

and Pensions Committee is one of the more controversial committees of the Senate. If I didn't have some credibility of following through on the things I have talked about in the process, that would not have gotten out of committee unanimously, had that not had the same kind of confidence on what I would do if a conference committee were appointed. And we talked about what kind of differences there are. The House had already passed their bill. If they didn't have some confidence in me that what I had said would happen would happen, it would not have gotten through the Senate floor unanimously. That doesn't happen often with Health, Education, Labor, and Pension bills.

This has been a very important bill for the workforce of America, and we had great agreement and cooperative work on it, recognizing what would probably be done in conference committee. Now, we could probably send this over four or five times to the House—which there is not time to do—and resolve some of the differences in each of those. Had I known this was going to happen, I would have started that process much earlier so we would have had time to send an important bill like this back and forth.

The way this has always been done with the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee bill—that is the committee I have been on ever since I got here—is that we held conferences. Yes, some of them had a lot of animosity, but we worked them out and got bills finished. When you have difficult issues, the best thing is for people to sit down with each other. I have always invited the other side to any conference committee I have been on, and we have listened to both sides. What we have usually come up with, instead of one side or the other, was a third way. That is what ought to be done on this bill.

We ought to be reaching an agreement so we can get 900,000 people a year trained to fill the skills gap we were talking about before. We are not just going to have a lack of jobs, we are going to have more jobs than we can fill—provided we have people trained to fill them. If we don't train the people, those jobs are going overseas and we will never see them again. It has been critical for this year, the year that is just about over. We cannot afford to do this again next year and wait a year or 2 years to reach an agreement to get people trained for jobs. That is what is happening.

If we have to go until the first of the year, all these bills start all over again. Everybody's ideas come back in again, we redraft and start again, and we get to conference—maybe. But there is no assurance of that. We are at the point where we can have a conference committee. If we have a conference committee, then there can be agreement or disagreement. If there is disagreement, there is an opportunity to filibuster at that point. Senators

who cannot filibuster a bill through the rest of the session, as short as it is going to be now, probably ought to be worried about their senatorial capability.

Our workers and our companies deserve more than election year political obstruction. They deserve the tools needed to keep American workers and businesses the best in the world. They deserve to see us act in a bipartisan manner and send this bill to conference.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield the remaining time on the Republican side?

Mr. ENZI. Yes.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is now closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:53 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed as in morning business for the following two items: That Senator DORGAN be permitted to proceed after the Senator from New Mexico for 5 minutes to speak as in morning business, and the Senator from New Mexico be recognized for 7 minutes to speak as in morning business, and that those are the only two speakers to be permitted as in morning business at this point, and that is for debate only.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I also seek the same 7 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. With the same conditions.

Mr. DORGAN. Yes.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. So we have 7 minutes each, speeches only as in morning business, and that is all we have agreed to at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI pertaining to the introduction of S. 2818 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, beyond the statement of my friend from New Mexico and Senator DORGAN, is there any other time that has been allocated?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, there is not.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 3 minutes to respond to my friend from New Mexico. Also, Senator NELSON is in the Chamber, and if there is a Republican who wants to speak—we are as in morning business, are we not?

Mr. DOMENICI. We are, but I cannot do that because we carved this out without our leadership. The Senator on his side is indicating he did not want us to do that, but he agreed to our two. We will soon agree with him, but at this point I cannot. Senator DORGAN is entitled to speak next, and I will inquire about Senator REID's and Senator NELSON's requests very shortly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

UGLINESS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, first, I am proud to be in the Senate. I have always been proud to be a part of our political system. It is a remarkable privilege to participate in this system of ours. I have run for Statewide election 11 times, since I was in my midtwenties. I must say there are times when I see and hear things in American politics that fill me with disgust.

Two years ago, we had a colleague, Max Cleland, who sat in that desk near the door. Max Cleland was charged in his campaign with lack of commitment to our country's national security. They ran an ad against Max Cleland that had an image of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. This is a man who left three limbs on the battlefield. He sat in this Chamber missing two legs and an arm. Back home on television, he was accused of not standing up for this country's national security. It stretches my threshold of forgiveness to excuse those who do that to someone like Max Cleland, who went to Vietnam, came back, and wrote a book entitled "Strong at the Broken Places." He ran for the Senate to become a U.S. Senator, only to be attacked that he was not somehow standing up for the national security interests of this country. Shame on them.

