

Today, this body has the opportunity to confirm an excellent nominee with the skills, with the experience, and the character to help bring our students of all ages and backgrounds along the pathway to fulfill their own version of the American dream. I am confident we can do so, and provide our children and students of all ages with an effective advocate at the Department of Education.

Thank you, Mr. President. I think all Members who wish to speak on this have spoken.

I ask unanimous consent that all time remaining on both sides be yielded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. I ask the Senate to proceed to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Margaret Spellings, of Texas, to be Secretary of Education?

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DURBIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business under any unanimous consent, I ask to be recognized to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first, let me congratulate the new chairman of the HELP Committee, the Senator from Wyoming, for his leadership. I wish him the same level of success for everything he brings to the floor—that it be both bipartisan and moved through so quickly. I think our decision to move the Secretary of Education so quickly was the right decision. I was happy to join in that vote.

I wish the chairman the very best in his new assignment on the committee.

There are several nominations that are likely to move through with equal dispatch—if not today, within the next few days.

It has been my honor to meet with the new Secretary of Commerce-Designate, Carlos Gutierrez, who was formerly the CEO of Kellogg, and is now taking on this post. He is new to Government but he brings an amazing perspective to the Department of Commerce. I am certain his nomination will move through very quickly. I am certain he will do a very good job.

The same thing can be said of the Governor of Nebraska, Mike Johanns, who has been tapped by the President to serve as the new Secretary of Agriculture. He and I had a very positive conversation and dialog yesterday. He is from Iowa originally. He went to law school in Nebraska and made it his home. He was elected Governor. Having grown up on a dairy farm in Iowa, he understands farming first hand. We had a very positive conversation. He succeeds an excellent Secretary, Ann Veneman, who now will go on to be the head of UNICEF.

Mike Johanns was an excellent choice by President Bush and was confirmed without any debate or controversy. I say that because many people think when it comes to the Senate floor it is nothing but a fistfight every single day. That is not a fact. We will disagree, but in many instances the President's recommendations are approved without controversy and without debate. Every White House prays that every recommendation, every nomination, and every bill will have the same outcome. That is never the case. We will do our best to work with this President. Coming together today, in this session, immediately after the inauguration, is an indication of our efforts to do so.

INAUGURATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will speak for a moment about the inauguration we just attended. First, I address an issue of style which was brought to my attention earlier this week in Chicago. One of my acquaintances is a columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times. His name is Neil Steinberg. Mr. Steinberg recently wrote "Hatless Jack." It is the story about men wearing hats in America. It was a good conversation we had about his book.

It starts with the premise that some 44 years ago today with the inauguration of John Kennedy, there was a change in fashion in America and men stopped wearing hats. Mr. Steinberg debunks that notion but goes into a very interesting history of not only John Kennedy wearing a hat but also hats in America.

People remember that inauguration 44 years ago. Seven inches of snow fell the day before. Some 3,000 soldiers were on the street overnight shoveling the snow, using flamethrowers to try to melt the snow to make way for the inauguration the next day.

The inauguration started an hour late. Senator Kennedy, of course, became the President and gave his famous speech: Ask not what America can do for you but what you can do for your country. Robert Frost was at that occasion. People seem to remember there were no hats there, that John Kennedy did not wear a hat. They mistakenly blame him for killing an industry.

I wish those same people could have been out today for the inauguration

and seen my colleagues in the House and Senate. There were some amazing hats being worn. There are very few other times my colleagues would wear one. We had Senator BAUCUS and Senator HATCH in cowboy hats, Senator DEWINE in his bowler, Alan Greenspan with his Yankees baseball hat—quite an array, not to mention Justice Scalia's hat, which I cannot describe.

I say this by way of introduction. There is a style issue here that someone should report. I thank Mr. Steinberg for bringing this historical notion to our attention, that the inauguration today raises questions which I am sure an enterprising journalist will follow up on.

Let's go to the substance of the speech and what happened today. Clearly, there were disappointments on the Democratic side of the aisle. Many Members worked long and hard for our colleagues JOHN KERRY and Senator John Edwards on their candidacy. I served as vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee and traveled to many of the battleground States on their behalf. I saw an outpouring of volunteer support for that campaign that I had never seen before in any previous campaign. There was also an outpouring of small donations, an indication of the interest the American people had in that campaign.

