

so full of life. The family requested that the service be a celebration of Chuck's life rather than a time of mourning. As patriotic music played, thousands paid tribute to this American hero. The service was a testament to the love his community had for this brave man—and a testament to the number of lives he touched.

Staff Sergeant Charles Kiser was a good, decent, loving man, who protected our Nation bravely. We will remember him always. I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TALENT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ASSESSING THE LAST TWO YEARS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we near the completion of the 108th Congress, it is an appropriate time to look back over the last 2 years and assess where we are. I think by any standard these have been 2 years marked by great achievement.

We have kept Americans safe at home, strengthened our economy, and vigorously pursued the war on terror. I would like to take a look back, as I indicated, at the legislative accomplishments of the 108th Congress.

Last year the Senate passed 11 appropriations bills left over from the previous Congress, and then pushed through all the normal 13 appropriation bills as well as the emergency wartime and Iraq reconstruction supplemental appropriations bill. We responded with the necessary funds to suppress the California fires through a supplemental appropriations. In all, the Senate passed 27 appropriations bills into law last year in the first session alone.

The Senate also pushed through the economic growth package, cutting taxes on American families by \$350 billion, as well as a revolutionary new Medicare prescription drug bill for all of our seniors. The Senate banned the horrific practice of partial-birth abortion. We passed the Do Not Call registry at the Federal Trade Commission. We provided tax relief to military families. We passed the Healthy Forests Act, to stop the catastrophic wildfires that have raged across our country. We enacted free trade agreements with Chile and with Singapore, and passed the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

The Senate passed the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization to revitalize an air transport industry suffering from the effects of the terrorist attack of 9/11.

After witnessing more than a decade of repression, the Senate passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act.

We secured significant resources to improve our nation's election systems, making it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

We passed the President's faith-based initiative, funded the effort to eradicate the scourge of global AIDs, and acted to guard our children against abduction and exploitation by passing the PROTECT Act.

We expanded NATO to include most of the former Warsaw Pact Countries and passed a significant arms reduction treaty with our enemy-turned-ally, Russia.

We took steps to bridge the digital divide by providing needed funds to historically black colleges, awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, and affirmed the constitutionality of using the term "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

And that was last year. This year, in the second session of this Congress, we passed into law a pension relief and stabilization plan for private sector businesses, workers, and their retirees.

We passed into law a bioshield act to improve countermeasures, like vaccines, to protect our people from biological, chemical or other terrorist attacks.

We passed into law the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

We passed into law a Defense appropriations bill, the Defense Authorization bill, a Homeland Security appropriations bill, and a Military Construction appropriations bill.

We passed a supplemental funding bill for operations in Iraq.

And we are about to complete work on the nine remaining appropriations bills which successfully concludes action on all Fiscal Year 2005 spending bills.

We have expanded trade opportunities with new free trade agreements with Australia and Morocco.

We have also passed expanded assistance to families with the Working Family Tax Relief Act.

We passed the Internet tax bill to prevent the imposition of capricious taxes on internet transactions.

We expanded the educational opportunities for disabled children by passing an improved IDEA reauthorization.

Also, we responded to the findings of the 9/11 Commission by implementing reforms in the Senate and are still considering as we finish this session intelligence reorganization measures which are in conference now and being discussed on both sides of the aisle.

Last, we passed legislation to revise our tax laws to comply with international trade agreements and, thus, will remove the European tax on U.S. manufacturers. Of particular interest to the Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, that measure included a buyout to aid our long-suffering tobacco growers, many of which reside in my State.

These are the legislative accomplishments of a very productive Congress, of

which we can be justifiably proud. I want to salute the effort of my colleagues who made it so, especially the members of my deputy whip team: LAMAR ALEXANDER, WAYNE ALLARD, CONRAD BURNS, BEN CAMPBELL, JOHN CORNYN, MIKE CRAPO, MIKE ENZI, LISA MURKOWSKI, GORDON SMITH, JOHN SUNUNU, JIM TALENT, and CRAIG THOMAS.

I can't thank them enough for all their hard work, their sound counsel and their tireless effort to help win so many close votes. I particularly want to thank my chief deputy whip, BOB BENNETT, my trusted adviser and dear friend for many years here in the Senate.

But one man deserves particular recognition. During these tough times of economic challenges and armed conflict, America has had to decisively confront some monumental questions.

Yet here, in the Senate, the majority had just a one vote margin—one vote.

But America steered a steady course during the 108th Congress only because this Senate was able to deliver a "yes" when "yes" was needed—yes to economic recovery, yes to funding the war on terrorism, yes to a Medicare prescription drug benefit,—a resounding "yes" to getting the business of America accomplished.

And here in the Senate, with the smallest of margins, on the toughest possible terrain, on the most pressing questions of our time, it was the tireless BILL FRIST who delivered that "yes" time and time again.

A truly remarkable performance by Senator FRIST. He has earned certainly my greatest respect and I think the respect of virtually everyone in this body. We are also proud to call him our good friend.

I also wish our good friend across the aisle, HARRY REID, great success as the new Democratic leader. He is a very able man, a very skillful legislator, and a worthy opponent. I and my colleagues look forward to working with him in the next Congress.

Finally, we cannot conclude the 108th Congress without a sense of sadness. There are many—in fact there are too many—great Senators who are leaving this institution. I have already had an opportunity to express my goodbyes to Senator NICKLES, Senator CAMPBELL, and Senator FITZGERALD.

I also wish a happy and healthy future to our colleagues across the aisle, Senator DASCHLE, Senator BREAU, Senator HOLLINGS, Senator BOB GRAHAM, Senator JOHN EDWARDS, and Senator ZELL MILLER. Each of these men has made a lasting contribution to this marvelous institution.

