr. COBURN and his wife, Carolyn, a graduate of Oklahoma State University and former Miss Oklahoma, were married in 1968 and have three children and seven grandchildren. They are members of First Baptist Muskogee.

Dr. COBURN's priorities in the Senate included reducing wasteful spending, protecting liberty, balancing the budget, improving health care access and affordability, protecting the sanctity of all human life—including the unborn—and representing traditional, Oklahoma values. As a citizen legislator, Dr. COBURN pledged to serve no more than two terms in the Senate and to continue to care for patients. He was a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Dr. COBURN also served as ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

As a Senator, Dr. COBURN offered more amendments than any of his colleagues. He offered amendments to eliminate funding for the "Bridge to Nowhere," the "Woodstock Museum" in New York, and countless other special interests earmarks sponsored by Members of both parties. Dr. COBURN also worked to make government more accountable and transparent. In 2006, he teamed up with then-Senator Barack Obama to create http://www.usaspending.gov/, an online database of all Federal spending.

Dr. COBURN issued over 50 oversight reports during his 10 years in the Senate, taking a closer look at nearly every aspect, mission, and department of the Federal Government. Washington bureaucrats feared being called out in his annual "Wastebook," which highlighted the most outrageous government spending of the year that spared no agency from scrutiny, questioning, or ridicule.

Before his election to the Senate, Dr. COBURN represented Oklahoma's Second Congressional District in the House of Representatives from 1995 through 2001. He was first elected in 1994, then reelected in 1996 and 1998, becoming the first Republican to hold the seat for consecutive terms. Dr.

COBURN retired from Congress in 2001, fulfilling his pledge to serve no more than three terms in the House.

In 1970, Dr. COBURN graduated with an accounting degree from Oklahoma State University. One of the top ten seniors in the School of Business, Dr. COBURN served as president of the College of Business Student Council. From 1970 to 1978, Dr. COBURN served as manufacturing manager at the Ophthalmic Division of Coburn Optical Industries in Colonial Heights, VA. Under his leadership, the Virginia division of Coburn Optical grew from 13 employees to more than 350 and captured 35 percent of the U.S. market.

After the family business was sold, Dr. COBURN changed the course of his life by returning to school to become a physician. Again he emerged as a leader, becoming president of his class at the University of Oklahoma Medical School where he graduated in 1983. He then did his internship in general surgery at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City and family practice residency at the University of Arkansas, Fort Smith.

Dr. COBURN returned to Muskogee where he specialized in family medicine, obstetrics, and the treatment of allergies. Dr. COBURN has personally delivered more than 4,000 babies.

Dr. COBURN also is a three-time cancer survivor.

Farewell to the Senate

Thursday, December 11, 2014

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, following in the traditions of the Senate, I come to the floor to speak about my experience in the Senate. Unfortunately, this will not be the last time I speak, much to the chagrin of many of you, as I have some adamant opposition to some of the things we are doing.

But I nevertheless will try to put in context some of my feelings and thoughts about the great privilege that has been granted to me by the people of Oklahoma. We hear a lot of speeches in this place. As Members who are elected, it gets reflected on us, but nothing could be further from the truth. Because the things that really make this place operate are the people who work with us, the people who support us, the people who help guide us, the people behind the scenes who are both brilliant and committed and dedicated to the founding principles of this country.

We all have them working for us. Yet they are rarely recognized. So whether our accomplishments are big or small, those accomplishments come through the work, efforts, and labors of those who join with us as we come here to try to make a difference. So I first wanted to say there are a lot of people I need to say thank you to; from our Parliamentarian Elizabeth to all of the staff who work in the Senate, to the people who work at GAO, wonderful people, CRS, the IGs, legislative counsel—they have written thousands, I mean literally thousands of amendments for me. They probably are going to have some real mixed feelings about my departure. Then I have personal staff—all tremendous—but one of whom I found to be a phenomenal, brilliant person. His name is Roland Foster. There is not anything he has ever forgotten. You can ask him anything. He will find it. He knows it. So I mention him. I have hundreds of others whom I could equally speak about, from my former chief of staff Mike Schwartz, who passed away from Lou Gehrig's disease, to those in my office and staff who each knows what a difference they make—they did—the Cloakroom staff and the help we get from Laura Dove and David Schiappa and Mr.

Duncan on our side—same on the opposite side. We are only able to function because of all the people who enable us to do that. So with those thank yous, I actually wanted to move to a different topic. The topic is believing in our country. I tell people wherever I go: We do not have one problem we cannot solve. There is nothing too big for us. They are all solvable.

To prove that is my chairman, Tom Carper, on homeland security. He has been a phenomenal chairman. He is not in my party. We do not agree on everything, but the one thing we agreed on was that we were going to work together to solve problems. We have. We did not solve them all, but I would suggest if we look at what has come through this place, even in this dysfunctional place at this time, we will see more coming out under his leadership than any other pieces of legislation. Why is that? It is because the focus was not about him, it was not about me, it was about solving the problems of our country.

To those of you through the years whom I have offended, I truly apologize. I think none of that was intended because I actually see things differently. You see, I believe our Founders were absolutely brilliant, far smarter than we are. I believe the enumerated powers meant something. They were meant to protect us against what history says always happens to a republic. They have all died.

So the question is, What will happen with us? Can we cheat history? Can we do something better than was done in the past? I honestly believe we can, but I do not believe we can if we continue to ignore the wisdom of our founding documents. So when I have offended, I believe it has been on the basis of my belief in article I, section 8. I think we can stuff that genie back into the bottle.

E pluribus unum. "Out of many, one." But you do not have one unless you have guaranteed the liberty of the many. When we ignore what the Constitution gave us as a guideline, to protect the individual liberties, to limit the size and scope of the Federal Government so the benefits of freedom and liberty can be expressed all across this land, that is when we get back to solving our problems.

I think about my father—he had a fifth-grade education—a great believer in our country. He would not recognize it today. The loss of freedom we have imposed by the arrogance of an all-too-powerful Federal Government, ignoring the wisdom and writing of our Founders that said, "Above all, we

must protect the liberty of the individual and recognize that liberty is given as a God-given right."

So my criticism isn't directed personally, it is because I truly believe that freedom gains us more than anything we can plan here. I know not everybody agrees with me, but the one thing I do know is that our Founders agreed with me.

They had studied this process before. They know what happens when you dominate from a central government. This didn't mean intentions are bad; the intentions are great. The motivations of people in this body are wonderful, but the perspective on how we do it and what the long-term consequences are of how we do it really do matter.

We see ourselves today with a President whom we need to be supporting and praying for, with an economy that is not doing what it could be doing, and we need to be asking the question, Why? Is there a fundamental reason? And there is.

We are too much involved in the decisionmaking in the economy in this country that inhibits the flow of capital to the best return, which inhibits the growth of wealth, which leaves us at a standard of living the same as what we had in 1988. That is where we are, yet it doesn't have to be that way.

I am going to read some words we have all heard before, but they are worth rereading. "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . ."

All of us. ". . . that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

I look at legislation and say how does that have an impact on those two things, and too often it has a negative impact.

> That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it.

I don't know where we are on that continuum, but I know we are not where we were intended to be in the vision of our Founders, and we are suffering, no matter where you are in the country, as a consequence.

We established the Constitution to try to protect those rights and to delineate those rights. We put in the limitation of the government and outlined the rights of each individual citizen upon which the government shall not infringe. Yet what comes out of this body and this Congress every day, to my chagrin, infringes those guaranteed rights.

Every Member of the Senate takes the same oath and this is where I differ with a lot of colleagues. Let me read the oath, because I think it is part of the problem.

> I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.

Your State isn't mentioned one time in that oath. Your whole goal is to protect the United States of America, its Constitution and its liberties. It is not to provide benefits for your State. That is where we differ. That is where my conflict with my colleagues has come. It is nice to be able to do things for your State, but that isn't our charge. Our charge is to protect the future of our country by upholding the Constitution and ensuring the liberty that is guaranteed there is protected and preserved.

The magic number in the Senate is not 60, the number of Senators needed to end debate, and it is not 51, a majority. The most important number in the Senate is one—one Senator. That is how it was set up. That is how our Founders designed it, and with that comes tremendous amounts of responsibility, because the Senate has a set of rules that gives each individual Member the power needed to advance, change, or stop legislation. That is a tool that has to be mentored and refined and wise in its application.

