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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of truth and love, source and end of our believing and loving, You alone are worthy of our praise and we celebrate Your great Name. Thank You for the gift of Your dynamic presence in our lives and for the power we receive from knowing You.

Be near our Senators today. Lift them from any discouragement, and give them a sure sense of duty and service. Pour fresh energy into them and use their work to transform disorder into harmony, beauty, and peace. Guide them with Your undying love so that the reign of Your kingdom will become a reality in our world.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today we will have a period of morning business with the first 15 minutes

under the control of the minority and the final 15 minutes under the control of the majority. Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the emergency supplemental appropriations conference report. Under the time agreement that was reached yesterday, we have a little over an hour and a half of debate this morning. The vote on the adoption of the conference report is set for tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Today we will continue work on the Department of Defense authorization bill. Senators who have amendments should consult with the bill managers, Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN. Votes on amendments to this bill can be expected to occur throughout the day.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Connecticut.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to take a minute or 2, if I can, to join my other colleagues who over the last several days have paid tribute to our colleague from West Virginia, my seatmate, Senator ROBERT BYRD, who, on Monday, celebrated the unique landmark of serving longer than any other person in the history of this remarkable institution.

I said to Senator BYRD, my colleague and seatmate, yesterday, his longevity is impressive but his record as a U.S. Senator is really what excels. While

serving for 47 years in this institution is certainly remarkable, what he has done during those 47 years is what is truly remarkable. His contribution to the public discourse and debate of our country throughout that time has been truly exemplary.

I noted the other day, in fact, that when Senator BYRD was first elected to the House, there was a wonderful picture taken that appeared with Senator BYRD and several other Members of newly minted Congressmen who had been elected in 1952 at the White House with Dwight Eisenhower. In that group of pictures was also a newly minted Congressman from Connecticut by the name of Thomas Dodd, my father.

Senator BYRD and my father were elected to the House together in 1952, and came to this body together in 1958. So during these many years of public service, ROBERT C. BYRD has had to serve with two Dadds in the U.S. Congress, my father and myself. I sit next to Senator BYRD by choice. I have been his seatmate for almost 15 or 16 years now, and do so because I have enjoyed his company, his wisdom, and listening to his contributions to the debate and his knowledge of the Senate and its procedures.

I know we have a new group of pages who have arrived to serve in our Nation's Capitol here in the U.S. Senate in the last few days. As someone who sat on the steps of the Democratic side back in the early 1960s as a page, I say to the pages, I would strongly urge you to listen to ROBERT C. BYRD. If you want to have truly a great lesson during your tenure here as pages, then listen to the remarkable Senator from West Virginia, and you will learn more in the short period of time you are here than almost anything else I could advise you to do, except to read his two-volume history of the U.S. Senate, which you may not have time to do during your 2 of 3 weeks here as pages.

Senator BYRD, of course, has had significant accomplishments. And I think

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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of the time when I served as a page, an unpaid page, back many years ago, and the giants of the Senate in those days; certainly people such as Lyndon Johnson, Mike Mansfield, Richard Russell, Everett Dirksen, Margaret Chase Smith, Hubert Humphrey, John Sherman Cooper, Stuart Symington—and so many others who served during those years who were truly giants in many ways.

They were Senators in the very fullest sense of the word. They represented an institutional spirit that in many ways is lacking today, and I regret that deeply. But it was critical to the success of our democratic Republic how they related one to the other. It is a spirit of independence and understanding that all Senators are equal in this body, regardless of the positions they hold in the institution. All 100 of us are equal Members representing our respective States and constituencies. It is a spirit that allows us to debate—sometimes very vigorously—our differences, while still obliging us to seek common ground for the common good of our country.

ROBERT BYRD certainly epitomizes that spirit—a vigorous debater but also someone who recognizes it is vitally important to reach common goals for the common good. It is a spirit that refuses to submit to the encroachments of any other institution or office in the land, including that of the Executive.

I cannot count the times that ROBERT C. BYRD would correct someone who said: I served under a President here. I served under seven Presidents. ROBERT BYRD will quickly tell you: You do not serve under any President. You serve with Presidents. You are a Member of a coequal branch of the U.S. Government as embodied in the Constitution of the United States.

And how right he is. As Senators understand, ROBERT BYRD understands implicitly that the Senate is a coequal, powerful branch of Government, that our Founders wanted it to be of equal weight in the deliberations of our country.

I carry with me a copy of the U.S. Constitution. I have had this for many, many years, and it was given to me by my seatmate, ROBERT C. BYRD. It is getting rather worn, but his inscription inside is something I will cherish for the rest of my days and life—that I carry a copy of the Constitution given to me by this person who cherishes and loves the Constitution as much as ROBERT C. BYRD does. One of the reasons I care so deeply about this particular copy is of course it was given to me by him and inscribed by him.

I think it is only fitting that someone who cares so much about that document and this institution is now the Senate's longest serving Member.

In his close to five decades of Senate service, Senator BYRD has had an enormous impact on his State and on our country. He, more than any other Member that I can think of in the last half century, has worked to preserve

the delicate system of checks and balances conceived by the Founders of our great Republic. That work is typified by his opposition to the line-item veto and his insistence on preserving the prerogatives of this institution in relation to the other branches of Government.

But more than that, he has also helped to bring good jobs, better schools, and decent health care not only to the constituents of West Virginia but also to millions of people across this country because of his leadership.

He has never forgotten the good, hard-working people who sent him here from his beloved West Virginia or why they did so; that is, to make our Nation a stronger, more prosperous, and more hopeful Nation for all of its citizens.

Senator BYRD has had the courage and strength of character to admit past errors—something that too few of us do in this Chamber—and to seek genuine understanding for the good of our country.

