

Senate had a productive and beneficial session under his helm. I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD an article that appeared in the Lexington Herald-Leader on May 8, 2006, that details his recent accomplishments. I ask my fellow Senators to join me in thanking David Williams for his service to the people of Kentucky.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

POWER POLITICS HAS A NEW CAPTAIN
(By Ryan Alessi)

FRANKFORT.—For better or for worse, this was Senate President David Williams' General Assembly session.

Williams, the commanding and strategic-minded Republican from Burkesville, has gradually established himself as the dominant personality in the legislature since taking the helm of the upper chamber six years ago.

But during this year's session, which wrapped up last month, Williams played multiple starring roles.

He was the deal maker—adding more money in the budget for the University of Kentucky and ensuring that one of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's priorities, the addition of two school days, was approved.

He was a facilitator. Just when most everyone thought a seat-belt enforcement bill was dead, Williams tacked the measure—another key priority of Fletcher—on to less controversial legislation, which eventually passed.

And early in the session, Democrats praised him for allowing bipartisan proposals relating to mine safety and a ban on protests at military funerals.

He also was a lightning rod for criticism, notably the controversy over the University of the Cumberlands.

It was Williams who inserted \$10 million into the budget for construction of a pharmacy school on the campus of the Baptist-run university in Williamsburg, which is in his Senate district. Another \$1 million would go to scholarships at the pharmacy school.

The revelation about public funds going to a private university sparked some outcries, particularly after the school expelled a student for announcing on a Web site that he is gay. Williams has defended the funding.

And an ongoing rhetorical feud between Williams and Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph Lambert provided an interesting sidebar to the legislature's work, as Williams sparked debates about separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches.

Throughout the 60-day session, all roads seemed to lead through Williams.

"They led through me or over me?" joked Williams, who at times comes off as affable and self-deprecating, and at others as defiant and argumentative.

He acknowledged that he tried to approach 2006 differently than recent sessions that digressed into bickering and stalemate among the legislative leaders over key issues—especially the budget.

"I felt like in the past, I had been drawn into a few confrontations that I shouldn't have gotten into. I don't think it was constructive to the institution," Williams said.

That's not to say he remained above the fray.

The last week of the session was a particularly grueling test of Williams' restraint. Lawmakers were trying to finalize details of the budget while scrambling to pass the last batch of other bills, including a proposal to lessen the tax burden on certain small businesses.

As Williams attempted to ram through the Senate's version of that tax-relief plan, Democratic Sen. Tim Shaughnessy vehemently objected, at one point declaring: "I don't trust you guys."

So Williams switched off Shaughnessy's microphone.

In the end, negotiations between Senate Republicans and House Democrats crumbled on the small-business tax issue—one of a handful of key priorities pegged by both parties that failed.

But the main goal—passing the state's two-year, \$18.1 billion spending plan—was achieved. And negotiations between House Democratic and Senate Republican leaders again proved to be a stage for Williams.

For instance, House Democrats first included \$17.5 million in their budget draft to repair a dam on the Kentucky River.

The Senate stripped that funding in its version.

During later closed-door negotiations between the two chambers' leaders, Williams was the first to emerge to tell reporters that they had restored the funds and allowed the Kentucky River Authority to use \$33 million in additional fee money to fix more dams.

Senate Republicans often gain the upper hand during such budget negotiations because Williams and Majority Floor Leader Dan Kelly of Springfield usually convey a united front, lawmakers say.

Sen. Ernesto Scorsone, a Lexington Democrat, said that's because Williams "controls the party caucus."

But Williams noted that it's easier for Senate Republicans to get on the same page because there's just 21 of them, compared to 56 House Democrats.

"It would appear to me that the Democratic negotiators generally do not have a unified plan or plan of action. There are about five or six strong personalities," he said. "They don't seem to come to a consensus before they come to the table."

Others say that the Senate Republican leaders have a knack for putting their own stamp on just about every key bill.

"David and Sen. Kelly are the driving force behind all the legislation that comes out, no matter where it originates," said Rep. Stan Lee, a Lexington Republican.

As a result, many legislators have dubbed Williams the most powerful man in Frankfort, with more effect than even the governor.

"David knows what he wants and goes out and gets it. I don't think the governor knows exactly what he wants, and certainly doesn't know how to get it," said Scorsone. "Fletcher's future, in terms of legislative success, is very much in the hands of David Williams."

The governor's staff disagreed, saying Fletcher has stood on his own.

