

sit at the knee of Congressman Claude Pepper, a former Senator. He was a walking political history book. And along with that delightful personality, you could learn so much just listening. Of course, he was always a great delight. The Senator who presides and I both had the pleasure of being with Claude Pepper. So often I would hear when he would take what he would call his "boys"—those members of the Rules Committee—on a trip and those younger Members of Congress—younger by one-half and sometimes two-thirds the age of the venerable Claude Pepper—could not keep up with the energetic pace he kept on those congressional delegation trips.

And so, likewise, it has been such a privilege for me that I have now had the opportunity to come here to the Senate and sometimes to sit at the knee and learn from the senior Senator from West Virginia.

For what you have given to all of us—the particular interests and affection you have shown to the new Members of the Senate in the 107th Congress—we are all so very appreciative to you.

Again, thank you for your words today in commemorating this time of Thanksgiving that so many of us in our own way will say a little prayer of gratefulness for this blessed land of which we have the privilege of being citizens.

Mr. President, I rise today to again give another one of my speeches about my favorite little agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, before the distinguished Senator proceeds, if he would allow me to interrupt him for a comment.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I yield to the Senator for that purpose.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator for his kind words of praise. But let me say some good words about him. That is why I have sought to interrupt him. The Senator has come to the Senate and brings with him a marvelous background of knowledge—knowledge of space, space flight, and our explorations into space. He is not by any means as long in his experience in this great country as I am. I can remember when Lindbergh flew across the ocean in 1927, I believe on May 9. When he launched that flight in the Spirit of St. Louis, the New York Times had a headline, if I remember, that said Lindbergh flew across New York City—or perhaps it was Nova Scotia—at the "tremendous" speed of 100 miles an hour. That man, when he flew across the ocean—sometimes 10 feet above the water, sometimes probably 10,000 feet above the water—he had a payload of about 5,500 pounds; he had about five sandwiches, and he ate a half of one on his way across the water. That was a lonely man.

But now this man from Florida, who graces this Chamber, flew in space at the tremendous speed, I would imagine, of about 18,000 miles an hour. So as we

in high school used to talk about that flivver—there were not many flivvers in that day. A few automobiles were owned by high-ranking officials in the coal mining community, and they spoke of that automobile coming down Sofia Mountain at the speed of a mile a minute. Here is this man who has come to us and has flown at the tremendous speed of 18,000 miles an hour. He has also brought with him a deep respect of the Constitution of the country, a deep respect for this institution.

I thank God, as we near Thanksgiving Day, for pioneers like this man, Senator NELSON of Florida. He is a pioneer in space. We have thankfulness to him and other men like him, such as the Presiding Officer who comes from Illinois; they both came over from the other body. So many of us came from the other body, and so many of us, I am sorry to say—especially those who have come lately—seem to think this body should be another House of Representatives. I should not get started on that.

But I thank the distinguished Senator, my dear friend, for his kind references to me and the context in which he made those references. I hope I can live up to his faith and his accomplishments. I thank him for the Senator he is and the American that he is as we near Thanksgiving Day in a land for which we have so much to be grateful.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for his kind words. Whenever he is so gracious to me, as he just has been, I think myself undeserving of those kind words.

I look around this Chamber and see the places that people who have really shown courage and devotion to duty and to country sit, a place like over there, Senator INOUE, a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor; a place like over there, Senator MCCAIN, a prisoner of war who withstood those horrors for over 6 years; a place like over there for Senator CHUCK HAGEL, a distinguished veteran of Vietnam; a place like over here, the seat of Senator JOHN KERRY, the holder of the Silver Star from Vietnam; or that seat right there, the occupant of which will be leaving us at the end of this Congress, a triple amputee from Vietnam, Senator MAX CLELAND, who has overcome so much and yet who has the greatest attitude of any Senator in this body. These are the heroes, and there are many more, both men and women, in daily acts of courage. I feel very privileged to be a part.