Of course, there was a bitter disappointment among those on the Democratic side with the outcome on November 2. I am glad Senator KERRY came forward on November 3 and said, clearly, that he was conceding the election and that America should move on with its new President, President George Bush, who was then reelected.

Many people contacted me and expressed the sadness and bitterness and disappointment, as you might expect, after a hotly contested election. It is a fact of life that America is very closely divided politically. Had one State, the State of Ohio, gone the other way and the electors pledged to JOHN KERRY rather than to President Bush, we would have sworn in JOHN KERRY today as President of the United States. The margin in Ohio was 118,000 votes. So still we see our Nation divided, blue States and red States, though there is a lot of commonality within those States on issues of importance.

I listened to the President's speech today. It was a good one. Many people mistakenly believe the inaugural address is the State of the Union. It is not. Most Presidents use the inaugural address to make a statement that will stand the test of time, that will last through history. It does not address the morning paper so much as the summation of what has happened in America over the last year, two, three, or four. That is what President Bush did in his speech today.

I thought the direction of that speech toward freedom was an important point. It is one that every American and every American President would share—not only that we value our own

freedom but want to see other nations reach that same goal. I agree with the President completely.

He also spoke about what the freedoms would mean to Americans. He is not the first President to address that issue, of course. We can all remember the famous speech by Franklin Roosevelt, the "Four Freedoms" speech, in his address to Congress on January 6, 1941.

Franklin Roosevelt, in that speech, laid out what he considered to be the four essential human freedoms: first, freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world; second, freedom of every person to worship God in his own way, everywhere in the world; third, freedom from want, which translated into world terms means economic understandings, which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants everywhere in the world; and the fourth, freedom from fear, which translated into world terms means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor anywhere in the world.

That speech of the Four Freedoms was given about 12 months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. As we read about the freedom from fear, we put it in the context of what followed: one of the bloodiest wars in the world. What President Bush spoke to was the freedom from fear from terrorism, recounting our tragic national experience on September 11. He also talked about the freedom from want, which President Roosevelt raised, as well. We all want the people of this country to have the best. We all want to do our part to make that happen.

We just heard an extraordinary exchange between Democrats and Republicans in the Senate on the issue of education. What struck me in listening to Senator ALEXANDER of Tennessee, Senator ENZI of Wyoming, Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts, and Senator WYDEN of Oregon was the commonality, so many things they agreed on, the importance of education. We will see in a few weeks how important education really is. This administration will present to Congress its budget resolution. We can give a lot of speeches in the Senate, we can pledge that we have great interest in issues, but the real test is if we put our resources and our energy behind those interests.

The budget resolution is the first test. We can look to that budget resolution to see if the values of the inaugural address are expressed in the budget of the President. It is one thing to speak of those values on January 20; it is quite another to present a budget resolution which meets that test.

We can look to several items. First, will there be more money for No Child Left Behind? This is a program I voted for, a program of accountability in schools to make certain that the kids are progressing. But there has been a

real complaint from local school administrators, Governors, that we have created a Federal mandate for testing and accountability but no resources to take care of the problems. When we identify special ed students or students from struggling families or disadvantaged households who are not doing well on tests, what do we do as a Federal Government to help the school district?

In my home State of Illinois, we are in a desperate situation. School districts are bankrupt all over the State. We have had a terrible time because of the turn down in the economy. Our Governor is struggling to balance his budget. The amount of money for education certainly should be increased. Instead, the Federal Government identifies problems, creates this category of so-called failing schools, and then does not provide the resources to take care of the problem.

In a few weeks we are going to see a budget resolution from this administration. When it comes to education and all that we have heard on the Senate floor and the President's speech, the real test is, will we put the resources there? Will we put the money there?

Secondly, there is the whole question of health care. If you want to talk about what most families and individuals need in America, it comes down to basic health care. Ask any Governor in this Nation the importance of Medicaid. That is the program, of course, the Federal and State program, to provide health care to people who are disabled or in lower income categories. Ask them what their concern is. Their concern is that the cost of Medicaid is going up substantially and that the Federal Government is not providing the resources. As a result, many of these Governors worry that people today depending on Medicaid will not have the Federal funds to match the State funds to make certain that Medicaid is viable.

