

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.

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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.

Not yet a teenager, she is left to fend for herself and her four siblings. Despite this challenge, Mary rose to greet our delegation and recited a poem she had recently written to her parents entitled, "Parents yesterday, parents today, parents tomorrow."

I left for that trip convinced that these challenges facing Africa—chief among them the AIDS pandemic—were tragic humanitarian crises. After this trip, I am convinced Africa's challenges, if left unaddressed, could soon become America's national security threats. Failure to more energetically engage this troubled continent, especially in the post-September 11 world, poses risks to both the lives of millions of Africans and our own national security.

That is why I was especially disappointed to learn last Friday morning that the House chose to adjourn without passing two important pieces of legislation that could have energized our efforts in Africa.

S. 3032, a bipartisan bill to expand U.S. efforts to support micro-enterprise and which passed the Senate unanimously, was a casualty of the House's rush to leave town. We all know that micro-enterprises are a lifeline for the poorest of the poor—and have proven to be a pivotal tool that has allowed women, especially, to provide for their families. Across Africa, we saw women fighting for their families and raising their children on money they earned at small shops. But for every woman who was able to make ends meet because of her micro-enterprise, there are thousands of others who need a helping hand to get started. And by helping hand I don't mean a costly program. The typical micro-enterprise loan is \$50. By failing to pass S. 3032, the House missed the opportunity to provide that helping hand and opportunity.

The House also left town without passing a Global HIV/AIDS bill. In July, the Senate unanimously passed H.R. 2069, which authorized the resources that we all know will be required in the battle against HIV/AIDS. We were told by the House that the price tag on that bill was too high, and that they would pass it if we reduced the funding level. So we made clear to the House that we were ready to cut back the amounts authorized for this battle—vastly if they insisted—to remove the obstacles to some form of progress on this vital issue. Apparently, any amount at all was too much for the House leadership, because the House just could not get to yes on this vital issue.

I am particularly disappointed because the House's refusal to act ends any hope of enacting the Family Partnership Survival Act. This program is very simple. It authorizes \$75 million over the next 2 years to treat HIV-positive mothers and their partners. By keeping mothers and fathers alive so that they can help raise their children, it is, in effect, an orphan-prevention program.

I remember vividly arriving at an HIV Voluntary Counseling and Testing Center in Kibera, the largest slum in Nairobi, Kenya. We were greeted by mothers, each of whom was HIV-positive. Yet they greeted us, dancing and singing a song whose lyrics were:

We are so blessed, because we know our status.

They felt blessed to have learned they were HIV-positive because, by knowing their status, they could take steps to protect their partners. And they could receive counseling and nutritional supplements to keep themselves healthy in the face of this insidious virus.

It will be an even more joyful day when these women will feel blessed not only because they know their status, but also because they have access to treatment and drugs that will keep them alive. The House could have hastened that day. It did not. And so, Mr. President, I will come back at this issue until it is law.

The President is scheduled to travel to Africa in January. As I was able to carry with me on my trip—to young Mary and others—some of the compassion of South Dakota, I wish the President could have been able to bring with him two new laws expressing the compassion of the United States.

As our dear colleague Paul Wellstone used to say, "time is not neutral." We can no longer afford to ignore Africa's challenges, because before long they will become our challenges. The House missed its chance to help confront those challenges in the 107th Congress. I hope it will help us address them in the next.

HONORING THE RETIRING SENATORS OF THE 107TH CONGRESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, one of the advantages of a lame duck session is it gives us a little longer before we have to say good-bye to departing colleagues. Quite a few members of our Senate family will not be with us when the 108th Congress begins in January.

From the moment we first step foot on this floor, most of us are powerfully aware that we are links in an extraordinary chain of history. When we open our desks, we see carved or penned in them the names of those who served in this body before us.

Over in the historic Old Senate Chamber, we can almost hear the voices Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John Calhoun. Here in this Chamber, we walk in the footsteps on such leaders as leaders like Lyndon Johnson, Mike Mansfield and Howard Baker.

Once you have served here, you never leave here entirely. Every Senator who has ever served here remains here in some form.

That connection is not only carved in our desks. It is carried in those with whom we serve.

Think about this: Senator THURMOND entered the Senate in 1954.

He served with Walter George, who entered in 1922. Walter George served

with Henry Cabot Lodge, who entered in 1893, who served with John Sherman, who entered in 1861, who served with Hannibal Hamlin, who entered in 1848, who served with William King, who entered in 1819, who served with Rufus King, who re-entered in 1813, who served with Joseph Anderson, who entered in 1797, who served with John Brown, who entered in 1792, who served with Robert Morris.

Robert Morris entered in 1789—and signed both the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Through just ten people, we are directly connected to the two documents that this Nation is founded upon—two documents that all of these departing Members have advanced and defended throughout their careers.

We are able to see those linkages because of the masterful historical work of another of our colleagues, Senator BYRD, whose birthday, we have noted, is today.

Every departing Senator has added pages to the history of this Senate and this Nation. Some have provided whole chapters. And, in a couple of cases, whole volumes of history.

I would like to take a moment and acknowledge our departing Senators.

STROM THURMOND is the longest serving Senator in our Nation's history. His career has spanned the arc of the last century, and his service has helped usher in this one.

He has gone from Democrat, to Dixiecrat, to Republican. His party affiliation may have changed, and his position on some issues may have changed, but his service to the people of South Carolina has been unwavering. He is truly the Cal Ripken of the Senate.

JESSE HELMS began his first term in the Senate in January 1973. Senator HELMS is a giant—not only on the Senate stage, but also on the world stage. And, with his budding friendship with the rock star, Bono, in retirement we may yet see him on a concert stage. It has been said that leaders face a choice between being loved or feared—Senator HELMS is both.

JESSE and Dot have been indispensable members of the Senate family, and we will miss them.

PHIL GRAMM has been at the center of every major economic and domestic policy battle in my time here. And even though I have frequently disagreed with him, I have always learned from him. Virtually singlehandedly, he has changed America's economic policy—twice. Like all things Texan, he is larger than life, and he leaves some big shoes to fill.

FRANK MURKOWSKI is departing the Senate not because the people of Alaska don't want him in Washington, but because they do want him closer to home. That makes sense, because he has been a tireless advocate for his State. I have no doubt that he will continue to be, whether it is shaping policy at home, or twisting the arms of his former colleagues here. Congratulations, Governor.