NASA'S FISCAL YEAR 2003 BUDGET AMENDMENT AND A NON-PARTISAN NASA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I have been making a series of speeches about NASA, and I rise again today to speak about this little agency. It is a favorite agency of mine, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Last week, the White House submitted a budget amendment to its 2003

budget request for NASA. The budget amendment, which also retools NASA's 5-year budget plan, amounts to a watershed point for NASA.

In this budget amendment, the administration has requested a significant change in its 2003 NASA priorities. Instead of funding a program to replace the space shuttle, this amendment seeks to scale back funding for the space launch initiative to a more realistic development time line.

This budget amendment, in my opinion, signals a revamping of NASA's integrated space transportation plan. The new plan incorporates the space shuttle, a new orbital space plane, and technology for future reusable launch vehicles into one comprehensive plan to provide for the advancement of human space flight. It is about time we had such a plan, and I applaud the administration's efforts to move in this direction.

The new plan includes an increased shuttle launch rate to better meet the research needs of the space station. Under this new budget plan, both the shuttle and the station programs will be funded on a much more sustainable and long-term level, while also seeking to develop a new orbital space plane. This new spacecraft would be used to provide astronauts regular access to the international space station without always needing to rely on the aging space shuttle fleet.

The new budget plan provides for a much-needed infusion of cash to start to provide for space shuttle safety upgrades and infrastructure repairs and modernization. These repairs and improvements will help us fly the shuttle much more safely through the middle of the next decade and possibly even longer.

This funding is a welcome reprieve for the neglected and decaying human space flight infrastructure that is literally falling apart at NASA centers around the country.

The new budget plan also responds to the concerns of a new study. This study, called the ReMAP study, concluded that the space station in its currently planned form would not be able to conduct even a minimum level of science research to call it a science program.

NASA's 2003 budget amendment seeks to fix some of these concerns by providing additional funding to increase the research capabilities on-board the space station. I welcome this decision. I have been into the mockup of the space station at the Johnson Space Center, and the capability for science, for research, is there if we can have the crew members who can be dedicated to the research while in orbit.

With this budget amendment, I am pleased with the administration's restructuring of NASA's budgetary priorities for fiscal year 2003, and I congratulate administrator Sean O'Keefe. In this budget amendment, the administration, with Administrator O'Keefe,

and his deputy administrator Fred Gregory, have provided more funding for the shuttle program, including an increased flight rate and more funds dedicated to safety and supportability upgrades, as well as improvements to the ground-based infrastructure.

These areas are in dire need of additional financial support. The space shuttle simply cannot continue to fly safely if NASA does not dedicate additional resources to the orbital fleet.

The one missing piece from this plan is the formal cooperation with the departments dealing with the Nation's defense. NASA's new plans to upgrade the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle—everything has an acronym at NASA—or the EELV—to meet the human-rated requirements may also yield great efficiencies and reliabilities for defense launch needs. An orbital space plan could also meet some of our defense needs, and the Air Force has also had on the books for many years plans to develop such a vehicle.

The defense establishment should be part of this effort. DOD, NASA, and other agencies need to pool their resources to develop these high-risk, expensive technology programs. NASA cannot be expected to do this alone. Our country will be better served by jointly developing the technology needed for exploration and use of space.

I congratulate the agency and its leadership on what I think is a budgetary watershed point and one that is a shift in the right direction, and I encourage the defense-related agencies to start cooperating with NASA to develop these new technologies.

Mr. President, there is another area in which I have concern and I want to express it. NASA has a proud history of staying outside the partisan nature of our political arena. As one of the largest independent agencies, NASA has a unique role in the structure of our executive branch. Its leader does not assume a Cabinet-level position, and yet its policies and practices have a significant impact on the strength and future of our Nation's science and technology programs and sector.

No other independent agency has as much influence on our country's innovation capabilities in science and technology, outside of the medical field. Yet unlike the Departments of Commerce or the Department of Education, NASA does not usually get brought into partisan battles or political struggles of Congress. Rather, NASA's nonpartisan approach is more akin to the nonpartisan style of the Department of State and the Department of Defense. There are clearly occasionally disagreements within these Halls about the future of this little agency, but never have the differences come down to simply a question of to which party a Member belongs.