Most of the bills that pass the Senate never receive a vote. We all know that. It is a vast majority of the bills. They are approved by unanimous consent. It only takes a single Senator to withhold consent to stop most legislation.

There are many other rules and procedures a Member can use. They are often referred to as arcane, but that is only because they are rarely used. They are not arcane. They were designed to protect liberty, to secure liberty, to make sure that we don't all follow history and fail.

Every Senator has the power to introduce legislation and, until recently, offer amendments.

No single Senator should be allowed to decide what the rights of another Senator should be. That is tyranny. It has nothing to do with the history and classics of the Senate.

To exercise the rights we have been entrusted with, we must respect the rights of others. That is the true power of our Constitution. That is also the true power of the Senate.

It is what binds our Nation together, and it is what is needed to make the Senate work properly again.

The Senate was designed uniquely to force compromise, not to force gridlock—to force compromise. One Senator had the power to stop everything for the first 100 years, but it didn't because compromise was the goal.

Our Founders understood there were many differences between the States—in size, geography, economy, and opinions. They united the States as one country based upon the premise that the many are more powerful than the one. As Senators, we have to follow this example. I have not always done that; I admit that freely to you. I should have. As Senators, we must follow the example, stand for our principles, but working to find those areas of agreement where compromise can be found to unite and move our country forward. My colleague Senator Carper has my admiration because he has worked tirelessly the past 2 years to try to accomplish that.

Not all of the powers of the Senators are exercised on the Senate floor. Each Member of the Senate has a unique role to participate and practice oversight, to hold the government accountable, and that is part of our duties, except most often that is the part of our duties that is most ignored.

To know how to reach a destination, you must first know where you are, and without oversight—effective, vigorous oversight—you will never solve anything. You cannot write a bill to fix an agency unless you have an understanding of the problem, and you can only know this by conducting oversight, asking the tough questions, holding the bureaucrats accountable, find out what works and what doesn't, and know what has already been done.

Effective oversight is an effective tool to expose government overreach and wasteful spending, but it also markedly exposes where we lose our liberty and our essential freedoms.

I have had some fun through the years, taken some criticism for the waste vote—and it is opinion, I agree. Everybody who has seen the "Wastebook" has a great defense of why it is there. But the real question is will we become efficient at how we spend the money of the American people? This is a big enterprise. There is no other enterprise anywhere close to it in size in the world. It is not manageable unless we all try to agree to manage it and have the knowledge of it.

I think there ought to be 535 "Wastebooks" every year, and then we ought to have the debate about where we are not spending money wisely and have the information at our fingertips so we make great decisions because, quite frankly, we don't make great decisions because we don't have the knowledge. Then what knowledge we do have we transfer to a bureaucracy to make decisions about it when we should have been guiding those things.

True debates about national priorities would come about if we did effective oversight. It is the Senate, once hailed as the world's greatest deliberative body, where these differences should be argued. Our differences should be resolved through civil discourse so they are not settled in the street.

Just as the Constitution provides for majority rule and our democracy while protecting the rights of the individual, the Senate must return to the principles to bring trust of the electorate, and it can. Our Founders believed that protecting the minority views and minority rights in the Senate was essential to having a bicameral legislature that would give us balance and not move too quickly against the very fundamental principles upon which this country was based—and not out of guessing, but out of thorough knowledge of what had happened in the past. We have to be very careful to guard both minority rights and the rule of law.

There is no one who works in the Senate who is insignificant, whether it is the people who serve us when we have lunch, to the highest of the high. They all deserve our ear. Each of us has value.

I end with one final comment. The greatest power I have not used as a Senator, which I would encourage you to use in the future, is the power of convening. You have tremendous power to pull people together because of your position.

To convene the opposite opinions—Chuck Schumer has been great at that for me. When we have a difference, he wants to get together, convene, and see how we work. That power is the power that causes us to compromise, to come together, to reach consensus. So my encouragement to you is to rethink the utilization of the power of convening. People will come to you if you ask them to come.

Again, I end by saying a great thank you to my family for their sacrifice, a great thank you to the wonderful staff I have, and a thank you to each of you for the privilege of having been able to work for a better country for us all.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

TRIBUTES

TO

TOM COBURN

Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *December 8, 2014*

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in the waning days of the 113th Congress it is a bittersweet moment as many of us are saying goodbye—although not on a permanent basis but at least in terms of our official relationships working together as Senators—to so many of our good friends and valued colleagues. Every other December we find ourselves bidding farewell to some of the most admired and respected Members of this Chamber. Today I want to say a few words about three of these esteemed Members, starting with my good friend, the senior Senator from Georgia [Mr. Chambliss]. . . .

I will close my remarks today on our retiring colleagues by paying tribute to Dr. TOM COBURN. He is someone we have all come to know and admire over 20 years as a relentless fighter for limited government and conservative values here in the Congress.

TOM can be a very charming guy, but I know he can also be a pain in our side when he is determined to make sure he gets a chance to get a vote on an important matter here in the Senate. I think he is comfortable in both of those roles. In fact, I know he is.

TOM COBURN is a man of strong principle, a man of great integrity, and, perhaps just as important, a man of remarkable humility. Our country has benefited greatly from the wisdom and leadership TOM has provided during his service in Congress—first in the House and then in the Senate. I have been in the Senate now for a little more than a decade, and during that time our colleague from Oklahoma has done more than anyone else in this Chamber to eliminate wasteful spending, expose fraud and abuse in the Federal budget, and get our entitlement programs on a sustainable path. TOM would be the first one to say that job has just begun, but he has certainly given it everything he has.

He has educated our Nation on the fiscal threat we live under and what it means for our children and grandchildren, and he has worked tirelessly to correct it.

He has done a remarkable job as the ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, as well as his service on the Intelligence and Banking Committees.

Furthermore, TOM has been an unyielding force for protecting liberty and improving access to affordable health care by proposing positive patient-oriented alternatives, and for these reasons and many more I am grateful for his service.

But perhaps the thing he does not want to be remembered for—but that has made such a profound impression on many of us—is his courage and ability to deal with the fact that he is a three-time cancer survivor. Even last week, I know he was receiving treatment for this most recent flareup, but he will be back here today. He will be doing what he does best, and that is fighting for his principles and perhaps causing more than a little bit of turbulence in the process in this otherwise staid Chamber.

I know I speak for this entire Chamber when I say it is an honor to serve with a man such as TOM COBURN. I know this to be true because TOM is well respected on both sides of the aisle.

In fact, when Time magazine named TOM 1 of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2013, a friend of TOM's and former Democratic Senator wrote:

> The people of Oklahoma are lucky to have someone like TOM representing them in Washington—someone who speaks his mind, sticks to his principles, and is committed to the people he was elected to serve.

The friend I am referring to who made those remarks is none other than our President, Barack Obama, when he served with TOM in the Senate. When the President said that, he found out that TOM received a number of angry letters from constituents that said he and President Obama looked a little too chummy together, to which TOM replied—and this is classic TOM COBURN, "What better way to influence someone than to love them."

This serves as a testament to his character. You see, TOM has an extraordinary ability not just to win the respect of those who agree with him but the admiration and respect of those who disagree with him as well. That is a rare thing in politics and especially in today's society.

Nevertheless, TOM has spent his career promoting what is good for the country while never wavering from his personal conversations. Along the way he has racked up a lengthy list of accomplishments that protect taxpayers and increase transparency in government.

TOM's resume proves he has been a leader not only in Congress but in every aspect of his life. For example, I think many of our colleagues don't realize he had a distinguished career in business and medicine before he got here. TOM served as president of the school of business student council while getting his accounting degree at Oklahoma State University. Later he went back to law school—excuse me, that was a Freudian slip he wouldn't be happy with. Later he went back to medical school, where he trained to become a physician and served as president of his class at the University of Oklahoma Medical School.

TOM has a lot to be proud of about his service in the House and in the Senate. But, again, like all of us, he is most proud of his family. He has been married to the former Miss Oklahoma for nearly 50 years, and he and Carolyn have three daughters and seven grandchildren. Meanwhile, in his career as a physician, he has delivered more than 4,000 babies, which perhaps explains the vote totals in some of his elections, because I am sure many of them have grown up to vote for him.