Seventy percent of all Americans in nursing homes today depend on Medicaid—70 percent. A substantial number of our children depend on Medicaid for their health care, and a substantial number of pregnant mothers about to deliver depend on that same Medicaid program.

Watch carefully when the President's budget comes forward. See what the funding for Medicaid is. See if the President's budget will also address this aspiration of freedom from want when it comes to health care.

Another issue that is very timely in the news is the future of Social Security. We are still waiting. We have heard some generalities from the President, his general goals, his general aspirations when it comes to Social Security reform. There is an ad playing on Washington, DC, television that shows Franklin Roosevelt signing the bill into law to create Social Security in the 1930s and then quickly switches to a color photo of President Bush

working at his desk saying we need his leadership to make certain Social Security will last into the future.

Well, that is a good thing. Each President should address that. But we need to see the particulars, and we need to ask ourselves, is this President proposing a privatization, even a partial privatization, of Social Security which will in fact cause a cut in benefits to Social Security recipients? If that is the President's proposal, I think he is in for a struggle.

Many of us view Social Security differently than some on the other side of the aisle. We understand there is a challenge in Social Security. But keep this in mind: If we do nothing on Capitol Hill in Congress about Social Security, absolutely nothing, Social Security will continue to make every single payment every year with a cost of living adjustment until at least 2042, 37 years from now, and perhaps 2052, 47 years from now. Those are the estimates from the experts. So we have between 40 and 50 years of Social Security making every payment if we do nothing today.

I believe, and many share it, that we can do something today. We can make commonsense changes in Social Security that are modest, which would, when played out over 40 or 50 years, much like the miracle of compound interest, make Social Security strong, not just for 40 or 50 years but 60 or 70 years or beyond. That is what I believe we should do.

The reason I believe it will work is I have seen it work. I served in the House of Representatives in the 1980s. President Ronald Reagan, a Republican, came to Tip O'Neill, the quintessential Democratic leader, and said: We have a problem. All of the babies born after World War II, the baby boomer generation, will show up for Social Security, and we will not have the resources. We need to make changes today in the mid-1980s to take care of a problem we can foresee in 2010, far into the future. And we did it on a bipartisan basis. We made changes, some popular, some not, some very modest in nature, and look what happened: Social Security bought more longevity and more stability because of those changes.

If President Bush is coming to us and saying, make the modest changes so that Social Security can be strong in the future, then I will sign up for that. On a bipartisan basis, we owe that not only to those who are to retire, working today, but to future generations. But if the goal here is to privatize Social Security, is to take from the Social Security trust fund resources we are already counting on to pay to retirees and to put it into the stock market, which some are suggesting, I think the President is in for a battle because if we are going to privatize Social Security at the expense of cutting benefits to Social Security recipients, then I am afraid there is going to be a great resistance on both sides of the aisle.

Wait for the President's State of the Union, wait for his budget resolution, wait to see if the promise in values that were articulated in the inaugural address will be played out in the actual budget presented to Congress in the future. That is what we have to do.

There are a lot of hungry people in America today. There are a lot of families anxious to find work. There are a lot of people who have jobs today that are not quite what they were a year ago. We have lost manufacturing jobs across this country. We have health insurance costs going up dramatically, not only hurting businesses but labor unions as well. Schools are struggling to do their job. We are in a much more competitive world.

But I think what the President said today was a message of hope; that if we can come together as a nation, regardless of our political persuasion, that if we can be honest about the challenges, and if we can give a little on both sides to work out compromises, the country can, in the future, as it has in the past, rise to the occasion. I look forward to being a part of that process.

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

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

A CALL FOR UNIFICATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, every 4 years, at the time of the inauguration, it is a festive time in America. It certainly is a time of celebration in Washington, DC. I have had the good fortune of being able to be here on a number of occasions.

As I look back, the thing that stands out—Democrat and Republican—is how cold the weather is. It is always cold. It is always a question of how cold it is going to be. I had the good fortune, historically, of being able to serve here in the Senate when we canceled an outdoor inauguration ceremony for President Reagan. It was so cold it simply could not be held outside, and the crowd had to be thinned down by thousands and thousands, and people jammed into the Rotunda behind us. Even though it was cold outside, it was still warm inside at the second inauguration of President Reagan. It is a time when we put political differences aside and honor the American presidency.