The Nation's space program is not a partisan program. It is an American program, and that is the way the Senators of this body treat it.

In recent weeks, constituents, newspaper columns, editorials, and NASA

employees have brought to my attention at least two incidents of partisan political activity on the part of the agency's head, who may have been acting at the direction of the White House itself.

In October, NASA's Administrator made a decision that could stand to challenge this agency's traditional bipartisan and nonpolitical status. Administrator Sean O'Keefe flew to Alabama to campaign for a candidate for Governor, and then he publicly announced his plans to travel to Florida to hold a space townhall meeting for a nonincumbent congressional candidate. He also participated in a fundraiser in Alabama.

Now, in this last announced trip, were it not for a mechanical problem that delayed his flight beyond the candidate's reasonable timeframe, Administrator O'Keefe would have been on the ground in Florida conducting political campaign events.

I am troubled about the implications of this public decision. At present, I have the good fortune of cooperating on space policy issues with dozens of my colleagues in both parties. Senators who share my love and enthusiasm for space exploration include Senators TRENT LOTT, DON NICKLES, ORRIN HATCH, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, CONRAD BURNS, GEORGE ALLEN, RICHARD SHELBY, BARBARA MIKULSKI, JOHN BREAUX, MARY LANDRIEU, and BOB GRAHAM.

When it comes to supporting our favorite little agency, we agree wholeheartedly and together happily roll up our sleeves and work on furthering the Nation's space-faring capabilities, despite what other issues might separate us, or despite the partisanship in which we sometimes engage in this body.

In the other Chamber, NASA's supporters come from both sides of the aisle. Representatives TOM DELAY, DANA ROHRBACHER, KEN CALVERT, DAVE WELDON, NICK LAMPSON, RALPH HALL, BART GORDON, and BUD CRAMER are but a few who have repeatedly gone out on a limb for NASA.

By announcing his plans to participate, being perceived as acting in his official capacity as the head of NASA, Administrator O'Keefe diminished the spirit of bipartisanship. Well, thank goodness for an airline mechanical problem on that last occasion.

So I rise to make a public request of our Administrator, which follows the private request I made of him prior to his scheduled trips, and that was a private one before the fact. My request now publicly is do not ruin the spirit of bipartisanship and bipartisan cooperation that NASA and its supporters enjoy.

When it comes to political campaigns, just stay out of them altogether and keep the long-standing tradition that NASA Administrators stay out of partisan politics.

This is a speech in which for the first two-thirds I praised the Administrator of NASA for the change in direction that I think is a good change, and I

think shows his good leadership, but it is a speech also with a heavy heart that since he would not take my advice, or that of many others privately, it needs to be stated publicly that there is a great and long-standing tradition that NASA Administrators stay out of partisan politics.

I ask unanimous consent that supporting documentation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Florida Today, Oct. 23, 2002]

NASA HEAD STUMPS FOR GOP CANDIDATES

(By John Kelly and Kelly Young)

Sean O'Keefe is taking time off from his day job, as administrator of NASA, to campaign for Republican political candidates in two states with high-profile NASA centers.

O'Keefe took time off Monday and went to Huntsville, Ala., to endorse the Republicans' candidate for governor at a space museum near Marshall Space Flight Center. Monday, he will be at the Cocoa Beach Hilton with Tom Feeney, the GOP nominee in the 24th Congressional District that includes Kennedy Space Center.

NASA is not paying for the trips and O'Keefe is not doing official business, agency spokesman Glenn Mahone said. He is not flying on NASA planes or taking government aides along. O'Keefe and the candidates are paying any costs, Mahone and the GOP campaigns' officials said.

High-ranking presidential appointees often hit the campaign trail for party candidates. A search of news archives and interviews with longtime NASA watchers yielded no examples of former administrator Daniel Goldin politicking so openly or endorsing specific candidates. If Goldin ever did make such an appearance, "I'm reasonably sure he would have been the first," said Howard McCurdy, an American University public affairs professor.

McCurdy, who has written books about NASA, said the practice is becoming more common. Goldin could not be reached for comment.

"It's certainly expanding in the federal government as a whole," McCurdy said. "It's not unusual to see the head of the parks services doing the same thing."

