

Diego to watch the last votes being counted, and then to proceed into the convention hall to accept the nomination.

Mr. President, we miss Bob Dole's leadership in the Senate. We are delighted, though, the Senate is taking time to recognize the great service that he rendered during his career here.

SENATOR BOB DOLE

Mr. BROWNSBACK. Mr. President, I am in the Dole seat for Kansas. When Senator Dole left, I ran for his seat and was fortunate enough to be elected to that seat. I worked with Senator Dole for many years, when I was secretary of agriculture for Kansas. I first met him when I was Kansas State president of the Junior Farmers of America. I have had a wonderful relationship with Senator Dole. He is an outstanding American, and he is an outstanding Kansan. He deserves tribute.

We in the Senate are certainly blessed and honored each time we have the opportunity to rise on our feet on this floor and address this august body. At this moment, I feel particularly blessed and honored to be able to recognize my predecessor, Senator Robert Joseph Dole.

Today, we rise to mark the decade anniversary of Senator Dole announcing his retirement to this body. On June 11, 1996, Senator Dole, as the Republican nominee for the Presidency, announced that he would resign his seat in the U.S. Senate. And some asked, Why would he retire with 2 full years left in his term and only 6 months left in the campaign? "I thought that was what was best for Kansas." For while he was many things—a legislator, a statesman, a decorated war hero, a leader—Senator Dole believed in his State and he believed in service to his State and he thought this was the best for his State, and that he would run just as a man, an ordinary citizen. It was a tremendous tribute to his service and his believing in the service of this body, that if you couldn't be here full time to do this work, he thought it would be better that he would leave it and bring somebody else in so that he could pursue the Presidency full time.

The motto of our State is "Ad Astra, per Aspera." That is a Latin phrase meaning "to the stars, through difficulty." Perhaps, considering our State's motto, one could consider it also the motto for Bob Dole.

He was born in 1923 in Russell, KS. Bob Dole was a teenager during the worst environmental disaster of my State's history—that was the Dust Bowl. He was 11 years old on April 14, 1935, which was referred to as "Black Sunday." On that day, a wall of dust covered the prairie of western Kansas, turning day into night. Some thought it was the end of the world. During those years, childhood friends of Bob Dole recalled postponing basketball

games in the middle of them, four or five times during the game, just to sweep the piling dust off the floor.

Some fled the dust. Others were withered by it. Bob Dole was formed by it. Years later, he would recount that "growing up on the edge of the Depression-era Dust Bowl, I was taught to put my trust in God and not government, and never to confuse the two." Per Aspera.

As a young man, Bob Dole rose to meet the greatest challenge his great generation would face—World War II. Bob was a second lieutenant in the Army's 10th Mountain Division. He served in the mountains of Italy, where he and his unit faced some of the fiercest and challenging fighting of the war. Bob fought bravely. He was wounded. He fought again. He crawled from the security of his foxhole during intense fighting to assist a critically wounded radio operator, and in the process was shot in the back by a Nazi machine gunner. This time few thought he would survive. Bob Dole was hospitalized for a total of 39 months. He gave up the use of his right arm.

Ad Astra—to the Stars.

For his wounds, Bob was awarded two Purple Hearts. For his valor, Bob Dole was awarded the Bronze Star with an Oak Cluster.

Ad Astra—to the Stars.

Returning to his native Kansas, Bob turned to his family, to his neighbors, and to his friends for support. Later, he remarked: "I was sustained by neighbors, who were anything but stingy with their love and encouragement. I learned then, if I hadn't already known it, that there is no such thing as a wholly self-made man or woman."

He picked up where he left off and earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Washburn University in Topeka, KS. From there, Bob Dole began his political rise to the stars.

Ad Astra.

Bob served in the Kansas State House as the Russell County attorney, and on January 3, 1961, Bina Dole's little boy was sworn into the 87th Congress of the United States. Within a decade, Dole had distinguished himself as a legislator and was sent by his fellow Kansans to serve here in this body.

And here in this Chamber, Bob Dole continued to serve the people of Kansas and this great Nation. He served them as chairman of the Finance Committee. He served them as the minority leader of the Senate. He served them as majority leader. He served them for nearly three decades, until exactly one decade ago today, when he retired.

