

while advocating fiscal responsibility. He has been a proponent for improvement in our Nation's public schools, fighting for more teachers, increased school construction, and school safety. He has also been a champion against discrimination. He led the fight to end injustice to African American farmers who faced discrimination by the Agriculture Department and voted against moves to end affirmative action programs by the Federal Government. In all these things, he showed the same dedication to his country in a legislative position that he had shown to his State in his executive position as Governor, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, Foreign Relations and Finance Committees, and the Joint Economic Committee and Select Committee on Intelligence. He served this body, the Senate, so well, and in turn our whole Nation.

I think of the tough political battles he has faced. I think of the difficult votes during his time in office, how he had to balance the interests of his State with the well-being of the Nation. But I can remember so many times on this floor when a vote would come up where, politically, CHUCK ROBB could have ducked and ran and voted a different way. He did not, any more than he would have when he was in combat in Vietnam. He would stay on the floor, he would state his position, and you would see the marine; you would see the character; you would see the steel. He would stand up and do what his conscience told him was the right thing.

Mr. President, I pay tribute to a man I have worked with and admired since he came to the Senate over twelve years ago. As only the fourth person from the state of Virginia to serve as both Governor and U.S. Senator CHUCK ROBB came to Washington ready to build on a distinguished career in public service. Beginning in 1961 when he joined the Marines, and through his days as an infantry company commander in Vietnam, CHUCK ROBB demonstrated the kind of determination and stamina that would characterize his political career. He later served Virginia as Lieutenant Governor and Governor before being elected to the United States Senate.

During his time here in Washington he has shown his dedication and concern for our men and women in the military, fighting for a strong defense while advocating fiscal responsibility. He has been a proponent for improving our nation's public schools, fighting for more teachers, increased school construction and school safety. He has also been a champion in the battle to end discrimination. He led the fight to bring justice to African American farmers who had faced discrimination by the Agriculture Department, and he voted against a move to end affirmative action programs by the federal government. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, Foreign Relations, Finance Committee, the

Joint Economic Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence he has served the Senate well.

Senator ROBB has faced several tough political battles and cast many difficult votes during his time in office—all the while he has been determined to balance the interests of his state with the well-being of the nation.

It has been an honor and privilege to work with him over the last years. I know he is going to be sorely missed by our colleagues in the Senate.

I will miss having the chance to get advice and encouragement from him on the Senate floor, but I know I will still have that available to me throughout the remaining years of my Senate career.

Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation now, as we go down to these waning hours and we hear the choral group downstairs practicing Christmas carols?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I would like to advise the Senator from Vermont that earlier the Senate had been conducting morning business. That order has expired.

Mr. LEAHY. Is my understanding correct, though, that I am still able to maintain the floor without slowing down the vital business of the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. LEAHY. Am I also correct there is no particular vital business pending at the moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At the moment, the Senator is correct.

WRAPPING UP THE SESSION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, you know I think the world of all my colleagues. The distinguished Chair right now is one of my best friends in the Senate and one who deserves congratulations on—actually, they didn't have to have an election in his State; he wins by so much. I love being with him, as I do my dear friend from Nevada, the deputy Democratic whip. But I hope that neither of my colleagues takes it at all personally when I say I would probably rather be at home with my family at this time of the year. But then I suspect they would, too. I hope this means we are soon to wrap things up, possibly this evening or Sunday or Monday or sometime. We seem to be in a situation where wrapping up the session is like wrapping up the Presidential election this year. I am beginning to feel a little bit like a hanging chad of some sort.

I thought of some of the other terms that have been used, but I am afraid sometime somebody might pull that out of context and I will be reminded that I will not be forgiven for what I may say because of my Irish nature.

Let us hope we can wrap it up. I say that also for the sake of the President-elect and the leadership, both Republican and Democrat, in the Senate. All of us have a lot of work to do before January 3 when the Senate comes back

into session with a number of new Senators and in a unique situation of a 50-50 Senate.