In closing, I also remember the greatest public servant of my lifetime, President Ronald Reagan, who, after 93 luminous years, departed the Nation he never lost faith in and that loved him so well.

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

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

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

FRITZ HOLLINGS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have served here long enough now that I have witnessed a lot of the comings and goings of many fine public servants whom I have known on the floor of the Senate.

Today, I would like to comment about those who are leaving us, and I want to start, first, with my good friend from South Carolina. FRITZ HOLLINGS and his wife Peatsy are very close friends of ours. They have been friends since we first came to the Senate. FRITZ and I served in World War II. We have traveled to places where he served and I served in World War II, and we are comrades in the deepest sense of that word.

He is a very interesting man. I remember earlier this year, when I was asked to cut a tape to be used at a retirement dinner for Senator HOLLINGS, I told my press secretary I did not think I could do it. As a matter of fact, I ended up appearing in person. As I told my staff, I really cannot conceive of the Senate without FRITZ HOLLINGS. It will be a different Senate. We have not always agreed, but we have always been friends.

There have been good times together. I can remember some of the fish that FRITZ and Peatsy caught in Alaska, and I can remember tales about some that they did not catch, the big ones that got away.

But I do know that having visited with them in their home in South Carolina, and visiting with their friends in Charleston, they have a really great life to go home to. They are wonderful people, and we are going to miss them a great deal.

I will say this, that when I first heard of Senator HOLLINGS, it was in a story about his role as Governor of South Carolina. He had become Governor, and as he entered the grounds of the Governor's house, he found there were places inside the grounds where prisoners were kept. There were literally, at that time, I think, cells that were partially underground. FRITZ did not like that any more than I would have, and he found ways to free those people and to give them another life. As a matter of fact, I remember meeting one of them who was very devoted to Senator HOLLINGS.

Senator HOLLINGS is a man with a great heart and a great mind and a great spirit and a temper almost as bad as mine. We are going to miss him, miss him terribly.

I hope he will come back often and visit us. I think he has the longest ca-

reer of all of those who are retiring, obviously, because he is the oldest. But he was one of the Ten Outstanding Men of the Year in the United States when he was young. I don't like to tell stories about him, but I think he actually attended a Republican Convention at one time.

As a member of the statehouse, as Governor, and as a member of the Hoover Commission, he distinguished himself in many ways, in commissions where he was appointed by both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy.

We are losing a man who has had a great role in public service. I hope we will all wish him well as he departs the Senate.

DON NICKLES

Mr. President, another Senator who is leaving us is Senator DON NICKLES. Senator NICKLES is a man I first met when I was traveling through Oklahoma with my friend, Senator Bellmon. Senator Bellmon had served here as a Senator. He served as Governor of his State.

Senator NICKLES, obviously, is a man of great capability, too. As a matter of fact, he is the first Oklahoma Republican Senator to be elected for four terms. He has had a commitment to his constituents and to his colleagues. He, as I, served as assistant Republican leader. That is the highest leadership position ever held by a Member of the Senate from Oklahoma.

I particularly remember his role as chairman of the Budget Committee and his role in the Finance Committee because no one has been more strenuous in expressing his views concerning the level of spending in the United States and the necessity to have firm budget control over the processes of the Senate, particularly the appropriations process where I have served a great many years.

I do believe his commitment to making Federal Government more responsible and less intrusive, his commitment to the basic Republican principles that government nearest the people is best, has been demonstrated by his service in the Senate. We are going to have a tough time without his guidance. He, I am sure, will be somewhere near us—at least that is indicated.

But having met him even before he ran for the Senate, I felt really a great warmth of friendship for him because I know how hard he worked to become a Member of the Senate, and I know his commitment, having left his business and coming here to make a new life.

Linda and their four children have been known to all of us in one way or the other. I think he has a wonderful family, a wonderful wife, and we wish them well.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska yields the floor and suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. I am going to give a speech on the floor regarding wellness and obesity. Is there a time constraint we are operating under now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a 10-minute time limit in effect now, but it has not been strictly enforced. The Senator may ask for more time.

WELLNESS AND OBESITY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as the 108th Congress comes to a close, many of us are looking back and asking whether we accomplished all that we might have. Now, of course, we are looking ahead to the next Congress for opportunities to move forward with some bipartisan agendas. What can we work on together to really do something good for our country?

The last year has been a challenging one. The campaign season always makes it a little more difficult to accomplish tasks that are already a challenge. It is not surprising, then, that many Members of this body look back on the 108th Congress with mixed feelings. I personally view it in which some important opportunities have been missed. But I also think some have been offset by what I detect as an emerging bipartisan concern and interest in some issues that have previously not received much attention.

In particular, I have been heartened by the degree of interest shown by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the issue related to obesity, health promotion and prevention of premature death and chronic disease.

This is very heartening that we see on both sides of the aisle strong interest in promoting wellness, in promoting disease prevention. As I have often said, we in America do not have a health care system; we have a sick care system. If you get sick, you get care, but there is precious little out there to keep you healthy in the first place. All the incentives are to patch you up, fix you, and mend you once you are ill. There are very few incentives to keep you healthy in the first place.

Now with all of the recent revelations on obesity and what that is doing to our society, more and more interest is being shown in what we can do as a Congress to change this paradigm, to change us from a sick care system to a truly health care wellness system in our country.

I am confident that in this area, we can make some historic progress, again, on a bipartisan basis in the new Congress that will convene in January.

I have been working for a long time in this area, but I am not the only one who appreciates the urgency of these issues. For example, the distinguished majority leader, Senator FRIST, has shown a keen interest in finding ways