There are no rules against it as long as government resources are not used and O'Keefe carefully distinguishes his appearances as personal rather than official.

"As long as he's not trying to say four out of five astronauts agree, and I assume he's not, then he's OK," said John Pike, a defense and space policy analyst with Virginia-based globalsecurity.org. "Now if I was a partisan Democrat with an interest in these races, I wouldn't have to work very hard to come up with a cheap shot."

Mahone said everyone knows O'Keefe is a Republican, and he has rights as an individual to support candidates like anyone else.

"He did not endorse them as the NASA administrator, but as Sean O'Keefe, a Republican and a member of the administration," Mahone said. "He is Sean Q. Citizen."

Apparently, that's not how U.S. Rep. Bob Riley saw it. His campaign material clearly identified "NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe" among the people who've endorsed him.

"Bob Riley is an enlightened leader who understands the critical nature of research investment, and Alabama's economy will prosper under Bob Riley's leadership," O'Keefe said at the event, according to a

campaign news release. "Bob Riley is the right man with the right plan for Alabama."

The release quoted Riley: "Having NASA's administrator fly down from Washington to endorse my campaign for governor illustrates the viability of my plan to build a new high-tech research-based economy in Alabama. Administrator O'Keefe's strong endorsement highlights his confidence that Alabama can become a vital part of the new economy if given the right leadership."

Riley campaign spokesman Dave Acbell said O'Keefe is interested in Riley's plan to develop Alabama's economy like North Carolina's Research Triangle.

The Huntsville Times quoted O'Keefe in Tuesday's edition saying his two appearances were not about bipartisanship but leadership ability. The paper reported that when asked if he would endorse Democrats with similar leadership abilities, O'Keefe said, "These are the only two opportunities I had to be involved with."

Feeney's campaign is stressing that O'Keefe is appearing in an "unofficial capacity." But the campaign is billing the event as a "Space Town Hall Meeting" at which space industry officials selected by the campaign will get to ask the men about NASA and other space issues.

In debates and other space-related appearances in the district, which includes Kennedy Space Center, Feeney has said his close relationship with O'Keefe and President Bush will help the area.

His press secretary, Kim Stone, made the same case Tuesday. Harry Jacobs, the Democrat candidate running against Feeney, is not invited. Questions asked of Feeney and O'Keefe will be screened by the campaign, she said.

Jacobs' spokeswoman Azalea Candelaria said such events are not unusual and President Bush's aides and appointees have been helping Feeney from the start. She said she hoped O'Keefe and NASA were equally willing to provide the Democrat candidate with access to tours and to face-to-face discussions with the administrator.

"Harry Jacobs has lots more support than the Republicans expected so Tom Feeney rang the alarm and a series of dignitaries are coming down to campaign for him," she said. "When the president of the United States is a Republican and you're not, you can't get that campaign help."

Neither Mahone nor Feeney's spokeswoman said they knew whether O'Keefe will endorse Feeney.

O'Keefe has long served Republican administrations, including that of President Bush's father. The younger Bush moved O'Keefe over from the Office of Management and Budget to head NASA on orders to clean up the agency's money woes.

Pike said previous NASA administrators have been "space cadets" who were at NASA because it was their dream job. O'Keefe is more of a career political appointee, so it's not surprising he is politically active, Pike said.

[From the Orlando Sentinel, Oct. 23, 2002]

NASA CHIEF O'KEEFE TO JOIN FEENEY AT CAMPAIGN STOP IN COCOA BEACH

(By Gwyneth K. Shaw and Sean Mussenden)

NASA chief Sean O'Keefe will campaign with House Speaker Tom Feeney in Cocoa Beach next week—a highly unusual foray into politics for the head of an agency that has tried hard for its 44 years to stay above the partisan fray.

O'Keefe's appearance will occur eight days before voters decide whether to send Feeney or opponent Harry Jacobs to Congress.

District 24, a new district essentially hand-drawn for Feeney, includes parts of Volusia,

Orange and Seminole counties. It also encompasses much of northern Brevard County—including Kennedy Space Center, one of NASA's highest-profile sites and the workplace of thousands of constituents.