"Governor Fletcher's record of accomplishments speaks for itself. His style is to build consensus and find areas of common ground with members of the assembly," said chief of staff Stan Cave in a statement.

Williams, who has said he supports Fletcher's re-election bid in '07, is deferential, noting that Fletcher missed a month of the session battling complications from a gallstone and pancreatitis.

"It's hard to compare management styles," he said. "Obviously the governor, because of his illness, was not around a lot at crucial times."

Williams, meanwhile, rarely missed a cue at those critical points.

"I feel I had the most productive session I've ever had," he said.

that I inadvertently missed the vote on cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 22, the Medical Care Access Protection Act of 2006, due to unavoidable airline flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Americans are going to spend \$2.3 trillion this year on health care. One out of every three dollars does not go to help anybody get well. We are never going to be able to compete globally if we cannot control the health care costs in this country. The threat of medical liability raises the cost of health care for everybody in this country.

Only 16 percent of the lawsuits that are filed across the entire country have any merit whatsoever—84 percent of them are filled with the idea that we can intimidate people into settling a case so a lawyer can make money. It has nothing to do with the patient. It has everything to do with enriching the trial bar. I have experienced that personally as a physician who has delivered over 4,000 children into this world.

We have a problem with out of control medical liability—the cost of defensive medicine alone is up to \$126 billion per year. We can fix those problems. But we can't fix them by protecting special interest groups that have been protected for years—special interest groups that claim they want to do something great for people but who most of the time are motivated to do something great for themselves.

The Medical Care Access Protection Act of 2006 is based on the successful Texas model of medical liability reform. It's a solution to the problem that is already getting results.

NATIONAL POLICE SURVIVORS
DAY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. In 1962, the Congress enacted and President Kennedy signed into law a joint resolution designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which May 15 falls as National Police Week.

National Police Week is observed with numerous events here in our Nation's Capitol and parallel events in communities across the Nation. The two most moving of these events are the Peace Officers Memorial Day ceremony, on the Capitol grounds, and a candlelight vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial on Judiciary Square. At that candlelight vigil, the name of each officer who perished in the line of duty during the preceding year is read aloud to an assembly numbering 10,000 or more.

These events emphasize the heroic acts of the law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial bears the inscription that our fallen officers are not heroes for the way that they died but for the way they lived their lives. Heroes, as we know, live on forever in our hearts, our spirits and our collective memories.

But for the families, friends and co-workers of law enforcement officers

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask that it be submitted to the RECORD

who lost their lives in the line of duty, the grief and the loss are very real. The survivors of fallen law enforcement officers command our sympathy and our prayers.

Yet after the funeral is over and news of the tragedy falls off of the front pages of the daily newspaper, the very hard and often solitary process of adjustment begins. In many cases, that process can last for years and years after the loss and during that lengthy period, our police survivors need support in more tangible ways.

On May 14, 2003, on the eve of the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, 10 widows of fallen law enforcement officers came together at dinner to ask the question, "What about us?"

At the National Police Week gatherings, everyone focuses on the loved one whose life is lost, but it is also important to focus on the needs of survivors who must rebuild their lives from the ashes.

From this dinner conversation came the birth of a new national organization called "Concerns of Police Survivors." The acronym is "COPS".

One year later, COPS was formed at the first National Police Survivors Seminar which drew 110 law enforcement survivors.

Suzie Sawyer, a former President of the Fraternal Order of Police Auxiliary was selected as COPS' first Executive Director. She is also the only person to have served as the group's executive director.

Today, COPS provides healing, love and the opportunity for a renewed life to over 15,000 families through a network of 48 chapters around the country.

Over its 22 year history, COPS, as it is called, has expanded its offering of programs to include: peer support and counseling for survivors every day of the year, assistance in obtaining death benefits, assistance in coping with parole hearings, and scholarships for surviving spouses and children.

It offers special programs for parents, siblings and spouses of fallen officers as well as a summer camp for young and teenage children.

COPS also trains police agencies on how to cope with a line of duty death.

But one of the most important activities COPS offers is the Annual Police Survivors Seminar. This weekend at a hotel in Alexandria that is closed off to the public and the media, survivors from across the country will find a safe place to vent, to cry, to laugh, to think, and to heal.

COPS has played a pivotal role in helping the families of Alaska's survivors rebuild their lives. COPS was there for Laurie Heck Huckeba, the widow of Alaska State Trooper Bruce Heck, slain on January 10, 1997. Laurie went on to become a member of the COPS national board of directors, and facilitates sessions at the National Police Survivors Seminar.

