

Last year was one of the saddest in our Nation's life. As we begin this new session, with its new challenges and new opportunities, let us remember those who died on September 11. But let us also remember the children they left behind, some of whom they never even had the chance to see or hold. Let us also remember the other children who are depending on us to pass on to them an America that is filled with as much hope, freedom, and possibility as the Nation we inherited from our own parents.

Let us resolve together to find a way to meet the most important of all of our responsibilities. I am confident that we can.

I look forward to working with our Republican leader, as I have always done at the outset of a new session of Congress. This year is certainly one of those years again.

I thank my colleagues and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR AMERICAN SECURITY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator DASCHLE for his opening statement. I see a lot in his remarks that should give us encouragement and hope that we can come together and achieve things that need to be done this year in the Congress for the American people. Regardless of party, regardless of past difficulties, we should try to find a way to work together.

There's a common word between what Senator DASCHLE said and what I will be saying, if you look at what we have in our remarks and the thrust of those remarks. That word is "security." We need to pay close attention this year more than ever to that issue, that word. We need strong national security. We need to make sure that our men and women have the tools, the weapons, whatever they need to deal with the threat of terrorism and with threatened democracy wherever we may find it in the world. We also need to have personal security for our people here at home.

Last year brought so many startling things to our attention. Never before had we been attacked here at home like we were last year. And so, this year working on homeland security, working on personal security, we have to find a way to protect American people. Surely that's one of the obligations that we have as a Congress, to at least be safe and secure here at home.

The only way we can look after our national security and personal security is to have economic security. We've got to make sure that America is strong, that our economy is growing, that jobs are being created, that Americans have the opportunity to get a job, a good paying job, and to keep that job. And when they have a problem, on a temporary basis, that there's something there for them, that there will be un-

employment compensation. But we don't want them just to have a check for tomorrow.

We want a job for the future. Both of them are important. But we've got to look at economic security this year. We've got to take some actions in the Congress, by restraint, perhaps, by encouragement in other ways, so that we can have a stimulus to the economy, so there is some commonality in the themes of what's been said here today.

I think we've gotten off to a good start this morning. The President called the bipartisan, bicameral congressional leadership to the White house, and we met for 35 minutes, started right on time, ended right on time. He talked to us about what's happening around the world, our threats abroad and at home and what we needed to do with the economy. He listened to us. He extended a hand of cooperation. I believe that this President has changed the tone in Washington. He has tried to work with the Congress. We have produced a bipartisan vote, House and Senate, for major tax reform and tax relief for the American people last year. We did come together on the most fundamental education reform in 35 years. A lot of people thought the Thursday before we got the conference agreement it couldn't happen, but it did happen. And we came together—Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, President Bush. We got an agreement the American people liked.

I think that President Bush is going to be persistent in calling on us to do our work, to work through the procedure, the process. But to do our work, to produce the things we need for our country.

Last year we had a tremendous period of cooperation and bipartisanship. And then we kind of lost it there at the end. Maybe—maybe we were tired. The issues were different. Maybe we got to thinking about politics again. We kind of lost our ability to come together on an economic stimulus package. We didn't produce an energy bill. We didn't do trade. We didn't do agriculture. And we left a lot of nominations on the calendar. That was last year.

Now let's do it. Let's get this job done. And each one of those—those issues—were mentioned by Senator DASCHLE in his remarks, today.

Right now we're working to see if we can come up with some substance and a process and a procedure so that we can, in fact, consider and hopefully get a result on the economic security package, and we're working on what the substance might be and what the procedures may be. Right now we're working in a bipartisan way with three Senators, MCCONNELL, DODD, BOND, and others—Senator DODD as chairman of the Rules Committee. They've come together on election reform.

Now, is it perfect? Would we all like it just like it is? Not necessarily. Will some amendments be offered? Surely. But there's a case where when it looked like it was going to be a par-

tisan shootout, they've come together. And so this afternoon we're working to see if we can identify amendments and come up with a procedure to do this bill, perhaps in short order. Boy, wouldn't that stun people? The House has acted. Let's act in the Senate. Let's do it in a bipartisan way.

So, I'm encouraged. It is a new year. We have a window of opportunity. The President is doing his part. We're working to see if we can move some of these things that have stalled out. We should do that, and I will do all I can to try to encourage that and foster that. It'll take, again, working together and a little trust here and there, but there is a period here when we can accomplish, I think, a good deal for the country.

As we look back on last year and the horrors of September, we've been doing a lot. We've come together. I think we've changed. We changed for a while last year. Could we build on that attitude this year?