The Feeney campaign and officials with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration insist the visit Monday is simply a gesture of friendship from O'Keefe and that he is appearing with Feeney as a private citizen, not as the nation's top space policymaker. They also say the trip will not cost taxpayers: O'Keefe is taking the day off, and the campaign is paying for his commercial airline ticket.

O'KEEFE IS A REPUBLICAN

Glenn Mahone, NASA's associate administrator for Public Affairs, pointed out that O'Keefe is a Republican as well as a political appointee named by a Republican president.

"He was invited by Speaker Feeney to come down and attend an event on his own time, and he graciously accepted," Mahone said. "He is going not as NASA administrator, but as a friend of Speaker Feeney."

On Monday, O'Keefe traveled to Huntsville, Ala.—home of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center—to endorse U.S. Rep. Bob Riley, R-Ala., who is running for governor.

O'Keefe could not be reached for comment. Alex Roland, Duke University professor and former NASA historian, called O'Keefe's political visits unprecedented in the annals of the agency. NASA administrators, who often complain about interference from Capitol Hill, typically do not get involved in elections, he said.

Roland said it's ironic that O'Keefe has chosen to step in.

"It's one thing to be politicized, in the sense that the agency represents a set of policies with which some elected official may or may not be in agreement. But it's entirely different to be partisan, because those members of Congress that decide about this can be of either party," he said. "This is a member of a federal agency saying a representative of one party is better able to serve NASA's interests than the representative of another party. That's just none of their business—how the elected representatives get there."

Bill Allison of the Center for Public Integrity, a Washington-based nonpartisan ethical watchdog group, said the situation is clearly more than just a friendly gathering. "It's obviously a favor being done to elect a member, a Republican, to Congress," he said. "This is somebody trying to use the prestige of his position to further the political interests of a candidate."

Mahone said that if O'Keefe were invited by other Republicans he knows to campaign with them between now and the elections, he would be open to it if his schedule would allow it.

"Is it unusual for a NASA administrator? Well, we have a new NASA administrator, and this NASA administrator has decided this is something that he wants to do," Mahone said.

Jacobs, the Altamonte Springs lawyer challenging Feeney in the Nov. 5 election, said if he wins, O'Keefe's decision to help Feeney would not make it more difficult for him to work with the agency.

"NASA is not Sean O'Keefe and Sean O'Keefe is not NASA," Jacobs said. "NASA will be there before or after Sean O'Keefe."

Asked whether he thought it was improper of O'Keefe to break with the neutral tradition of his predecessors, Jacobs said, "That's a question for Sean O'Keefe."

DISTRICT SPLIT-UP

When Feeney's top lieutenants in the Legislature were carving out District 24, they swiped Kennedy Space Center from a

Brevard-based seat now held by U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, R-Palm Bay. Weldon was able to keep the adjacent Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, site of the military's space operations.

The split, Feeney and others have said, ensured that Central Florida would have two sets of eyes in Washington focused on space.

O'Keefe's visit Monday is Feeney's latest attempt to court the votes of the area's space workers—something he has done with promises to funnel more money into developing the region's space industry and his tours of key public- and private-sector facilities.

Feeney also frequently mentions that his wife, Ellen, works at KSC—reminders that are exceeded only by his frequent descriptions of his "close" ties with President Bush and O'Keefe, two people with extraordinary power over NASA's budget. The implication is that Jacobs does not have the connections needed to bring the bacon back to Brevard.

Jacobs, in response, has said that Democratic leaders in Congress have promised him a seat on the committee that oversees NASA's budget.

But Feeney's partisan ties have granted him access that Jacobs has not enjoyed. Although KSC officials invited Jacobs on a tour of NASA facilities, Feeney was a guest of O'Keefe at a shuttle launch earlier this month. Jacobs was invited to the same launch by U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., but was unable to attend, a Jacobs spokeswoman said.

Ralph Gonzales, Feeney's campaign manager, said the town hall meeting at the Hilton Oceanfront in Cocoa Beach is "not really a political event."