The things that I mentioned are only a few of TOM COBURN's long list of notable achievements. Knowing TOM and his work ethic, I have no doubt he will be giving 110 percent right up until the last minute he serves in the 113th Congress on January 3, 2015.

I wish TOM and his family the very best as they enter the next season of life.

TUESDAY, *December 9, 2014*

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to salute my colleagues who are departing the Senate at the end of this year with the conclusion of the 113th Congress: Mark Begich of Alaska, Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, Kay Hagan of North Carolina, Tom Harkin of Iowa, Mike Johanns of Nebraska, Tim Johnson of South Dakota, Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, Carl Levin of Michigan, Mark Pryor of Arkansas, Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, Mark Udall of Colorado, and John Walsh of Montana.

They have all worked hard, ceaselessly giving their energy and considerable time and service to their constituents, to their home States, and to our country. I want to thank them for their service and for their kindness to me over many

years in so many cases. In particular, I want to say a few words about these colleagues. . . .

TOM COBURN has always been passionate on the issues he cares about. We have engaged in vigorous debate, demonstrating, I hope, that principled disagreement can lead ultimately to principled progress. My thoughts are with him, particularly as he battles health issues, his cancer. I hope and wish him success and much happiness as he moves forward. . . .

Along with all of my other colleagues who are leaving us at the conclusion of the 113th Congress, let me thank them for their service, their dedication to improving the lives of Americans, and on a very personal level for their friendship. I wish them all well.

WEDNESDAY, *December 10, 2014*

Mr. DURBIN. I have some tributes here for my colleagues who are retiring, leaving the Senate. It is a lengthy list of tributes. . . .

I want to say a word about three others on the other side of the aisle who are retiring: Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, and Mike Johanns of Nebraska. I got to know them when I gathered with one of these gangs, as they call them around here, to talk about deficit reduction. We spent more time together trying to explore the Federal budget in ways to reduce our deficit in a thoughtful manner so that we really got to know one another and respect one another.

There is a world of difference in our political values and philosophies, but each of them in their own way made a positive contribution toward making this a stronger nation. . . .

Senator TOM COBURN and I come from different parts of the country and different ends of the political spectrum, but we found there is a lot we agree on. I have always believed, as Senators Paul Douglas and Paul Simon said, that being a liberal doesn't mean you have to be a "wastrel." Senator COBURN knows that being a conservative and protecting America's economy demands more than blind budget cutting. His nickname is "Doctor No," but when it comes to wishing him well as he steps down from the Senate, my colleagues join me in a resounding "yes." . . .

None of them is running for reelection so I can't hurt them politically by saying that I regard each of these Senators as

friends. They showed political courage when partisanship would have been easier.

I wish them the best in all their future endeavors.

Mr. COONS. . . . As I close, I would also like to thank those of our colleagues who will be leaving the Senate after the New Year.

It is an incredible privilege to work in this Chamber and to represent the people. Every day I am awed by the dedication and talent of many of my colleagues, public servants who come to work to fight for their States and their government.

To those who are ending their service in the Senate, know that I value your friendship and partnership. It has been an honor to work with you, and I thank you for all you have done for our Nation.

Mr. MCCAIN. Today, I would like to offer words of tribute to my departing colleague, Senator TOM COBURN, whose service exemplifies standards of purposefulness, integrity, and decency, to which we should all aspire and whose example ought to inspire the service of new and returning Senators alike.

I am going to miss an awful lot our colleague from Oklahoma. I have always admired TOM for the strength of his convictions and the courage and candor with which he expresses them day after day. "The No. 1 thing people should do in Congress," TOM once said, "is stay true to their heart." No one in the history of this institution has ever followed that injunction more faithfully than TOM COBURN has.

TOM COBURN has an unshakable faith in the goodness of America, and he has worked diligently with others when he could and alone, if necessary, to make sure government respects the people we serve—respects their hopes and aspirations, their concerns and sacrifices. He has never forgotten he is the people's servant first and last, and they have never had a more genuine and determined champion.

I think TOM has often acted as the conscience of the Senate. He can be unmovable on matters of principle when to do otherwise would harm or do no good for the country. TOM COBURN is sometimes called "Dr. No," affectionately most, if not all, of the time. He has held up more legislation that he thought ill served the public interest than any other Member of this body. He even placed a hold on one of his own bills that he thought no longer met his high standard of accountability after it was reported out of committee. I don't think

the American taxpayer has ever had a greater defender than TOM COBURN.

I like to think I have taken a few principled stands when the situation has warranted it, and I have made myself an occasional nuisance in service to what I thought was a good cause. But I have never been so conscientious that I felt obliged to defeat my own legislation. That is a pretty high standard of personal responsibility to meet and a character test of the first order. I am not sure many of us would pass it. I wouldn't. But then, as all his colleagues can attest, TOM COBURN is a person of the very highest character. He possesses the highest virtues—courage, humility, compassion—in an abundance. It has been an honor to serve with him.

As principled as he is, as unwavering as he can be when he believes it necessary, he has also been a brave and determined proponent of compromise when he believed it served the public interest, when it would help build a more prosperous and secure society with more opportunities for more people and brighter futures for our children.

We always have detractors. It comes with the job. Whether TOM was standing on principle or seeking a principled compromise, he stood up to criticism. He stood up to pressure. He stood up to threats and insults and whatever negative personal consequences he might suffer. He stood up to whatever came his way to do what was right for his country. He stood up for the American people, no matter how difficult it was. What better can you say about a public servant?

TOM and I worked together on a lot of things. We fought together to end earmarks and opposed other forms of wasteful spending. We worked together on oversight projects for the stimulus bill and highway trust fund spending. We also fought for a long time to let veterans decide where they could best receive health care. We made good progress on some issues and not enough on others, but TOM COBURN was always an example and an inspiration to me.

If I could speak more personally, TOM has been more than a paragon to me and to other Members of the Senate. He is first and foremost a kind, considerate, and loyal friend—a friend in good times and bad, a friend who brings out the best in you because he believes in the best part of you. I said earlier TOM COBURN sees the innate goodness in the American people. He also sees it in his colleagues, even when it isn't apparent to other observers.

We have shared happy times together, TOM and I, but TOM has the instinct and the kindness to be the kind of friend

who is there when you need him—when you need him most, in moments that aren't so happy.

We all lead pretty good lives here. We get the chance to serve the greatest country in the world and, on occasion, to make history. We are honored and feted and praised more than we deserve. But as all human beings do, we have moments of worry and doubt and disappointment. TOM always has the knack for showing up when I need cheering up. He has made the point over the years of being company when you most need it.

Friendship is a virtue to TOM, and he means to live a virtuous life. You could be working on something with him or opposing each other on an issue, it doesn't matter. If you need him, he will be there for you with a kind word, a piece of advice, a little encouragement or just good company. There are too few people like that in anyone's life not to cherish the hell out of those who are. I cherish my friendship with TOM COBURN, and I always will.

The Senate will be a poorer place without TOM COBURN to set an example of public service for the rest of us. But in gratitude to him for his leadership and friendship, I will try a little harder to live up to his standards, and I hope he will let me know when I fall short.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I rise to thank my friend Saxby Chambliss. Senator COBURN spoke about leadership. We are very much going to miss Senator COBURN, Senator Johanns, and Senator Chambliss in this body. . . .

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, in the new Congress we will welcome 12 new Republican Senators, and that is wonderful. They are great people. They are excited. They are enthusiastic. I think they are going to do wonderful things. So there are 12 new Republican Members coming into the new Senate, and we are going to lose 3 of our Republican colleagues. I am thinking, maybe that is about the right ratio; it is about 4 to 1.

But these are three individuals who are unbelievable in what they have been able to do in the relationships they built, the friendships, and the work they have done on behalf of the American people. So I am looking at that statistic and I am thinking: Wow, these are three great people who have done the work of many, and I think they have laid the foundation in many ways for us to get to a majority: Senator Johanns, Senator COBURN, and Senator Chambliss. I think

they have done a lot of that work required for us to get to majority.