This Sunday, I saw that ugliness again raise its head. It is the worst of American politics, in my judgment. This is a newspaper called the Rapid City Journal. I have it because this comes from a neighboring State of

mine. On Sunday, Republican challenger John Thune accused Democratic Senator TOM DASCHLE of encouraging America's enemies and damaging U.S. troop morale with a headline, "Emboldening the Enemy?"

For those who engage in this kind of politics, attacking the Democratic leader in the Senate as emboldening the enemy, encouraging America's enemies, and damaging U.S. troop morale, the Rapid City Journal says, all I can say is, shame, shame. Is there decency left in American politics? There was not in the attack on Max Cleland, a man who nearly died on the battlefield, and there is not in this unforgivable attack on the Democratic leader in the Senate.

Does anyone really believe that which occurs here, that the actions of the Democratic leader embolden the enemy, encourage America's enemies, and damage U.S. troop morale? It is so disgusting to see the tactic of questioning someone's commitment to their country, questioning someone's patriotism, or when someone says a critical word, suggesting somehow that they are giving aid and comfort to America's enemies. That is not what ought to be the best in this democracy. It is the worst in American politics. The shrill, ugly, corrosive, relentless attacks in this political system ought to stop. There is so much to be done. Obviously, I support my colleague, Senator DASCHLE.

There is reason to have an aggressive debate in our State to the south about a range of issues. But there is no reason, no excuse for the challenger in that race to be suggesting the Democratic leader here in the Senate, my colleague and friend Senator DASCHLE, somehow is encouraging America's enemies and damaging U.S. troop morale. That is not below the belt, that is below the radar screen of American politics. My hope is that the American people, my hope would have been that the citizens of Georgia, and my hope certainly is that the citizens of the United States see it for what it is. It is an outrage, and this country should not stand for it. This country is about, in my judgment, aggressive, open debate. There is an old saying: When everyone is thinking the same thing, no one is thinking very much.

But we have people around today who believe if you raise any questions at all, you are somehow unpatriotic. What a load of nonsense.

I came into American politics and into this political system proud of politics and the way we make decisions. John F. Kennedy used to say that every mother kind of hopes her child might grow up to become President as long as they are not active in politics.

He was kidding, of course. Politics is an honorable venture in this country. It is the way we have made decisions for over 200 years. There is nowhere else like this place on this globe. We spin around the Sun with 6 billion of us and somehow through divine provi-

dence we landed right here right now. What a wonderful event for us. It is our job to be caretakers of a political system, a democracy that is the most successful in the world. There is plenty of reason for us to have aggressive debates. Aggressive debate is wonderful. It is invigorating and refreshing to our democracy. But this is not aggressive debate. This is the worst of American politics. I hope it stops.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, may I direct a question to my colleague?

Mr. DORGAN. I would be happy to respond or yield the floor.

Mr. JOHNSON. I want to express my agreement with the observations expressed by my friend and colleague from North Dakota about the tenor of some of the recent attacks directed toward my colleague from South Dakota, Senator DASCHLE. This is beyond anything we have witnessed in America politics in more than a generation, and perhaps ever, to have an attack in a political campaign essentially accusing a leader of the Senate of conduct bordering on treason.

I think Senator DASCHLE put it well, that based on good values in the way we tend to see things, the observations of this gentleman ought to lead to a trip to the woodshed for the despicable nature of the observations. I believe it would be hard to find anyone in the Senate—I am sure my colleague from North Dakota would agree with me, Senator DASCHLE being the only veteran in that particular race, someone who served in the Vietnam era—would Senator DORGAN agree with me that there is virtually no one in the Senate of either party who has been more committed to living up to our obligations to our veterans, to the safety, equipment, and resources of our men and women in uniform? I ask this question of my colleague from North Dakota, as the father of a young man, my oldest son who served in combat in both Afghanistan and most recently in Iraq, a member of the 101st Airborne, my son, who is a very big supporter, a very vocal supporter of Senator DASCHLE and the importance for the sake of our military and our national security of our State of reelecting him to this important position. But can you think of anyone who has done more, who has provided more leadership, has been more vocal in support of our troops and our military and our Nation's defense than Senator DASCHLE?