You know, the American people's attitude toward the Congress in terms of a favorable rating went up to the highest its ever been. Why was that?

It's because the American people saw us working together and doing what ought to be done. Rising above party. Now, over the last couple of months, those numbers have started coming back down. I would like to drive them back up. When you talk pure politics I've been on both sides. I've been in the majority and the minority. I've been in situations where we gained seats, held our own, lost seats. But I've figured out something. When we do our work, when we produce results, if you're in a leadership position, it pays positive dividends. People like it when they see us doing what we ought to be doing.

So we should look at the courage and the sacrifice of those who gave their lives last year, the families that have endured a terrible time here over the past four months—the courage of the firefighters, the policemen, the calm of Mayor Giuliani. Now there's a guy who rose above politics. I saw people cheering for him, chanting his name when they could have been chanting Senator DASCHLE's and mine. No, they were chanting Giuliani when we went to see Ground Zero. He rose to the occasion. When we look at the loyal support from overseas, the leadership of the President, when we look at how we did come together, then I think we can and should be able to learn from that and rise above just the normal things we get into here.

Our soldiers are fighting overseas right now. They're fighting for freedom. They're counting on us to give them the help they need. It would help if we could show this is a different time and a different place and we all learn something from September.

Next Tuesday, President Bush is going to deliver his State of the Union Address. I think the Congress will be wanting to hear what his agenda is, will listen very carefully to it. I believe

he'll call for the country and the American people to come together and support him and follow him. Yes, there's a legislative process and this very morning he said, I think we need a stimulus package. I understand the Senate has got a unique set of rules. You've got to deal with the process. You deal with the process but let's get this job done. He'll give us an agenda, and I believe the American people and the majority of the Senate of both parties, a large number in the Senate, will support what he wants to do in economic security, energy security, national security. I do think that we need to pay attention to the economy. There are signs that, well, yes, maybe it's improving but we're not quite sure exactly if it's improving enough. We see States struggling with their budgets.

We had a recession coming on going back to last March. It was clearly exacerbated by September 11. Are there some things we could do to at least sort of fill the interim here to help those who are unemployed but also to give incentive to small businessmen and women to create some more jobs, to have the economy grow?

We may not need it, but what if we do? What if we say let's wait and see and we wake up 6 months, 9 months, a year from now and say oh, my goodness this recession is not ending like it should? We can give some incentives that would be positive. I think we ought to try and find a way to do it. There are going to be people who try and find a way to do nothing. We can have gridlock. I don't want that. I think we ought to find a way to get a result to produce an economic stimulus package that is stimulative, not one that raises taxes, not one that's just more spending but one that actually will contribute to the creation of jobs.

So I think that's something we should focus on here in the next few days. And I'm willing to work with Senator DASCHLE and see if we can do that.

As a part of our economic security, we need a trade bill. I can understand that there will be features of the trade debate that need to be discussed. There will be amendments. But we passed a bill out of the Finance Committee 6 weeks ago or so on a large bipartisan vote. I voted for it. Senator DASCHLE voted for it. Let's get it up. Let's get it passed. Let's get to the President the authority he needs to expand the opportunity for trade. I think it will help our farmers. I think it will help out small businessmen and women. I think it will help our neighbors.

When I look to Central and South America, I see millions upon millions of people that could benefit from the trade, the products, the commodities that we could provide them. Let's pursue that. That would help our farmers. We need a farm bill, no question about it.

I was very unhappy with the way we ended on the farm bill. Maybe we had to do that. Maybe we had to wring out

the politics a little bit so we can then really produce a farm bill. I would call upon Senator HARKIN and the leaders on both sides of the aisle to see if we can find a way to improve the bill that's pending, get a bipartisan bill, but get it into conference and get something that hopefully won't take too long, that hopefully will not hurt agriculture in the future, that the President can sign so that our men and women in the businesses and all the people who depend on agriculture—including the consumer—some certainty as what they could expect. Again it won't be perfect but just the knowledge that it's coming and what they'll be able to do would be very positive.

I've been complaining about the energy situation for years. I really don't understand why in America we can't have a national energy policy. I don't understand why we are dependent for 59.6 percent of our energy needs on foreign oil.

Some people say, oh, you guys, all you want is just more opportunity to drill. That's not so. I do think we could get more oil of our own. I'm from an area where there's a lot of natural gas—clean—and I think it can be made accessible to the American people if we can get it out of the ground or from under the gulf or wherever it may be and develop a transmission or grid system to get it where it needs to be. I think we need to use coal.