Governor Bush and former Secretary Cheney need time to work with the Republicans in the Senate and the House as they put together their administration. Of course, I hope and expect they will also be in contact with those of us on this side of the aisle. There is a lot facing this Nation, and we have to work on that.

VISIT TO IRELAND

I was privileged this week to spend 48 hours out of the country with some other Members of the Senate and the House accompanying President Clinton on a visit to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It was remarkable to see how people reacted to the President. He was accompanied by one of our Senators-elect, in this case the Senator-elect from New York, HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, although I think she was there more in her capacity as First Lady.

It was interesting to see the reaction of the people in Ireland, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, both in the Catholic community and the Protestant community. The President was greeted as he should be, as a hero in Ireland because more than any President perhaps since John Fitzgerald Kennedy, he has shown a real interest in Ireland.

He has become personally and intimately involved in trying to stop the sectarian damage, carnage, killings, and murders in Northern Ireland. He sent our distinguished former colleague and former majority leader of the Senate, George Mitchell, on countless trips to Northern Ireland helping to broker the peace agreement which became known as the Good Friday accords.

Whether it was standing in the small town on the northern border of the Republic of Ireland, bordering Northern Ireland, a town of just a few thousand people but where 50,000 to 60,000 people from the whole area came and stood in the cold, the rain, and the fog for hour after hour waiting for the President and those accompanying him to arrive, and then giving him a hero's welcome and not wanting him to leave.

I saw the faces of those people. I saw the children who looked out to him with hope in their eyes. I saw the older people who said he sought to bring prosperity to this area because he helped us stop the fighting that goes back and forth across the border. He has brought hope for our children and grandchildren.

I saw the same thing in Northern Ireland in Belfast the next day where those who had been sworn enemies a few years ago were joining in meetings with the President, encouraging him to stay involved and asking him to please come back even after his Presidency. It had to be an emotional time for President Clinton, but it was very much for the people there.

I talked with several who again told me he brought hope for them and

brought an understanding that their children could live in a world they had not known, a world where they could go to school, where they would not be defined by their religion but defined by who they are.

What an improvement that was and how grateful I am for the opportunity to have been there, not just as an Irish American but one who holds deeply our sense of freedom, our sense of democracy, and our sense that people do not get excluded because of their religious faith or their ethnic background or who their parents were but are included because they are human beings and because they have intrinsic worth.

RETIREMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD H. BRYAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with my dear friend from Nevada, Senator REID, on the floor, I want to talk about his colleague, also my friend, RICHARD BRYAN, who announced his plans to retire from the Senate. When he did, he said very simply and earnestly: It's time to come home.

I have known DICK and Bonnie BRYAN since they came here. I say DICK and Bonnie BRYAN because, like Marcelle and me, we think of them as one person because usually at events outside work, when you see one you see the other. In fact, that is what I cherish about both my colleagues from Nevada. I cherish their family life.

DICK said it is time to go home, and I am disappointed to learn we are going to lose a good humored and skillful colleague. As a Vermonter, I have to empathize with that deep-rooted impulse to go home. Everything DICK BRYAN has accomplished here paves the way for his return to a better Nevada, something all of us hope for because all of us will leave this body at one time or another.

Most of the time, the strength of our Nation stood resolutely with the welfare of Nevada in Senator BRYAN's mind. As Democratic cochair of the Senate National Guard Caucus, he blocked unwise and unjustifiable cuts in our citizen-soldier force. He brought us together so the Guard's voice could be heard, and his persistence has positioned this invaluable force to prepare for the new, continually emerging strategic landscape. Under his watch, Nellis Air Force Base became a national treasure, where our best, most skilled pilots mastered the art of war so that our country would never have to call on them for the real thing.