We have heard about the great Senator from Georgia. But I think the things I am going to talk about for a minute in regard to Saxby Chambliss apply to the two individuals sitting here with him. They are cut from the same cloth: Senator COBURN, Senator Johanns, true public servants. People who ran for the right reason; people who serve for the right reason. I think we could ask anybody in this body on either side of the aisle, and they would tell us that these three individuals served for the right reasons, and served to the very best of their ability the American people—not just the people of their State, but the American people. They will be remembered long after they are gone. They will be remembered because of the great, wonderful people they are, for the relationships they have built, and for that service. So I echo Senator Ayotte's comments. . . .

When we talk about Saxby Chambliss, TOM COBURN, Mike Johanns, it doesn't get any better than that. We will miss them a lot.

I wish all three of them Godspeed, and may God bless you in your next career.

ORDER FOR PRINTING OF SENATE DOCUMENT

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the tributes to retiring Senators be printed as a Senate document and that Senators be permitted to submit tributes until December 23, 2014.

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

THURSDAY, *December 11, 2014*

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, we have all just heard a very moving, a very inspirational and what I consider a motivational speech from our dear friend TOM COBURN.

Twenty years ago, in 1994, there were a bunch of wild and crazy folks who got elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Republicans took the majority for the first time in 42 years. They ran on a Contract with America and were led by a group of firebrand leaders. TOM COBURN was in that group of folks who got elected in 1994 to the U.S. House. I was in that group. Senator Graham was in that group. Sen-

ator Burr was in that group. Senator Wicker was in that group.

There were a few Members of that class who became known as real bomb throwers. TOM COBURN was a bomb thrower. TOM COBURN would object for the sake of objecting to anything that was going on. It didn't make any difference which side of the aisle it was coming from. But let me tell you, TOM COBURN matured into a class act, No. 1, which he always was; and No. 2, he matured into a legislator second to none.

TOM did not hesitate to object to any spending bill that came from either party if TOM COBURN believed that was not provided for in the Constitution and was something the U.S. taxpayer should not be paying for. There is nobody who has guarded the pocketbook of the taxpayers of the United States like TOM COBURN.

It is remarkable that those of us who were elected with TOM have had the opportunity to see him over the last 20 years take on major subjects that most veterans said, you know, in the end, we are going to prevail. But guess what. They never did. TOM COBURN, even though he may have lost a vote from time to time, in the end, TOM COBURN prevailed.

TOM is one tough guy too. He has been through a lot physically and, boy, what a survivor. I mean we think we have issues to deal with. None of us can imagine what TOM has gone through. When somebody comes up to me as I am walking through an airport—and they will have seen TOM COBURN on television—and they say, "What about this guy COBURN," there are two things that immediately come to mind when I think of TOM COBURN, family and faith.

First, family. TOM and Carolyn have had such a solid marriage. He tried to date her as an eighth grader and she wouldn't go out with him. But he kept pestering her long enough that she finally did and what a great marriage they have had. They have three beautiful daughters and a household of grandchildren whom he absolutely loves to death and likes to spend time with, as opposed to being here.

Second, TOM's faith. There is nobody I have ever met who has a stronger faith than TOM COBURN. He exhibits it on the floor, he exhibits it one on one, he exhibits it in the Prayer Breakfast every Wednesday morning. He is one person who has probably counseled more people in this body, on both sides of the aisle, than anybody other than the Chaplain.

On top of that, he is just a class act. He has been a dear friend. We have spent many hours on the road together,

many hours on the golf course together, and many hours socializing together. There is no finer individual who ever served in the Senate than TOM COBURN. He is one of the things I am truly going to miss about leaving here. But actually, as we have already talked, we will probably now spend more time together than ever since both of us are retiring.

TOM, to you, I thank you for that great friendship and also thank you for what you have done for my children and my grandchildren. You are a great American and you have served this country well.

God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, along with many of my other colleagues, I pay tribute to one of the most decent and principled men I have ever met, Senator TOM COBURN.

Washington is going to miss TOM, but the irony of that is TOM really can't stand Washington. When he first got here, the feeling appeared to be mutual. Some just didn't know what to make of this doctor from Oklahoma—so frequently on the losing end of lopsided votes, so often pressing ahead on his own and never giving up. That was apparent from his days in the House, when we hear he led the only "filibuster" in the House anybody can ever remember. He may have placed more holds than any equivalent Senator in history. He apparently placed a hold on his own bill once.

Fast forward to today. The pundit class has declared TOM COBURN a card-carrying member of the establishment. The rebel who once described himself as a kamikaze pilot has now been branded, incredibly, with a scarlet "E" right on his forehead. It may seem contradictory, but TOM always fought smart battles—the kind you might lose today but win later—and he forged an amazing bond with the people he represents. For TOM that meant spending as much time away from Washington as possible and making himself available when he was home.

TOM published his address, and Oklahomans were never shy about coming over to share their opinions. TOM was never shy about sharing how he felt either. He believed his constituents deserved the truth. He gave it to them absolutely unvarnished, but he did it in a respectful way.

It reminds me of the two posters he has framed on either side of his desk. One says: "NO," N–O. The other says "KNOW," K–N–O–W. That is TOM in a nutshell. It is why TOM has made so many friends on both sides of the aisle. It

is why you can't flip on MSNBC most mornings without seeing him.

I think TOM actually prefers these settings. It is a challenge he relishes. Not only is TOM confident enough to tangle with anyone, he usually wins, and he rarely makes lasting enemies. It is a trait that has served him well, particularly at the beginning of his career.

TOM first came to Washington representing a district that was heavily Democratic. He won a close race that year. I am told he also gained a friend, and that friend was the Democrat he defeated. His opponent's grandson actually ended up joining TOM's staff, which obviously is a great honor.

But it is no picnic being on TOM's staff. TOM works his staff hard. It is difficult even to take a sick day over there. TOM has always got the stethoscope nearby. If the doctor is in, so are you. Yet the people on TOM's team seem to love him. "Once a member of COBURN's family, always a member." That is their motto.

It doesn't mean they love everything about him. Take his handwriting; it is just what you would expect from a guy named Dr. COBURN. It is absolutely awful—a mix of chicken scratch, hieroglyphics, and vocabulary from the extra credit section of an MCAT.

Back in the 1990s one staffer made the mistake of letting TOM take a yellow highlighter back to Oklahoma. TOM spent the entire weekend marking up a massive bill. There were handwritten notes and questions in nearly every margin. It took literally days to decipher any of it. It was like something out of a Dan Brown novel. Needless to say, an office ban on yellow highlighters was quickly implemented.

So the legacy of TOM's former profession gets him in trouble sometimes, but it remains the job he enjoyed most: helping to deliver new lives into the world. It brings a unique perspective to TOM's work in the Senate. It instilled a lasting appreciation for life too.

Even though TOM has stopped delivering babies these days, he still travels back to Oklahoma a lot. There is nowhere he would rather be than his hometown of Muskogee, and there is almost nothing he would rather be doing there than mowing his lawn or eating a sandwich at his favorite barbecue joint or sipping a cold Coors with olives. He prefers these things over almost anything else, except spending time with his grandkids and of course his wife Carolyn.

TOM has known Carolyn since grade school. She has always been the one to keep him balanced and grounded. She

doesn't care that he is a Senator. She frequently reminds him of that too.

Carolyn is also the reason TOM is such good friends with President Obama. Both men came to the Senate the same year. At freshman orientation, Carolyn spotted Michelle Obama from across the room. "She looks like fun," Carolyn said. "Let's sit next to her." The rest, as they say, is history, and it is also remarkable. Because when TOM announced his retirement, warm sentiments poured in from across the political spectrum. It was a day—listen to this—when Barack Obama and Jim DeMint found something to agree on. It must have brought some joy to TOM at such a difficult time.

As he departs the Senate, TOM will leave one battle behind to confront another. We are sending him every best wish in that fight. We are keeping him in our prayers. We know he will prevail, but he is really going to be missed around here. He is just the type of citizen legislator our Founders envisioned.

TOM has poured over more oversight documents than anyone cares to imagine. His "Wastebook" has become an annual phenomenon. It helps drive the conversation on spending. He has led on issues like HIV and malaria.

The Senate will lose a critical leader on intelligence oversight when he leaves. TOM played an invaluable role on the Intelligence Committee, where he brought a unique blend of integrity, analytical rigor, and dogged determination. He served our Nation selflessly, toiling for hours every week in a secure hearing room, learning many sensitive matters he could not discuss with others.