I think we ought to pursue clean coal technology. I think we ought to promote conservation, encourage alternative fuels. I don't think we ought to believe that we're really going to conserve ourselves out of the need for energy. We're going to need it. And even though there may be tremendous opportunities technologically for the future and we should pursue those, I don't think that we're going to be able to produce 20 percent or 25 percent of our energy needs from alternative fuels or things that we don't now have for years. Let's be realistic but let's do it.

We went through the fiasco in the late 1970s of gas lines. We passed legislation. We tried to use alternative and find alternative fuels. A lot of them didn't work out. I was willing to try some of them. As I recall, coal gasification was one. I don't know if that ever quite worked. Maybe we've learned more since then and we can go into that area. But let's just do it. The day is coming when our energy needs are going to be a huge problem. It's going to be a national security problem, an economic problem. If just one oil producing country had a problem and cut us off, 25 percent of the world's oil needs would disappear. I don't like that. I'm looking for alternatives.

We've got a lot of products in Mississippi we could use, maybe in a different way like wood chips. We've got derivatives from cotton products. If there's some way we can burn that or convert it as a form of power, we ought to try it. I think we should go forwards.

Senator DASCHLE has committed to me and to the American people that we're going to go to this bill in early February, and we should not let it be taken down by a filibuster one side or the other. Let's get it done. We'll find a way to do it, I believe.

Nothing will be more important this year than what we do in national security defense. The President is going to ask for increased funds. I think he's going to be in a mood to introduce reform of our defense capabilities. I think that's needed. We need to continue to have multinational support.

When I look at the support we have gotten from countries all around the world—Britain, Australia, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Russia, Canada, Turkey, Jordan, Poland, Japan, and countries we never before could have counted as allies. Look at what has happened with Russia. Who would have believed a year ago we would be doing the things we're doing with Russia today. Very few people.

But we still have a lot of challenges there. And we see opportunities with other countries. Is there some hope in some of those countries that have harbored terrorists but now are saying maybe we don't want to do that anymore. The President has been willing to step up and say mutual assured destruction is a relic of the past. Europeans say, oh, my goodness, he can't say that. What will the Russians say. They say we don't agree but we understand. We will work with America. America is not our enemy anymore. That's an incredible development.

So I think this is going to be an area that's going to take a lot of time and thought from all of us. And there will be nothing more important.

I think we should build on what we did in education. We haven't yet succeeded in reaching a situation where we'll leave no child behind. We need to go back and look at other education reform.

I think the Disabilities and Education Act will require reforming. I think the system is being abused by many people who should not be on the program and therefore is taking away from others who do need additional help. We can work through that.

I call on Senator DASCHLE and the Democrats to work with us on these nominations. This President is entitled to his nominees unless there's a huge problem. We've got nominees on the calendar here that got held up for a variety of reasons. We had Senators who were concerned about certain bills, so they objected to moving nominations. But we don't have an Ambassador to the Philippines. We have a nominee on the calendar. It's been reported out of the committee. We've got troops going into the Philippines. We don't have an Ambassador.

The position of the person who is in charge of nuclear safety is empty, yet the nominee is on the calendar. There's 50 such nominations on the Senate calendar. Let's try again. Let's move

those nominees, particularly for the President's administration. It is his administration. Surely Assistant Secretary, Solicitor's General, Inspector's General, Ambassadors should be confirmed. And the judges, I'm not going to go through the litany here.

The fact is we've got a lot of people who are not being treated fairly. I don't understand why Miguel Estrada has not been moved. He's an immigrant from Honduras. He's well educated and is an outstanding attorney but hasn't even had a hearing. We ought to move not only the district judges but the circuit judges. Let's move judicial nominees if there are not problems. Let's pick up the speed. I know the President would appreciate that. The President deserves that. We can do better.

There will be those we want to fight over. We'll have a vote on them. We'll have a debate on them, but let's at least do it. My impression is we have about 50 on the calendar and about a hundred in committees—150 judges and administration officials. I think we need to go back and take a deep breath and get that job done.

From my discussions with this President, I can tell you: He is as determined to pull this country out of this economic recession as he has been to put an end to the terrorist threat.

It was 100 years ago that President Teddy Roosevelt uttered that quip we all remember: "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

One thing I have found out about President Bush is that he does speak softly, but he carries a heavy agenda because the needs of our country are great and the expectations of the American people are great. But our opportunities for accomplishment are great, too. And frankly, our chances as a government institution are great at showing the American people how men and women of good will can meet halfway and then when they disagree, take a fair vote to see whose argument will prevail, complete their work on that matter, and move on to the next priority. That's all we on the Republican side of the aisle can ask.