Survivors helping survivors—that's what COPS is all about.

And COPS was there for the family of slain Kenai Police Officer John Watson, who tragically lost his life on Christmas Day, 2003, while checking on the welfare of another. Officer Watson is the last Alaska officer to lose his life in the line of duty.

COPS will be there for the family, co-workers and friends of Vicki Armel, the Fairfax County Detective who was senselessly slain by a sniper outside the Sully District Police Station this week.

And it will do the same for the survivors of slain Philadelphia Police Officer Gary Skerski, also shot to death this week after responding to a robbery call at a bar. The perpetrator told patrons that he planned to kill an officer. Eleven Philadelphia officers have been shot in the last 25 months, according to the Fraternal Order of Police. Every one of those incidents takes an emotional toll on so many others.

Thanks to the work of Suzie Sawyer and COPS, all of those affected by a police line of duty death no longer need to ask the question, "What about us?"

They refer to law enforcement as the "thin blue line." Thanks to COPS, that thin blue line of support for our law enforcement families is tens of thousands of people thick.

In honor of our police survivors and the vital work that is undertaken by COPS, I joined with my colleagues earlier this week in offering Senate Resolution 473 which designates May 14, the anniversary of the founding of COPS, as National Police Survivors Day. The resolution is intended to engage all of our fellow citizens to lend their hearts and to lend a hand to the survivors of our police heroes.

I am pleased that the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 473. I appreciate the support of our colleagues in moving this resolution through swiftly. It is especially timely given the unfortunate events that occurred this week in Fairfax County and in Philadelphia. How tragic that these events occurred on the very eve of National Police Week.

I also want to acknowledge the leadership of my colleague, Mr. TALENT, in whose state of Missouri COPS is headquartered, and my colleague, Mrs. LINCOLN, our lead co-sponsor on the Democratic side, who worked with me to put forward this resolution.

In the United States, one law enforcement officer dies in the line of duty every 53 hours. Each year somewhere between 140 and 160 lose their lives in the line of duty.

As we remember the heroic deeds of the 17,535 law enforcement officers whose names are carved into the marble wall on Judiciary Square, let us also take a moment to reflect on those who are left to carry on. Let's do this on May 14—National Police Survivors Day.

GULF OF MEXICO RESTORATION AND PROTECTION ACT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have been pleased to join with my distinguished

colleagues, Senator MARTINEZ and Senator LANDRIEU, in introducing bipartisan legislation that will take a very significant step forward in restoring and protecting the Gulf of Mexico.

I want to highlight how important the Gulf of Mexico is to our country. The Gulf of Mexico is the ninth largest body of water in the world, and the Gulf region covers approximately 600,000 square miles. The Gulf of Mexico contains 7 of this Nation's top 10 ports in terms of tonnage or cargo value, 4 of the top 7 fishing ports in the Nation, yields more finfish, shrimp, and shellfish annually than the south and mid-Atlantic, Chesapeake, and New England areas combined, and supports a \$20 billion annual tourism industry.

Sadly, over many years, the resource productivity and water quality of the Gulf of Mexico and its watershed have been diminished by nonpoint source pollution largely resulting from pollutant transport along the nearly 2,300-mile-long Mississippi River. I believe many Americans would be surprised to know that the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program, the only Federal program solely focused on protecting the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico, is neither authorized nor adequately funded to perform critical program functions vital to protecting and restoring one of this country's greatest natural resources.

The Gulf of Mexico Restoration and Protection Act will authorize the Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Program to undertake specific nonregulatory functions, and authorize annual appropriations to support activities designed to improve Gulf of Mexico water quality and marine resource productivity. With an 18-year track record of success, the Gulf of Mexico Program proves that it is not only possible but also practical to manage our natural resources through collaborative, nonregulatory approaches that leverage support, resources, and capabilities from Federal, State, non-profit, and private sector partners. Unfortunately, the Gulf of Mexico Program is struggling with a very limited budget and a staff comprised largely of people "on loan" from other Federal agencies. The historic storm season of 2005 gravely worsened the situation by placing increased demand on the program's technical services, and I expect this pressure will continue to rise as the gulf coast rebuilds.

I commend the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program and its Federal, State, non-profit, and private sector partners for doing so much with so little for so long. However, it is impractical to expect this to continue in perpetuity. Now is the time to take actions to ensure the Gulf of Mexico is protected for continued economic productivity, recreation, and to make certain this great water body remains a place of beauty and enjoyment for current and future generations.