He worked closely with another extraordinary departing colleague, Vice Chair Saxby Chambliss, to ensure that our Nation's intelligence community retains the tools necessary to defend our country.

If anyone thinks our Nation's classified programs aren't overseen rigorously, they certainly haven't met TOM COBURN. He brought a skeptic's eye and a professional determination to the task. His probing lines of questioning earned the respect of his colleagues and helped the intelligence community craft stronger programs, while also reminding us of the value of many other intelligence activities.

Now, TOM has obviously done a lot to earn his reputation as a hawk on the budget, too. His interest there was never about the baubles of office. It is about solutions. That is why TOM actually volunteered for Simpson-Bowles. That is why

he lobbied me to actually take him off—believe it or not—of the Finance Committee.

You always know where TOM stands. I am told he was overseas with a couple of other Senators when a government minister launched into a finger-wagging harangue about our country. TOM couldn't take it after he listened for a few minutes. He cut him off, told the minister what he thought of him, and caught the next flight home. So TOM is literally one of a kind. We are not likely to see another one like this guy.

Here is what former Senator Kyl had to say about him: "TOM is like your conscience. You can try to ignore him, but you know he's right even when you wish he weren't."

Some people may think TOM is a member of the establishment now, but the truth is TOM never changed. Washington changed. America changed.

People recognize the wisdom of his ideas—about leaving a better country to the next generation, about giving Americans the freedom and the opportunity to achieve real meaning and lasting happiness in their lives.

We are going to miss the Senator who actually likes to get his hands dirty, who actually likes to legislate. We are going to miss the Senator who is so devoted to procedure that he sleeps next to Marty Gold's book, and we are going to miss a friend who understands that honest compromise is necessary to achieve anything in a pluralistic society. We are all going to miss TOM a lot. But he can retire with pride, and he should know that we are sending him our best wishes for a speedy recovery and a joyful retirement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I was not at all surprised as I listened to the words of our colleague Senator TOM COBURN that he quoted extensively from the Declaration of Independence and he referred to our Constitution—the founding documents of our great country.

When America's Founders conceived of a nation of citizen legislators, they had leaders like Senator TOM COBURN in mind. Indeed, throughout his service in Congress, he has remained a compassionate physician, a devoted husband and father, a fierce defender of the rights enshrined in our Constitution, and an unwavering opponent of excessive spending.

Senator COBURN may be best known as our most diligent fiscal watchdog, relentlessly hounding wasteful spending. His annual "Wastebook" report is a call for transparency and

accountability in the Federal Government that has guided oversight investigations and policy debates.

The aspect of his service in the Senate that deserves just as much acclaim is his work on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence. Serving with Senator COBURN on both of those committees for many years, I have seen first hand his brilliance, his tenacity, and his determination to strengthen our Nation and the safety of our people. He has a keen understanding of the grave and ever-evolving threats that our Nation faces.

As a citizen legislator, Senator COBURN leads by example and with compassion. With his expertise as a physician, he has been a leader in promoting wellness, disease prevention, combating HIV/AIDS, and advancing biomedical research. When it comes to fiscal responsibility, he walks the walk, having returned more than $1 million from his Senate office budget to the American taxpayers.

We have heard many descriptions of TOM COBURN today, but the word I most associate with him is "integrity." He is a man of the utmost integrity, who always stands tall for his principles and for what he believes in. He sets an example for all of us who seek to serve the public.

On a personal note, I want to thank Senator COBURN for hounding me into joining a Women's Prayer Breakfast that meets each week and has introduced me to a number of wonderful women from the House of Representatives who have become my close friends as well as colleagues. I use the word "hound" appropriately. He mentioned it to me so many times that eventually I gave in and went to one of those breakfasts, and, indeed, it has been a spiritually enriching experience that I never would have had but for TOM continuing to press me to attend.

This past January Senator COBURN announced his intention to leave the Senate, due in part to his deepening health problems—problems he has faced with extraordinary courage. This somber news was counterbalanced by his overarching concern, not for himself, but for his family and for the people of his State and our Nation.

As he now returns to the life of a private citizen, I wish him every success in combating his illness, and I thank him for his truly extraordinary service to our country. To quote from Scripture, I think everyone would agree with these words when it comes to TOM COBURN: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I have no prepared remarks. I am trying to speak right from my heart, and my heart is full.

I want to start off by thanking TOM for the very kind comments he made about serving with me. We met 10 years ago. He was that bomb thrower—still is a little bit—that Saxby talked about when they were elected 20 years ago. I was one of the people who came up, along with Lamar Alexander, George Voinovich, and Mark Pryor, for an orientation for new Senators so that when they got here we could actually spend some time and teach the new guys and gals the ropes.

I remember the first day we convened and put them all in a big circle in Ted Stevens' office, a beautiful office here in the Capitol, and out of those 3 days TOM and Carolyn and Michelle and Barack began to bond and became friends. I didn't know how close friends they were until about 4 or 5 years ago. Barack Obama had given the State of the Union Address. I was sitting on the Republican side. There was a time when we actually went back and forth to try to mix things up. The President finished his speech, and there is no ropeline at those speeches. The President came along to shake hands with people. I was sitting next to TOM, and we walked down so we could say hi to the President.

I will never forget what the President said to him. In just the quiet between the two of them—they embraced, and the President said to him, "Are you still praying for me?" Very quietly, TOM COBURN said, "Every night."

Just like that—they didn't agree on everything, but they were friends. They are friends, and they will always be friends. I hope TOM and I will be as well.

I remember sitting up there where Cory Booker, our new Senator from New Jersey, is sitting now, listening to Mike Enzi talking about how he worked so well with Ted Kennedy, one of the most liberal Democrats in the Senate, and Mike Enzi, one of the most conservative—and how they got extraordinary amounts of stuff done.

I just want to say that the legislation coming out of our committee—and Senator Collins has led that committee before—is moving through this body and the House—it is really pretty amazing—to strengthen our cyberdefenses, to take the chemical facility antiterrorism law that Susan Collins authored and to make it better and make it real, to better protect our Nation's information from attacks from all over

the world, to try to make our Postal Service not just relevant and not just hanging on but actually vibrant and real.

But that day, Mike Enzi talked about the 80/20 rule with Ted Kennedy. He said, "Ted Kennedy and I agree on about 80 percent of the stuff, and we disagree on 20 percent. He and I decided to focus on the 80 percent we agreed on and set aside the 20 percent we didn't agree on to another day."

I call that the "Enzi rule," and that has helped guide me here in the Senate, and it certainly has helped to guide me in the work I have been privileged to do with Dr. COBURN.

When I became chairman of the committee about 2 years ago and Dr. COBURN was going to be the ranking member of the committee, somebody asked me what it was going to be like. "How are you going to work with this guy?"

I said, "It is going to be a little like a marriage. You have to work at it every day. Everybody has to give and meet somewhere in the middle."

I love to ask people who have been married a long time what the secret is for being married a long time. Some of you have maybe heard me talk about this. I get some really hilarious answers but also some really terrific and insightful answers.

I think the best one I have ever gotten when I asked what is the secret for being married 40, 50, 60, 70 years is the two c's. It is not COBURN and Carper. It is the two c's: communicate and compromise. That is not only the secret for a vibrant, long marriage for two people; it is a secret for a vibrant democracy.

I believe the reason why TOM and I have had this partnership that I think has been productive is, one, we surround ourselves with people—certainly for me—smarter than us. The second thing is we believe in communicating, we believe in compromising, and we believe in collaborating. I think the American people are the beneficiaries of that.

We have a reception later today for TOM, and I hope he comes. We will have the opportunity to say some more things, as well. He is not the kind of person who likes to be praised, so this is probably punishment. There is a verse in the Scriptures talking about heaping with praise, pouring praise all over. This is probably a little like that. But I want to close with this. His words on the Bowles-Simpson Commission are for the ages, and I hope we will never walk away from the lessons he showed us with his courage in supporting that work and helping to craft that work.

There are words in the Scriptures, in Matthew 25, that talk about the least of these in our society. When I was sick, when I was hungry, when I was thirsty, when I was naked, when I was in prison—those are the questions. The answer: If you have done it to the least of these, you have done it also to Me.