Mr. DORGAN. Senator DASCHLE is an Air Force veteran. He is a patriot. He is someone who has a strong record on national defense and national security issues. He doesn't need me to come to the floor to defend him. I come to the floor only because I am disgusted at this sort of nonsense. This represents the worst of American politics. If you want to have a debate about energy, taxes, foreign policy, name it, have that debate. But don't accuse your opponent of somehow not standing up for the interests of this country. Don't accuse your opponent of giving aid and

comfort to the enemy. That is beneath, in my judgment, thoughtful politics. That is the kind of thoughtless and low blow in politics that is uncalled for. The only reason I came to the floor is I am disgusted by this.

I am part of this political system and I have always in my campaign tried to wage a positive campaign. When challenged, I am aggressive, no question about that. But I hope no one is accusing me of the low road because I never take the low road. I believe this is about a positive future of jobs and hope and opportunity for the American people. There is so much to talk about and so much to do. In my judgment, it betrays rather than serves the public interest in this country to be somehow questioning the patriotism or questioning the commitment of a Member of this body, especially the leader of our caucus, questioning the commitment of the leader to the ideals and goals of this country and saying instead that somehow what the leader of our caucus has done is to give aid and comfort to the enemy or to embolden the enemy, as the headline states. That is not what we should expect from our political system or the candidates who are in that political system.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DORGAN. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Senator for yielding.

The Senator has accurately described a political season where meanness is the order of the day. He has pointed out this element in the race in South Dakota. I have seen it in my State of Florida recently, interestingly, in the Republican primary, meanness where the truth doesn't matter, where you can be opponents, but you don't have to be enemies, and it is there nevertheless. It is time for the people of this country to say that is enough. We are killing our own democratic institutions with the smut and dirt and untruths, and it is time to stop.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

I know the Senator from North Dakota has the floor. I would like to ask a question of the Senator from Florida. To make the Senator's point clear, however, I ask, is it not true that the Senate race to which the Senator is referring was a race between two Republicans, one backed by the President and the other running on his own, former Congressman McCollum? And the viciousness—I have read editorials from the State of Florida which dealt with Martinez's campaign against this good man, Congressman McCollum, and the same applies to South Dakota. The same crew that is trying to demean Senator DASCHLE demeaned Congressman McCollum. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I say to the Senator that sadly Mr. McCollum, former Congressman, who ended up second in the Republican primary, a fellow I have known since high school and

who has some very high principles, because he announced that he was in favor of the hate crimes bill, was labeled, as reported in the St. Petersburg Times, as "the new darling of the homosexual extremists" as a means of trying to cut him down in a Republican primary.

This has absolutely gotten out of control and I am afraid we are going to see more of the same as we come into the general election. It is exasperating. It is not the American way. We have seen this time after time. My goodness, what do we have to expect in the Presidential race in the next 6 weeks?

That is my response to the Senator.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Chair state what the matter before the Senate is at this stage?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business for debate only.

Mr. REID. And the time is not divided between now and 3 o'clock?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from North Dakota has expired.

Mr. REID. Following that expiration of time, how is the time allocated?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no order in place.

The Senator from Nevada.

VOTING IN AMERICA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to comment briefly on the statement of my dear friend from New Mexico about voting and all that he thinks is wrong with our system. I would be happy to look at his legislation. But it seems to me around here what we should be dealing with is giving people the opportunity to vote more easily rather than making it more difficult.

I think it speaks volumes that when you look at the States that have same-day registration, the turnout is much bigger. We have one State where there is no registration, and the vote there, of course, is even higher. In those instances where you have same-day registration and you have no registration, with all the modern computerization, all the ways of checking, there has not been a single case of fraud reported, to my knowledge. So I think what we should try to do is make it easier for people to vote, not harder. I heard my friend, if I understood his statement, say that there are some people out registering lots and lots of people. Well, good. Good. We need more people like that.