Let's begin today. Let's get some agreements on how we'll proceed on these to important bills. Let's continue next week when we hear the President's State of the Union Address. Let's see how much we can do in the next 3 months. I believe that American people want that. And I know they would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Connecticut.

ELECTION REFORM

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I commend both leaders for their comments about the proposed agenda. While I certainly am not in a position to comment on the merits or demerits of the various proposals that have been suggested, there is one item in which the distin-

guished Senator from Kentucky and I are particularly interested. We are grateful to the majority leader and the Republican leader for making specific reference to the election reform proposal the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. McCONNELL, Senator BOND, Senator SCHUMER, Senator TORRICELLI, Senator DURBIN, and others have worked on to bring legislation to the point where we think we have a good product to present to our colleagues, to the Congress as a whole, ultimately to the President for his signature, and, more importantly, to the American people in response to a situation that did not merely occur in one State, in one election, but as we all know now for a number of years a slow deteriorating process of our election system to such a degree that it was crying out reform.

While we have not solved every single problem, we think we have set up a mechanism for the first time to deal with election issues for the foreseeable future, under a proposal offered by my colleague from Kentucky, a permanent commission, which I think is an excellent suggestion. We deal with some fraud issues that Senator BOND thinks are very important if we are going to have an election reform issue. While we may not have dealt with every issue, we think we have taken a major step in addressing some of the concerns he has raised.

For those of us who are interested in the disabled in this country, those who were denied an opportunity to vote who had a right to vote—many studies indicate that happened in far more cases than any of us would like to admit—we think we have put together a pretty good package for which we are very proud. That is not to suggest we have dotted every "i" and crossed every "t" and thought about every possible reform or improvement, but we think we have about as good a product as could be presented to a body such as this for their consideration.

I do not know what the agenda will be of the leadership, but I think, for myself and Senator McCONNELL, we are prepared to go forward when they would like us to go. Whenever that is appropriate, we are ready to present a proposal we think will enjoy very broad-based support, not only in this Chamber but throughout the country, including the National Association of Secretaries of State and others who have worked with us, and various other organizations around the country that are deeply interested in the election process.

I see my friend from Kentucky, to whom I would be happy to yield, but I say first when the bell rings and the leadership decides it is appropriate, these two Members and others who joined us and are prepared to present a proposal that we hope will enjoy the kind of support for which we think it is deserving.

I yield to my friend from Kentucky. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I echo the remarks of my good friend from Connecticut. Election reform had the potential of being an intensely partisan issue. While we know that may still develop, let me say we have had all of those discussions over the last 6 months in our negotiating process, and we have now come together with the hope we will be able to go forward in a totally bipartisan way to improve the election system in this country.

As the Senator from Connecticut, who has provided outstanding leadership on this issue, has indicated, we have dealt with the fraud issue, which is important to a lot of people on this side of the aisle. No one has been a more forceful advocate for removing barriers for the disabled to exercise the franchise. Senator DODD carried that ball very effectively in our negotiations.

I thought we needed a permanent repository for this kind of expertise, so we set up a commission with Presidential appointees equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. It would be the one place in America that States and localities could go for objective advice, not somebody knocking on the door trying to sell them a particular system but objective advice about the best way to meet their particular election needs.

We did not wipe out any particular election system in America. We did not mandate the use of any particular election system. We did provide some real money that would be dispensed on a matching fund basis by this Presidential commission to those who were interested in upgrading their system.

I think we have come forward with a good bill, and I thank my friend from Connecticut for his leadership on this subject. I have been happy to join with him on it. If and when we do go to this—and we think it will be early in the session—we would encourage people to offer amendments that are related to the subject. We think this is a bill that needs to move along, not be bogged down in extraneous matters unrelated to the subject.

Again, I thank the Senator from Connecticut. I look forward to working with him. We are ready to go whenever the leaders decide this is the subject matter before us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THE INVESTOR CONFIDENCE PROTECTION ACT OF 2002

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I anticipate the arrival of my colleague from New Jersey, Senator CORZINE, at any moment because we would like to at least put our colleagues on notice today of our intention to introduce legislation to strengthen the independence and objectivity of corporate audits in this country.

I have the fortunate job of being the chairman of the Securities Subcommittee of the Banking Committee