The 90-minute meeting, which begins at 4 p.m., is by invitation only, campaign spokeswoman Kim Stone said, with a host of Republicans and about 100 people from the space community, including Democrats, Republicans and independents, on the list.

Allison said it has become fairly common in recent years to use administration officials, from the President on down, to lend a hand to candidates.

And Feeney has been a beneficiary several times over: In August, Vice President Dick Cheney raised an estimated \$250,000 at an Orlando cocktail party. Last month, Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans campaigned with Feeney.

But O'Keefe's visits do stand out, Allison said.

"It definitely muddies the water," he said. "A NASA administrator is supposed to be running NASA. He's not supposed to be intervening in politics."

[From Florida Today, Oct. 29, 2002]

PLANE TROUBLE CANCELS NASA TOWN MEETING

(By Kelly Young)

CAPE CANAVERAL.—NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe canceled plans to attend a Space Coast event with Republican Congressional candidate Tom Feeney after airplane problems in Washington on Monday.

The administrator took some personal time off from his normal duties to fly down to Florida to appear with Feeney, who is running for a District 24 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. The joint event was billed as a town hall meeting where space industry officials could ask O'Keefe and Feeney questions about NASA.

After O'Keefe was delayed at the airport for about an hour, Feeney's office decided to cancel the event when they realized he would not make it to the Cocoa Beach Hilton by the scheduled start time at 4 p.m.

The cockpit door wouldn't close, said Feeney spokeswoman Kim Stone. O'Keefe

was traveling on a commercial flight to Orlando and paying his own way.

Other passengers got off the plane and boarded another flight. O'Keefe stayed in Washington, said NASA spokesman Glenn Mahone.

O'Keefe probably will not make it back to the Space Coast before elections next Tuesday, but Mahone said a later visit was not unreasonable.

"If invited and if time permits, he'll be more than happy to go down because he thinks very highly of Speaker Feeney," Mahone said.

[From Aviation Week & Space Technology, Oct. 28, 2002]

MR. O'KEEFE, STICK TO NASA

Breaking with a long-standing tradition that NASA administrators do not directly participate in partisan politics, Sean O'Keefe has taken to the hustings for Republican candidates and participated in a state party fund-raiser. Last week he turned up in Huntsville to endorse U.S. Rep. Bob Riley in his bid to become governor of Alabama. This week, O'Keefe is scheduled to appear at a political event in Cocoa Beach with Tom Feeney, the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, who is running in the congressional district that includes Cape Canaveral. O'Keefe will insist he is making these efforts purely as a private citizen. But that is a thin reed to grasp—and one not recognized by the candidates. In a press release, Riley gushed about "having NASA's administrator fly down from Washington to endorse my campaign for governor."

Even more disturbing than running out onto the campaign trail, O'Keefe participated in an Alabama Republican party fund-raising dinner in Huntsville in February. It was billed as a tribute to the aerospace and defense industry, but at \$250-a-plate, the dinner might more honestly have been labeled an occasion for the Grand Old Party to extract tribute from NASA contractors. Want some face time with Sean? Fork over your check.

Lest anyone accuse us of being naive or disingenuous, we are not "shocked, shocked" to learn that O'Keefe is a staunch Republican. Nor do we think there is anything illegal or immoral about a presidential appointee taking part in party affairs, provided it is done on his own time and does not involve government resources.

But that doesn't make these campaign swings and party fund-raising a good idea. Throughout its history, NASA has depended on bipartisan support. It's support that some have characterized as a mile wide but only an inch deep, so O'Keefe should be careful not to drain much off this reservoir of goodwill. In politics, what goes around comes around. And while none of the Democrats running against the candidates O'Keefe is endorsing is likely to turn against NASA should they win, the administrator should not be surprised if Democrats seek a payback and, in so doing, disrupt his plans for this storied government agency.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I wish all of the Senate, all of our colleagues in Congress, as well as the American people, Happy Thanksgiving.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS BOB SMITH AND FRED THOMPSON

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, one of the privileges we have of serving in this body is we get to work with a lot of outstanding men and women. I wish

to mention a couple of those who are very good friends of mine, who will be leaving the service of the Senate, one of which is BOB SMITH. BOB SMITH has served in the Senate for 12 years. I had the pleasure of working with him. He is a respected veteran. He served in Vietnam. I have had the pleasure of knowing BOB SMITH and his wife Mary Jo and their kids. Actually, their kids went to the same school as my children did.