I am very disappointed in the State of Nevada. I have tried for years to get the system changed. But, in Nevada, we cut off registration a month before the primary election, and then we cut it off a month before the general election. Just when people are interested in voting, we cut them off. And the county clerk says: Oh, it's so hard for us to get all the records in order. That is silliness. With all the modern technology we have, it is easy.

The reason it is hard is people like to know who they have who voted for

them last time or voted against them. They do not want to make a big impression on getting new people into the system. It is easier to deal with what you have, and it is wrong.

We started off after the Civil War with rules to keep people from voting. We need to get out of that mindset.

We need to make it easier for people to vote, and one way to do that is to have either same-day registration or even no registration. There are plenty of ways of checking to see if people are trying to vote fraudulently.

In the State of Oregon, people vote by mail. They do not have polling places in Oregon, and it works out just fine. The State of Washington also does a lot of their balloting by mail. It works out fine. Those two States decided they wanted to do what they could to increase voter participation, not cut back on it. We need to do more of that rather than all these laws that are going to throw people in jail if they register wrong people. I think there are so many different ways of checking to make sure you have an honest election that you do not need to have all these punitive measures that are proposed.

APOLOGY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I know my friend from Florida wants to speak. I certainly want to give him that ability. But I just want to say this: The Senator from North Dakota is absolutely right. Senator DASCHLE is a veteran who has served in the U.S. military. He is a person who has dedicated much of his legislative life to helping people who have served in the military.

There are a lot of people who can take responsibility for dealing with Agent Orange, but Senator DASCHLE, who is a Vietnam-era veteran, knows about Agent Orange, and he has worked tirelessly to get things done in that regard.

I have worked with him on concurrent receipts. He has been a big advocate of concurrent receipts. He is a person who has almost single-handedly taken care of TRICARE, to make sure that National Guardsmen and reservists are treated more fairly with medical care.

To think that in any way this good man has somehow emboldened the enemy—and that is in the way of a fundraising letter—is not very good. I know the man running against Senator DASCHLE. I like him. I am just terribly disappointed that he would allow people to use him the way they have. That Senator DASCHLE has emboldened the enemy is unfair. It is outrageous. And I think that Congressman John Thune should apologize to the people of South Dakota for suggesting that TOM DASCHLE has emboldened the enemy. I assume he is referring to these nameless, faceless, evil people who are committing this war on terror, who are executing this war on terror.

Senator DASCHLE has somehow emboldened the enemy, these name-

less, faceless people who are killing innocent women and children, and others? I think not. And I say John Thune, whom I have the highest respect for, should return the dignity to his person and disavow this statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator withhold?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I will yield to the Senator from Nevada.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business for the purpose of statements only until 3:45 p.m.—that is the next hour—with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I also say, Mr. President, if there is some concern because we used the last 15 minutes, if the Republicans want to come and get a little extra time because of that, we would be happy to take care of that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

THREE MAJOR HURRICANES IN FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, my family has been in Florida for 175 years, and I do not remember in all of the history books where major hurricanes have happened back to back. It has happened with lesser hurricanes, but I think the record book was shattered when three large, major hurricanes in a row have battered our State over the course of a 6-week period: first Charley, then Frances, and now Ivan.

As I flew in a National Guard helicopter last Friday with the Governor over the Barrier Islands, I saw there were no sand dunes anymore in the Barrier Islands of Pensacola Beach. The sugary white sand of the beaches and those sand dunes had been washed across the entire Barrier Island from the Gulf of Mexico to Pensacola Bay. And from the air, it appeared as if the entire Barrier Island was washed in white. There were structures standing, but the structures were usually the newer ones built according to the new building codes. And as we are hearing in the reports out of Alabama, those structures were even uprooted on their foundations and have to be destroyed. If it was an old structure, that old structure is history.

For not only the howling winds of 138 miles an hour, but the tidal surge of the water that came with the hurricane winds—water that then washed up into the very large Pensacola Bay, even taking out major sections of the Interstate 10 bridge—we did some quick mathematical calculations and figured that a wall of water at least 40 feet