Senator COBURN believes we have a moral responsibility, a moral obligation to the least of these in our society. He also believes we have a fiscal obligation, a fiscal imperative to meet that moral obligation in a fiscally responsible way. I think those two ideas guide him in his work, and, frankly, it is an inspiration to me.

Last word. Leaders should be humble, not haughty. Leaders should lead by our example, not "do as I say" but "do as I do." Leaders should have the heart of a servant. Leaders should have the courage to stay out of step when everyone else is marching to the wrong tune. Leaders ought to be committed to doing what is right, not what is easy. Leaders should treat other people the way they want to be treated. TOM has offended just about everybody in this body, but he always comes back and apologizes, and he has already done it here today. Leaders should focus on excellence in everything they do. If it isn't perfect, make it better. It is in the preamble of the Constitution—"in order to form a more perfect Union." That defines him. Finally, if you think you are right and you know you are right, never give up. That is what a leader should be about.

For the years he served here and for a long time before that and for a long time to come, he has been that leader, and I feel lucky to say he is my friend.

God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I feel surrounded by friends and colleagues who are getting ready to leave, and being part of that original class 20 years ago, there is one thing that I have learned is unique in Washington. I am next to two people who are voluntarily leaving. The toughest decision a Member of Congress ever makes is to leave this institution voluntarily. I know that for my two friends and my third one, Mike Johanns, this was not easy. It is not easy to stand here and know that in January they are not going to be here any longer, because they are truly friends, and that is tough.

To say that TOM COBURN can be intimidating I think is an understatement, and I think that comes because his breadth of knowledge based upon his experiences in life enables him to be an expert on a lot of issues.

With that in mind, I remember the day TOM sat down—we were leaving that week, and I said, "What are you going to do this weekend?" And he said, "Well, Sarah's future fiance is coming to sit down with me to find out whether he can marry my daughter." I looked at him and thought, I would hate to be that young man.

Well, the truth is that TOM is a very intimidating guy. He plays hard, and he plays to win.

There is not an individual I know who is more fair and more compassionate than TOM COBURN. I remember the day the Bush administration wanted to extend the PEPFAR Program—the AIDS in Africa program—and when TOM found out that they were going to relax the requirement on how many people were treated and that more money would go to education than to actually saving lives, he grabbed me and he said, "We can't let this stand. We've got to fight it. We've got to change it." It was TOM COBURN who blocked the reauthorization of President Bush's PEPFAR plan for 6 months—a Republican President, a Republican Senator. Why? On principle.

TOM COBURN, if you didn't know it before this speech today, has never done anything in this institution or in life that wasn't based upon principle. No Member of Congress should ever question whether he thinks he is right because if he didn't think he was right, he wouldn't fight so hard.

It is particularly difficult for me to say goodbye to TOM. We truly are legislative partners. We fought a lot of battles for a long time, and inherently we have a level of trust in each other that I would actually sign on to legislation that I had no idea what it did; I just knew that in that foxhole he needed somebody he could count on, and I knew when he signed on to something that I needed, that there was always somebody there to cover my back.

The institution is losing something significant when we no longer have that legislative expertise TOM COBURN represents.

There are a lot of descriptions that people have used today and that people will use in the future to describe TOM COBURN, but I would boil it down to two words that I think best describe him: TOM COBURN is a good man. In every

sense of the word, he is a good man. This institution will lose a great leader when TOM COBURN retires.

Godspeed, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I will be very brief. I know people are waiting to speak.

I guess it would surprise the world in general to know that TOM COBURN and I are true friends, but we are. He is a man of integrity above all.

You don't have to agree with someone—we probably disagree on 90 percent of all the issues—to trust someone's integrity, to trust someone's handshake, to trust someone that if you make a good argument, understanding their values, they will come along. That is just what TOM COBURN has done time and time again with this Senator from New York and countless others on the other side of the aisle.

On so many issues where TOM was opposed, I said, "Let's just sit down and let me give you the logic and then you will make your own judgment." I knew that would be good enough. Sometimes it didn't work. Sometimes he disagreed. But he always sat and listened. He always asked perceptive questions, not "gotcha" questions. He was trying to figure it out.

Of course the most well known was when we negotiated on the Zadroga bill. Thousands of New Yorkers had rushed to the Towers and gotten poison in their lungs and their gastrointestinal systems, and we wanted to help them. We thought they were just like our veterans. TOM knew it was a big expense. He sat with us, listened, made suggestions to make it leaner and trimmer, and then supported the bill. So right now there are people alive throughout the New York area, heroes, because of the integrity of that man from Oklahoma.

TOM, I will miss you. This body will miss you. Regardless of our ideological views and perceptions, we will miss you. You are a great American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. First of all, there is not a whole lot that needs to be said that hasn't been said, but one thing I want to say to my dear friend TOM COBURN is that he made Washington happen for me, if you will. He made it more tolerable. I had a hard time in transitioning. TOM reached out. He saw

that. We talked about this before, but TOM made this place more palatable.

TOM, you have expanded my area of friendships with more people than you know and the right type of people, and I appreciate it I think more than you even know.

I will end with this, and I don't mean to say a lot. I have been asked about TOM COBURN. How would I explain him? TOM COBURN's got soul. I mean that from the bottom of my heart, brother. You have soul, and I thank you for what soul you brought to this place.

God bless.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Fourteen years ago I entered the House of Representatives. I had been elected, but before I took office, I traveled to Washington, and Matt Salmon, the Congressman I was replacing, said, "Is there anybody you want to meet?" And I said, "TOM COBURN." I had watched from afar what he had done on the Appropriations Committee and the stands he had taken, and I admired him. I went and visited with him in his office while he was packing up his stuff. I will never forget that. I have to say that today I admire him even more than I did then, having watched him go back into the private sector and then enter the Senate.

Columnist George Will said TOM COBURN was the most dangerous creature that could come into the Senate. Why? Because he is simply uninterested in being popular. I think that is certainly true. But if he didn't care about it, it happened anyway. I have news for TOM. As you can see around, he has become popular. But one thing he never managed to achieve, if he sought it, was becoming partisan. When you hear those across the aisle lavish praise on this man, realize that was never one of his goals and never happened, much to his credit.

I thank you and your staff for your generosity over the years to me and my staff and for what you have done for this institution, for your colleagues, and for me personally.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I probably have known TOM for the least length of time of anybody in this Chamber, and I want to offer some comments from the perspective of only 2 years and really more like a year and a half since we became friends and colleagues.

I have seen Senator COBURN in two contexts—one is intelligence and the other is faith. He and I serve on the Intelligence Committee. We sit directly across from each other. That committee is generally a nonpartisan one, but it is also one where all the meetings generally are closed. There is no press. You can really take the measure of someone when they ask questions and participate in a debate in that forum.

His questions always struck me as the questions I wished I had asked, and they struck me as the questions I am sure the people of America would have wanted asked. They were penetrating, they cut through obfuscation, and they were always meaningful and helped us move toward the important work that committee has to accomplish.

I have also become acquainted with him through our faith and participation in the Wednesday Prayer Breakfasts, and more recently, for reasons that I am not entirely sure, he has invited me to join him on Tuesday evenings for dinners on the other side of the Capitol that have been very meaningful.

For the 9 years before I came here, I taught a course called "Leaders and Leadership," and I taught it at a couple of colleges in Maine. I taught it really as much for myself as for my students because I wanted to try to understand what leadership was, and I thought if I signed on to teach it, I would have to learn something about it. Every year what we did was go through and discuss the stories of great leaders throughout history, some well known and some not so well known. We always started with Ernest Shackleton. We talked about Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Thatcher and Martin Luther King and Lincoln and Churchill. We always tried to define the qualities that make a leader, and there are lots of them—perseverance, communication, vision, teamwork, trust—but the last one on the list and the one that brings me back to TOM is always character. It is an indefinable quality. You cannot really put a specific definition to it, but people like Lincoln had it, Ernest Shackleton had it, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain from Maine had it, Eleanor Roosevelt had it. It involves a combination of qualities that TOM embodies, and almost all of them have been mentioned here today—integrity, intelligence, honesty, faith, belief in principle, and daring to stand for principle. It is the hardest thing to teach, but it is the easiest thing to see. The reason I felt so privileged to get to know this man for such a short period of time is that he has shown me what character is all about.