BOB was a high school teacher and a coach from the great State of New Hampshire. He was elected to Congress in 1984, but I did not really get to know BOB SMITH until he was elected to the Senate in 1990. He was reelected in 1996. He served on the Armed Services Committee and was what I would call a very strong defender of our Nation's freedom, a very strong national patriot.

He was always interested in improving our national defense and he did an outstanding job. He was a leader in trying to find out what happened to the men and women serving in the Army, Navy, and Air Force who were missing in action in Vietnam. He showed great courage on a lot of issues that were not popular. He led the fight in trying to ban partial-birth abortion, and my guess is we will pass that in the next Congress, and it will be because of the leadership of BOB SMITH and his courageous effort in initiating that.

On behalf of countless unborn children, on behalf of the men and women serving in the military, on behalf of a nation that is very grateful for patriots who have led the fight in Congress to make our country free, they have always had a friend in Senator BOB SMITH. I congratulate him on his years of service in Congress, both in the House and the Senate, and I wish him and Mary Jo every best wish for their future.

I also wish to make a couple of comments about our soon retiring colleague, Senator FRED THOMPSON. Senator THOMPSON's career was shorter than many of us had hoped. He only served 8 years in the Senate. He was elected in a special election in the State of Tennessee 8 years ago, and then was reelected. He has served this body very ably and very nobly well.

Senator THOMPSON had remarkable achievements in his very short Senate career. After he was in the Senate for only 2 years, he was selected and elected chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, a remarkable accomplishment. He served as chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee at a very interesting time. I was on that committee for a couple of years during the investigation of campaign abuses, primarily focused on the Clinton administration. Chairman THOMPSON conducted those hearings and investigations in a way that deserves great credit. It would have been quite easy to have the hearings evolve into nothing but a partisan allegation, and he did not do that. He conducted

the hearings very nobly, in a very respected manner. I was proud to serve with him on that committee. It was an enormous responsibility to be investigating the sitting President. I believe Senator THOMPSON conducted those hearings very well.

He also, in a very short period of time, was made a Member of the Senate Finance Committee. I had the pleasure of serving with him on the Senate Finance Committee, again, a committee where we were able to make some positive changes for the country regarding tax cuts. Senator THOMPSON has proven to be a real friend of taxpayers in enacting probably one of the largest tax cuts in our Nation's history, certainly in the last couple of decades.

He always provided common sense, a sense of humor, as well. Certainly Senator FRED THOMPSON will be missed in the Senate. He is my friend from Tennessee. I wish Senator FRED THOMPSON and his lovely wife, Geri, every success in the future. No doubt he will have many.

I yield the floor and 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. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BRINGING SOUTH DAKOTA'S COMPASSION TO AFRICA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, in August, I had the good fortune to be able to travel with several Senate colleagues to South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, and Nigeria. We wanted to get a clear look at the development challenges in Africa, including health crises, U.S. investment and trade, micro-enterprise development, education and agriculture.

Even before we left, we got a sense of the common cause between the people of the United States and the people of Africa. Working with the South Dakota Red Cross and Hope Worldwide, citizens from Sioux Falls donated more than 1000 pounds of clothes and toys to South African children who have been affected by the AIDS pandemic. I want to publicly acknowledge the great work of Stephanie Koster, director of HIV/AIDS Services for the Sioux Empire Chapter of the American Red Cross, on this effort.

I was overjoyed to be able to deliver, on behalf of South Dakotans, some glimmer of hope to children who have suffered either because one or both of their parents contracted HIV or because they themselves contracted it. In Soweto we met a young girl, Mary, who gave me an indication of the price children are paying as a result of HIV.

Mary is 12 and the eldest of five children. She recently lost both of her parents due to complications with AIDS.