Today, Bob Dole's service is neither over nor forgotten. Having been recognized with the Presidential Medal of Freedom—a civilian honor, to match his military honors—he has continued to serve. He served as chairman of the International Commission on Missing Persons in the former Yugoslavia and the National World War II Memorial. He even gets a great deal of constituent casework of people contacting

to ask if he could help out with this or that—and of course he does. He spearheaded the World War II Memorial effort, and what a beautiful memorial to the greatest generation it is.

Also, I believe Bob served as the spokesman for a number of different commercial causes which have continued. And his humor continues unabated as well.

I remember when serving as secretary of agriculture in the State of Kansas that Senator Dole would address a number of farm audiences—sometimes from the back of a pickup truck. He would see a number of members of that audience who would often loosen up their belts and their overalls because they knew they were going to be in for an entertaining speech, a lot of times about 30 minutes or 25 minutes of jokes and one-liners and 5 minutes of politics. They loved it. He loved it. They loved him. He loved them. It was a beautiful symbiotic relationship that Bob Dole had with his State, with my State of Kansas.

He also continues to serve as a trusted adviser and friend to guys like me. I have been honored to be able to serve in his seat. It is difficult to follow somebody of his legendary status and his ability as a legislator, his ability as a leader, and the contribution that he has made to this society, to this Nation, and to this world. Yet we try—and try with his advice.

He is an important American of distinction. He is someone who truly deserves to be recognized. He is one who has touched many lives individually and millions of lives collectively. He is the epitome of the greatest generation, the generation that served the rest of mankind, to be beat off Fascism, Hitler, Communism, and gave us the freest world that we have known.

There are still wars to be fought, still battles to be fought, and we pick up the flag and carry it each and every day, but we owe so much in tribute to legendary leaders such as Bob Dole.

Senator Dole, on behalf of our country and our State, certainly from me personally, I say, thank you and God bless you.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in paying tribute to one of our Senate's finest leaders, Senator Bob Dole.

Ten years ago, after representing his home State of Kansas in the House of Representatives for 8 years and in the Senate for over 27 years, Majority Leader Dole resigned from the Senate. He did so in order to engage fully all of his attentions to his Presidential campaign. The Senate lost one of our greatest leaders that day, but Bob Dole continues to be a national leader to this day.

I traveled with him a great deal during his campaign, and it was a thrill for me. I was given the honor of introducing him at the 1996 Republican Convention—quite a humbling privilege for someone who considers himself far less distinguished than the man I was introducing formally to the Nation as

the Republican candidate for the President. He may not have won that election, but he ran an honorable campaign and worked as hard as anyone I have ever seen on the campaign trail. Bob helped teach me the meaning of dedicating one's life to a cause greater than one's self-interest, and for this I will always be thankful.

Everyone knows that Bob is a decorated veteran through his sacrifice in World War II and that he faced a very hard road to recovery upon his return—a road that many selfless men and women today are similarly facing upon their return from the war in Iran and Afghanistan. Like Bob, they, too, are American heroes and they need and deserve to be reminded of that fact as often as possible.

Bob Dole's distinction among his peers could have rested with his military service. But instead, he chose to continue serving his country and was as effective as he was, in my view, largely because of his experience as a war veteran. For example, his Senate leadership was essential to the efforts of Presidents Reagan and Bush to win the Cold War. He built majority coalitions to help restore the readiness and modernization of our Armed Forces, which had been so badly neglected in the previous decade. Thanks to his vision, America is better prepared to defend herself and others from those who want to cause us harm.

While Bob may no longer be daily in the public eye as he enjoys life in the private sector, he still continues to focus his energy on issues of importance to our country. He cochaired the Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund with former President Clinton, helping to raise money for the families of the victims of 9/11 to pursue secondary educations. Bob also continues with his efforts on behalf of the disabled. And, of course, since leaving the Senate 10 years ago, he is also now enjoying the obligations of a Senator's spouse.

Bob Dole is an American hero, and I am privileged to call him my friend.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority's time has expired.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will you please inform me of the business before the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in a period of morning business. The minority's time has begun, with 28 minutes 30 seconds remaining.