TOM, it is one of the great joys of my life to have had these 2 years to get to know you, if only slightly. It is one of the great sadnesses of my life that it has only been 2 years.

Godspeed, TOM. You have made a difference for this country that we all love and honor and respect. Thank you for your service and for sharing your great character with all of us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. I was elected in a special election 16 years ago. I was No. 435 in the House of Representatives, so I did what my father told me to do when I went into business. He said, "Son, sit in the back of the room, listen to people who are smart, pay attention to them, and do what the smart people do."

After 2 weeks of listening to TOM COBURN, I said no human being could know as much about everything as this guy named COBURN. In 16 years, I have come to believe, yes, there is one who knows about everything he speaks of, and that is TOM COBURN.

Senator COBURN has been a great role model for me. The Senator from Oklahoma has taught me many great lessons, and I have learned a lot from him.

The greatest evangelists in life are those who witness their faith, and TOM COBURN is a true witness for his faith and has changed the lives of many people. I have enjoyed, as much as anything, our walk with faith at the Prayer Breakfasts, in private meetings, and what we have shared together.

Last, every Christmas I try to give my grandchildren who can read something to read as a little treasury to put in their book to save so that when they grow up, they can refer to great things and great historical statements that have been made. I doubt if there has ever been a better statement made on the floor of the Senate about our heritage, our country, our future, and our hopes than TOM COBURN has said today. It will be required reading for my grandchildren this Christmas, and I can assure you that I am a better man for having served with TOM COBURN, the great Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

God bless you, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. The other Senator from Oklahoma.

I wish to make some unscripted comments, but sincere and from the heart. I hope I am accurate when I say this, that I think in some respect I discovered TOM COBURN. I suspect that TOM and I are the only two who have ever been to Adair, OK. I remember hearing that there was a conservative doctor from Muskogee. I remember calling him up at that time and asking him to run for the House of Representatives, which he did. He kept his commitments and did everything he was supposed to do. I always remember that day.

As Senator COBURN knows, we have a place my wife and I built on a big lake in Oklahoma back in 1962—a long time ago. When I drive up there, I go through Adair, and I go by that little sheltered area that is half torn down now. They tore down the biggest bank in town. Every time I go by there, I have to say I recall meeting for the first time with a young doctor named TOM COBURN.

I regret to say there are times in our service together when we have not been in agreement on specific issues, and I think we have a characteristic in common. I think we are both kind of bullheaded, which has created some temporary hard feelings, but there is one thing that overshadows that. Jesus has a family, and His family has a lot of people in it. Some are here in this room. TOM COBURN and I are brothers.

In the 20 years I have been here in the Senate, I don't believe I heard a speech that was as touching and sincere as the speech I heard from my junior Senator a few minutes ago.

I really believe that in spite of all the things that have happened—and there were some differences, but they were minor—that he never ceased to be my brother, and I want to ask the Senator right now to forgive me for the times I have perhaps said something unintentionally that was not always right and was not always from the heart. But I want my junior Senator to know that I sincerely love him and am going to be hurting with him with the troubles he has right now, or might have in the future, and will sorely miss him in this body.

I ask that the Record show that I sincerely love my brother, Senator COBURN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. I have been sitting here listening to the respect and the emotion of people recognizing the service of

TOM COBURN. I don't have a prepared speech, but I second everything that has been said about TOM.

My emotions well up in me when I think about TOM. TOM exhibits the conviction that I wish I had more of, TOM exhibits the commitment I wish I had more of, and he exhibits the courage I wish I had more of.

I remember my very dear friend Chuck Olson made this statement, "Lord, show me the kind of person You would like me to be and give me the strength to be that person."

I feel like God has given a gift to the Senate, and certainly a gift to me, by simply saying, take a look at TOM COBURN. Look at the qualities he exhibits and his commitment to faith. He is a pretty good model to follow.

Thank you, TOM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. I came down to give my farewell remarks, but before I do, I have to make a comment about Senator COBURN. Senator COBURN is absolutely what many people said about his word. Yesterday was an example of that when he resolved an issue.

There is always activity after the Senate, and I wish my friend from Oklahoma the best.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to make some remarks about Senator COBURN.

TOM COBURN is one of the more remarkable Senators who have served in this body—certainly since I have been here. He is a man with absolute courage, conviction, and dedication to make this country better. He didn't come here to go through the job and go through the motions; he came here to invest his great skills and his great intellectual ability and to pour his drive and effort into making America a better place. It is very special. It is unusual. I have not seen anything like it, as I said, since I have been here.

I always had great reluctance to disagree or oppose anything TOM offered. They were not always perfect, but basically I opposed them so seldom because I agreed with him time and time again. I always hated to vote no because I knew he had studied the issue, understood it, and was doing what he believed was right.

His whole philosophy and approach to government, had it been more effectively followed by other Members of this body, would have led us to a better country. To support what he said, I think in a way, was supporting high ideals for America.

I want to say I am going to miss him. People have no idea how many times he has stopped or altered bad legislation to make it better and less problematic and more principled. He believes that ours is a constitutionally limited government. He didn't just believe that, he acted on it and has acted on it consistently.

I understand, and I have no doubt of this—we don't need to run a test—but I understand and have no doubt that he has offered more amendments since I have been in the Senate than any other Senator. They have been amendments to stop waste, fraud, and abuse, to make the government more efficient, leaner, to consolidate multiple programs that should be consolidated for efficiency.

He has worked across the aisle on a host of issues. He has sought bipartisan support for matters that are small and large. It is remarkable. I have to say that we are going to lose someone who is of great value. He would easily have been reelected had he run again.

I remember him saying one time—and this is his philosophy—if you want to be reelected, don't worry about being reelected, just do the right thing, and you won't have any difficulties. He never had any difficulties in his election, because people trusted him. They knew every day, night and day, long hours, whatever, he was working to advance the common interest of our country. They trusted that he was not seduced, bought out, compromised by the powers that be in Washington, DC, and he remained true to those who sent him here.

I would say this: Part of the strength he has—as a matter of fact, maybe the greatest part of his strength is his faith. He is intelligent, sophisticated, knowledgeable, a scientist, a doctor, but a man of simple Christian faith which impacts his life as much as anybody in this body. He understands the true meaning of life, and he gives himself to others in a most remarkable way.

Thank you, and colleagues, for the opportunity for me to share these remarks. We are going to miss our friend TOM COBURN, who is going to object to those bills that require a lot of effort to make them better or stop some that are so bad they cannot be passed. A lot of us are going to have to pick up the slack.

Maybe TOM would say, "What are you doing down here, Jeff, wasting time talking about me when you ought to be studying this bill and finding some of the bogus spending that is in it? You should be spending your time fixing it."

But every now and then I think we should stop and recognize an extraordinary life and an extraordinary Senator.

I wanted to share these remarks.

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

FRIDAY, *December 12, 2014*

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I will now speak very briefly about my retiring colleagues and then turn it over to the Senator from Florida. I promise I will be brief.

Everybody will face retirement, voluntarily or involuntarily. There will be a last vote to cast and a last speech to make. Only God knows when that day comes because we are all just one car wreck away from ending our careers.

To the retiring Members, I have had the pleasure of serving with you, and I know you all. You did what you thought was best for our country and your State, and what more could anyone ask? My good friend Mark Pryor, who tried to find common ground at a time when it is hard to find. Mary Landrieu, who would drill under the Capitol if she thought it would help American energy independence. We have good friends on the other side, and I will miss you, and I wish you well. But I would like very briefly to speak about four. . . .

To TOM COBURN, when I grow up, I want to be like TOM. I don't see that happening anytime soon, me growing up. TOM COBURN has been at this for 20 years. We came in together. He was one of the first people I met in the freshman class of 1995—the 1994 Contract with America class. He was full of ideas and determination from the first day I met him until the very last day he leaves.

I cannot tell you, TOM, how proud I am to call you my friend. You and Carolyn have become dear friends, and you, my friend, have changed this body for the better. You had an awesome staff, and you will be missed, but what you contributed to the Senate will last long after I am gone, and we will all be the better. . . .