Senator BRYAN guaranteed the credibility of the institution of the Senate. I think of the Senate as being the conscience of the Nation, and we should be the guardians of it. Those who abused the public's trust and the powers of office, as Senators knew they would, received intense scrutiny when Senator BRYAN chaired the Ethics Committee in 1993 and 1994. None of us will forget his calm and dexterous handling of numerous sensitive investigations, some-

thing he could do because he was trusted by both Republicans and Democrats to do the right thing.

It had to be one of the most difficult times, requiring arduous work by any Senator, but never once did any of us hear Senator BRYAN complain about the difficult task, nor did he swerve from the steady course toward fairness and justice.

Indeed, in so many areas, RICHARD BRYAN made a difference whether in preserving the fragile desert environment or modernizing our commercial aviation system. The list is long, and if he stayed, he would have accomplished even more.

Senator BRYAN has made a choice that deserves only accolades and respect. He is going home, and Nevada is a fortunate State for it. It is also fortunate that he has left his partner, HARRY REID, here to carry on his battles. My wife Marcelle and I wish DICK and his wife Bonnie all the best, but I am going to miss some of our late night conversations and some of the humor and good will he has shown to all Senators.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have just spoken to Senator DASCHLE. We have been communicating with our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol. I understand the Senate will shortly receive from the House the appropriations bill containing the final appropriations measures, and we hope to have some agreement on how to proceed shortly.

We will notify Senators and hotline that information. Once Senator DASCHLE arrives on the floor, hopefully we can move forward with that. In the meantime, there are just a couple of bits of information for our colleagues about the remainder of this session and the dates for activities we will have next year.

Of course, we hope to have the sine die adjournment resolution here shortly.

Senator DASCHLE and I jointly will have resolutions thanking the officers of the Senate, the staff of the Senate who do just a magnificent job on our behalf and on behalf of the American people quite often during long and weird hours. They really do a magnificent job, and we thank all of them for what they do.

Also, I see Senator REID is here, the assistant Democratic leader. He has really made a difference since he has been in his leadership position. He is

always calm and always diligent. He works on both sides of the aisle. I want to acknowledge that and thank him for all of his work. I will not overdo it now because I don't want to get him into trouble as we approach the last few minutes of the session.

I want to inform the Members of some important dates and events of interest concerning the beginning of the 107th Congress. I see Senator DASCHLE is here. He can communicate with the staff. I will run over these dates quickly, and then we can visit.

Of course, at 12 noon on Wednesday, January 3, the 107th Congress will convene with an immediate live quorum, to be followed by the swearing-in ceremonies for the newly elected Senators.

I want to emphasize that. That is on January 3. It is at 12 noon. There will be a live quorum, and all Senators are required by law, if they want to be sworn in and receive pay, to be here for that occasion.

On Saturday, January 6, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the official counting of the electoral college votes.

The Senate has passed a resolution that would move that to January 5, which would be a Friday, instead of Saturday, January 6. The House has not yet passed that resolution. But they have indicated that they may pass a resolution changing the date to Friday, January 5, for the counting of the electoral college votes. We will let all of our colleagues know exactly about that.

I believe we are required to proceed at 1 p.m. on either Friday, January 5, or, as it now stands, January 6. We will make that clear later on. Senators will be notified if there is a date change, if and when it is confirmed.

Of course, Inauguration of the 43rd President of the United States will occur at 12 noon on Saturday, January 20.

Furthermore, because a Senate committee is a continuing body, committees may begin working on committee nominations on January 5 or 6. Senator DASCHLE and I will be working on that. But there is the possibility, between January 3 and the Inauguration, that there could be some committee hearings on nominations. We will have to work through that. Of course, it will depend on the receipt of those nominations once the investigations have been completed. We will work through what committees and how that will be handled. Members who might be involved will be notified as early as possible, and hopefully that will be even before the end of the year.

Votes on confirmations may take place even on Saturday, January 20. I believe that has been the case in the past—if not January 20, certainly beginning on Monday, January 22. We will want to move forward very quickly on actually confirming the nominations. Senators will be further notified on January 3.