OPPOSITION TO THE NOMINATION OF RICHARD STICKLER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the confirmation of Richard Sticker as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety. I also ask the Senate to send a message of confidence and hope to the miners across America that we in the Senate are no longer willing to put coal industry executives that care more about profits than lives in charge of their safety.

How many of us recall the recent news stories coming out of Kentucky and West Virginia—heartbreaking stories—where lives were lost and families waited expectantly aboveground praying that those miners would be found and be brought back safely, and how many times that was not the case.

What brings about safety in these coal mines, so deep in the Earth? The vigilance of the agencies, Federal and State, that keep an eye on the companies that are operating out of the view of most of the world. Those are the things that are important. Today, we will have a chance to vote on a man who wants to head the Federal agency when it comes to mine safety. Unfortunately, Mr. Stickler is yet another in a long line of coal industry executives nominated by this administration.

The last industry appointee to the Mine Safety and Health Administration withdrew or delayed final action on 18 mine safety rules. The result was disastrous—disastrous to the tune of 33 coal mine deaths in America in 2006.

Two of the rules that could have been enacted and were not by the predecessor to the man being appointed to this position had the potential to speed the rescue and increase the chance of survival for the 14 miners killed in the recent West Virginian Sago and Alma mine disasters. One would have sped up the formation of rescue teams. The other would have provided more oxygen for the miners. Both of these rules could have saved miners' lives this year. But the Mine Safety and Health Administration didn't enact the rules. Why? Because doing so would have cost the coal companies money. It is just that simple. And now 33 miners have paid with their lives, and Congress was forced to act.

We passed a new law this year—a law that was pushed by the Senators from West Virginia, Senators BYRD and ROCKEFELLER—which I was happy to support because of the coal mining in my own home State of Illinois. It is called the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006. It mandates the formation of two mine safety teams available within an hour of an accident. Such quick response mine rescue teams might have saved lives at these coal mines in America this year.

This new law also mandates the purchase of wireless tracking and messaging equipment and extra oxygen for miners underground. Both of these provisions could also have saved lives.

My concern with Mr. Stickler's nomination is not solely that he is a coal

executive—that doesn't disqualify him—but that he clearly stated during his confirmation hearing that these new provisions in the law are not needed. He unequivocally stated that no new laws are needed and that the laws on the books, which haven't been updated, incidentally, in 30 years, to adjust for new technology in coal mining, according to Mr. Stickler, those 30-year-old laws are just fine. And he said this after the Sago mine explosion that took the lives of 12 coal miners.

I can't support a nominee to be head of mine safety when he opposes the recently passed Miner Act. This law, which the Senate passed by unanimous consent, without one single Senator dissenting, was a recognition by all of us that mine safety laws need to be updated in order to protect the coal miners and to stop the unnecessary and sad and tragic loss of life. But Mr. Stickler, who wants to be head of this Federal agency to protect coal miners across America, disagrees.

Furthermore, Mr. Stickler argues that the duty to comply with safety laws falls on the shoulders of the mine companies, and that the agency he wants to head plays no role. He told a committee of the Senate that he believes there is a compliance problem, not an enforcement problem, in the mine industry. Mr. Stickler doesn't seem to understand that without enforcement, there will be no compliance. Any industry left on its own to comply with Federal and local laws will often fail to do so. That is a reality—a reality Mr. Stickler doesn't even understand.

I am astonished that President Bush would nominate a person to head this important safety agency who has such little regard for the need to enforce the laws of the land, to protect the lives of coal miners, and to spare families from the grief that so many have suffered this year.

Mr. Stickler's statements at his confirmation hearing fly in the face of reality, and I ask: What do his comments say to the families of those 33 lost miners?

Many of these families oppose the confirmation of Mr. Stickler because of his opposition to revising mine safety laws and his live-and-let-live position on enforcement regulations. They are not alone. The United Mine Workers and the AFL-CIO also oppose Mr. Stickler's nomination. All of us in the Senate supported passage of a new law to save miners' lives. We unanimously supported it. Mr. Stickler doesn't believe that legislation was even necessary.

We also know that enforcement of the laws is needed to compel mine operators to comply with the laws. Mr. Stickler, again, disagrees.

We learned a bitter lesson about 11 months ago on the gulf coast. Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster to strike America, came with warning, devastating New Orleans and many communities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Even with 3 or 4