I have had a lot of microphones shoved in my direction today. Each of those times I tried to recognize the day. The day is to honor our system of Government.

If we look back 4 years ago, there was a situation where the man who was elected President received fewer votes than the person he beat. We had the

tremendous problems with the electoral system in Florida, and then we had the race decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. But America being as it is, the minute the Supreme Court made their decision, Vice President Gore and the rest of the country recognized that the election was over. There wasn't a window broken; there were no riots; no one was hurt. The inauguration went forward as if President Bush had won by 10 million votes. That is what our country is all about. We are a nation of laws, not a nation of men.

It is my hope that today will usher in a new beginning in Washington. I say that because we have had a lot of partisan rancor and squabbling. I hope that now gives way to a spirit of bipartisanship. Frankly, we didn't get much in the last 4 years with the new tone. The President said he wanted to be a uniter and not a divider. For reasons I don't fully understand, that never took place.

I spoke to the President the day after the election, and it was a pleasant conversation. He clearly indicated at that time that he wanted to reach out. He said: I haven't another election, and I want to do my best to get along. That is my take on what he said to me. I hope we are able to go forward on the message the President delivered to me. This country needs unification. We have been divided too long.

Today we had a little lunch after the inauguration ceremony. Of all the speeches the President has given, his speech there, which took less than 5 minutes, was the best he has ever delivered. I commented on that. It was because he delivered the speech recognizing the tremendous responsibilities he has as President of the United States. You could tell by listening to and watching him the emotion that he felt. I was very impressed with that.

I trust and hope that the President's expressed feelings today go forward in the months and years to come. I say that because the American people are counting on us. People from Rhode Island, people from Illinois, people from Nevada, people from all over the country are depending on us to work together to tackle the immense problems facing this Nation.

We on this side of the aisle—the aisle that we talk about so much is right here—all 45 of us have stated privately and publicly, we will work with the President. But I do say this: We will not shy away from living up to the values and priorities we believe are important in our country. We are serious in tone and in context. We will work with the President.

He took an oath of office today. We all saw that on national television. People don't often see us every 6 years when we take the oath of office. During his remarks following taking the oath of office, he praised the wisdom contained in the document we call the Constitution. That document lays forth the separation of powers within our Government, the three separate

but equal branches of Government. I take my constitutional responsibility just as does the President of the United States.

We as Senators have constitutional obligations to which we swear every 6 years when we take our oath of office and fulfill our contract with the people of our respective States. Speaking for those on this side of the aisle, we are going to work as hard as we can to live up to the expectations the American people have in us. We may be elected as Democrats and Republicans, but we don't serve as Democrats and Republicans. We serve ultimately as Americans. There are so many areas where we can find common ground, we need not look to areas where we can squabble and be partisan. If we work together on the areas where we have common ground, it would take every waking minute the Senate has.

I look forward to being the new Democratic leader, working with this caucus and working with the President and my Republican colleagues to find ways that we can keep our commitments to the armed services, those serving in uniform in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, the Balkans, all over the world, as they are serving to keep Americans safe. The war on terror is a war for which we must be vigilant, and we will do everything we can to support the armed services of our country.

One of our immediate tasks must be to put our Nation's fiscal house in order. There can be no question about the need to do that. We are spending more money than we are taking in as a government. We are spending in excess of our resources by far too much. There is much work to be done to strengthen education, expand access to quality, affordable health care.

I don't talk about bipartisanship just in theory. I have had the good fortune to work with Senator JOHN ENSIGN, a Republican. JOHN ENSIGN and I are from the State of Nevada. Six years ago we were in one of the most difficult, bitter races, not only in the history of the State of Nevada but the history of our country. That race was ultimately decided by 428 votes. Here it is 6 years later, and JOHN ENSIGN is now a member of the Senate.

JOHN ENSIGN is a loyal Republican, and I do my very best to represent the Democratic Party. But because of our work together, the work of Senator REID and Senator ENSIGN, we have worked on that which is important to the State of Nevada and, we believe, to the country. We have worked together in a bipartisan basis. That work has been beneficial to our country.

With the spirit of the inauguration close to our hearts today, I look forward to the great debates ahead in the great debating society we call the Senate. I am optimistic and confident that today could be a new beginning. But it will only be a new beginning if the tone that is set today is carried forward in the years to come in making our country the country it has the potential to be.