To all of you, Godspeed. I wish you nothing but the best.

I am fortunate enough to go into my third term. To my colleagues, as we go into the next Congress, let's try to do better. I know we can. If we do, all boats will rise.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I pay tribute to my friend TOM COBURN as he prepares to leave the Senate. For 10

years, TOM has served the people of Oklahoma as their junior Senator. He is a man of principle and fierce determination. He has shown himself willing time and again to stand up to special interests and to fight for what he believes in. He will be missed.

Senator COBURN was born in Casper, WY, in 1948, and was raised in Muskogee, OK. His father Orin was a prominent optician and the founder of Coburn Optical Industries. TOM attended college at Oklahoma State University, where he graduated with a degree in accounting. From 1970 to 1978 he was a manufacturing manager at his family's company. After a bout with cancer, TOM returned to school to become a physician, graduating in 1983 from the University of Oklahoma Medical School. Following his residency, TOM moved back to Muskogee to practice family medicine and obstetrics. He has personally delivered more than 4,000 babies.

Senator COBURN began his career in public service in 1994, when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Oklahoma. He served in the House for 6 years, then went back to Muskogee to resume his medical practice. Three years later, in 2004, TOM was elected to the U.S. Senate to fill the seat being vacated by retiring Senator Don Nickles. Here in the Senate he has served with distinction on a number of important committees, including the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, of which he is the ranking member.

Since first arriving in Congress, Senator COBURN has been a strong proponent of fiscal restraint. His efforts to fight deficit spending, pork barrel projects, and earmarks earned him the nickname "Dr. No." I have always thought this nickname was a compliment to TOM. It shows he is willing to stand up against powerful interests in defense of his principles, and that he takes seriously the problems of unnecessary spending and long-term debt. Passing a balanced budget amendment has been a priority of mine for many years, and I have been glad to count TOM as a strong ally in that effort.

I have also been fortunate to work with Senator COBURN on a number of other issues during his time in the Senate. Earlier this year, TOM and I, along with Senator Richard Burr, introduced the Patient CARE Act, a market-based alternative to Obamacare. TOM and I have also worked together to fight waste and corruption at the Department of Health and Human Services and to reinvigorate the States' roles in meeting transportation, safety, and other needs.

Madam President, Senator COBURN is an honorable and steadfast man. He has served his country well. I wish him, his wife Carolyn, and their family the very best.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, at the close of each session of Congress it is our tradition to take a moment to express our appreciation and say goodbye to those of our colleagues who will be retiring at the session's close. It is always a bittersweet moment to reflect on the important contributions our friends have made as they worked so hard to represent their States and our Nation.

Such an individual is TOM COBURN and that is just one of the reasons why we will miss him. TOM always has and always will be a strong voice for conservative values and principles. There are not many who can express their beliefs with the same kind of clarity and power he brings to the issues the Senate takes up for deliberations.

I will always believe that TOM has been so successful in his career as a political leader and a doctor because he began his life with one of the greatest of all advantages—he was born in Wyoming, in Casper. That was not all. He graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in accounting. As an accountant myself I was not surprised by that. His love of accounting, his fondness for numbers and details, and his Wyoming birth all help to explain his power of persuasion.

I am kidding about that but one thing that is true about his background is how his love of numbers and his understanding of budgets and accounting practices has helped him to understand the financial problems we currently face as a nation and the importance of taking action to address them before they get so far out of hand we will be jeopardizing the future of our children and our grandchildren.

That would have never happened on TOM's watch. Grandfathers are like that. With one eye on the bottom line and the other on the future of our Nation, TOM has developed an amazing knack for finding ways to cut waste and save money, time, and effort. For TOM it is clear, if it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.

His insight and his immediate grasp of the essence of so many controversial and complicated issues has made him a great asset on the committees on which he has served. His willingness to get involved and lead on some pretty difficult issues has enabled him to make a difference that will be remembered around here for quite a while.

In our deliberations one of TOM's great weapons has been his mastery and understanding of the facts surrounding his positions on the issues we have taken up in committee and on the floor. He is an excellent speaker and when he talks we are all very attentive. The reason why is simple. If you agree with him you want to know what his views are so you will be able to strengthen your own arguments on the bill with some of his reflections and recommendations. If you disagree with him you will still want to hear him speak so you will know what the toughest arguments are you will be faced with during our deliberations.

No matter what side you are on, it is rare that anyone has ever questioned his facts. They may not like them—but you cannot avoid acknowledging them.

In addition, as a father, a grandfather, and a physician, TOM has been an outspoken advocate on health and medical issues. During his career he has worked to increase the access of seniors to the health care services they need. He has also been active in efforts to try to control health care costs and protect the right to life of the unborn.

He has such a strong kinship with the delegations of the West because TOM has a strong and heartfelt understanding of the challenges of our urban communities. I have often said one of our great battles here in Washington is to help our colleagues get a deeper understanding of the difference in life in the large eastern cities and the smaller rural communities of the West. It is a crucial difference that must be understood to get a better sense of what is needed to help both our rural and urban communities to grow and prosper.

In the next session I know we will miss him, his understanding of our conservative values and principles and his commitment to this generation and the next—and beyond. TOM knows that if future generations are to have it as good as we have we will all have to learn to get along with a little less.

Now TOM is closing that great chapter of his life that contains his service in the House and the Senate. It has not been easy. The House and Senate are very different places in which to work—and make progress—but TOM has managed to do it—and he has the results to show for his efforts.

Thank you, TOM, for all you have done to make our Nation a better place to live. We are grateful for your service, for your vision for America and most of all, your commitment to the future of Oklahoma and our Nation. Please keep in touch with us. I am going to keep your number on speed dial in

my office so I'll have it when one of those days comes along when I need a thoughtful word or two for a debate or a committee session. As the saying goes, facts are tough and powerful things and when it comes to those issues in which he truly believes, so is TOM COBURN.

MONDAY, *December 15, 2014*

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, while several Members of this Senate class will be retiring this year at the end of their terms, another Senator will also be taking his leave of this Chamber, in the midst of his current term. For a decade, Senator TOM COBURN has represented his constituents in Oklahoma with steadfast dedication and perseverance. He and I have not always agreed, but I have always respected and admired his commitment to his principles.

Senator COBURN has built a record and reputation as a fiscal hawk, reminiscent in some ways of the role that the late Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio assumed for many years in the Senate. Senator COBURN can be a tough bargainer, and sometimes he has chosen not to seek or accept compromise at all. But he also has shown the ability to work across the aisle, whether on reducing government spending or promoting transparency in government. In the first Congress in which he served in the Senate, he partnered with then-Senator Barack Obama and others to author the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, which established a public, online database detailing Federal spending. For many years he served as an active member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where we worked together on such policy issues as patent reform, copyright protections, and support for law enforcement.

Senator COBURN is a longtime public servant for the State of Oklahoma. Members retire from Congress for a host of reasons, and I know Senator COBURN's retirement has been hastened. He has left his mark on this institution, and I wish him, his wife Carolyn, their three daughters and their grandchildren good health and all the best in TOM COBURN's retirement from the Senate.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, as we wind down the final days of the 113th Congress, it is a good time both to reflect on the past and to look toward the future. I have been very moved as I listened to the farewell speeches of our departing Senators, and I wish I had time to pay tribute to each one of them. They have all been wonderful colleagues, and I enjoyed working with and getting to know every one of them. I wish them all the very best in all their future endeavors. They will most certainly be missed. . . .

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to celebrate and thank the 13 outgoing Senators who have worked tirelessly to represent their home States in the Senate: Senator Mark Begich, Senator Saxby Chambliss, Senator TOM COBURN, Senator Kay Hagan, Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Mike Johanns, Senator Tim Johnson, Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator Carl Levin, Senator Mark Pryor, Senator Jay Rockefeller, Senator Mark Udall, and Senator John Walsh.

I have worked side by side with these men and women for years—some for decades—and witnessed first hand their extraordinary commitment to public service and to the people they so proudly represent.

Even when we didn't see eye to eye on every issue, I always deeply respected and admired their service to our Nation and their dedication to fight for what they believe in.

It has been a privilege to serve alongside each and every one of these extraordinary colleagues. I will miss their leadership and their friendship, and I wish them all the best as they embark on the next chapter.

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