In his history of the U.S. Senate, Senator BYRD has written that:

After 200 years, the Senate is still the anchor of the Republic, is still the morning and evening star in the American constitutional constellation.

More than any other U.S. Senator in this body, I believe Senator BYRD has helped to ensure that this U.S. Senate retains that unique distinction.

So I am pleased to join with my other colleagues in wishing him well. I know more than anything else he would have loved to have his beloved Erma here with him in these days to celebrate this achievement. Of course, he lost Erma just a few months ago. But I am certain, as all of us are, that she is watching, with a great big smile, as she celebrates with all of us the distinction that our colleague from West Virginia has achieved this last Monday—47 years in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, our friend ROBERT BYRD, has achieved yet another historic milestone. He is now the longest-serving Senator in the history of the Senate. But what is most remarkable about Senator BYRD is not his longevity, but his unique stature and accomplishment within this body.

Senator BYRD is renowned for his unmatched knowledge of the Senate's history. So he remembers very well that our former colleague, Philip Hart of Michigan, was known as the "conscience of the Senate." Well, I believe that history will remember the senior Senator from West Virginia as the soul of the Senate.

No individual in my memory has been a more tenacious champion of the traditions, prerogatives, and rules of this body. No individual has had greater reverence for the Constitution, and for the Founders' vision of an assertive, independent, co-equal legislative

branch. As the Almanac of Americans says in its profile of Senator BYRD, and I quote, he "may come closer to the kind of Senator that the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other." By the way, if anyone here on the Senate floor needs to look something up in the Constitution, we know where to turn; Senator BYRD always carries a copy in his left breast pocket, directly over his heart.

I have always had a special affinity for Senator BYRD, because we are both the sons of coal miners, both raised in humble circumstances. Reading about the Senator's early years, lifting himself out of poverty as a welder and meat cutter before running for the West Virginia Legislature in 1946, I am reminded of Thomas Edison's remark that "opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." Well, ROBERT BYRD made his own opportunities with relentless work, self-education, and striving. And that incredible work ethic continues right up to this day.

One product of that work ethic, and of Senator BYRD's always impressive erudition, is his two-volume history of this body. It is recognized as the definitive history of the Senate during its first 200 years, and widely praised for its graceful writing. On this score, Senator BYRD has much in common with Winston Churchill. Both were prolific writers. And both were major players in the events that they chronicled.

On a personal note, let me just say that I have always valued Senator BYRD's friendship, wisdom, and advice. And I will always appreciate the way he tutored me in the ways of the Senate when I first came to this body in 1984.

So I join with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in saluting our friend. Senator BYRD is the longest-serving Member of this body. But there are still many chapters yet to be written in the career of this great Senator. As the late Senator Paul Wellstone used to say, "The future belongs to those with passion." By that standard, Senator BYRD is very much a man of the future.

I say to my friend, it has been an honor to serve with him.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a man who may be the most important friend that the people of West Virginia have ever sent to Washington or ever will send to Washington. He is the senior Senator of West Virginia, and today he becomes America's senior Senator.

The Senate is housed in this beautiful Chamber of marble columns and intricate architecture. But the Senate is not a building; it is not a seal or a symbol or an idea. The Senate is a group of 100 men and women who are chosen by the people to craft the laws that define and govern the American People.

While the Senate is not a building, it does have individuals who serve as pillars upon which the rest of us place our

trust and reliance. Today, we salute one such pillar. The senior Senator from West Virginia enters the record books as the longest serving Senator.

Note, I say that he enters the record books, not the history books. I say that because I expect the senior Senator from West Virginia to be making history on this floor for many years to come.

In an earlier time, we would have called ROBERT BYRD a renaissance man in the mold of such American luminaries as Jefferson or Franklin. Consider that he is a poet, an accomplished musician, an author, the foremost historian of this Chamber, a parliamentary expert, an intensely devout Christian, an unrivaled legislator, a scholar of our Constitution, and earned a J.D. while a Member of this Chamber.

Yet all of these accomplishments as an individual are dwarfed by what he has done and will continue to do for the people of West Virginia. He has brought new industries like biotechnology, biometrics and other high tech, high skilled work to West Virginia. He has fought for dams, roadways, hospitals, and highways. It is hard to imagine that one man might have such a transformative impact on a State. Yet friend and foe alike would concede this point to ROBERT BYRD.

I say today that Senator BYRD becomes America's senior Senator. In many ways, he always has been. No man or woman more rigorously defends the role of this Chamber in our governmental structure, and no man or woman fights more ardently to preserve that beautiful document he carries in his breast pocket—the U.S. Constitution. One of the first things I did when I was sworn in as a Member of this body was to take the whole Landrieu family to see Senator BYRD and have him give us a talk on the Constitution and the role of the Senate.

For the last 6 years, it has been my pleasure to serve under Senator BYRD's leadership on the Senate Appropriations Committee. In that capacity, he has proven repeatedly that he is a friend to the people of Louisiana and understands the tragedy that has befallen them. I thank him for that help and friendship.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that today is a bitter-sweet anniversary, for it is also Erma's birthday. A woman whose life, and now memory, Senator BYRD so obviously cherished.

So, Mr. President, I thank America's senior Senator for his service to this country and for his friendship.

I conclude my remarks, as he so often does, with a verse of poetry—one of the Senator's favorites—the final verse of "The Building of the Ship" by Longfellow:

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,

What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I have 5 minutes in morning business.

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

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I note my deep disappointment that the conference agreement for the emergency supplemental appropriations bill now pending before the Senate does not include the supplemental funding for VA health care that was included in the Senate-passed measure.

Despite the fact that the Senate spoke strongly on the need to ensure that VA has enough resources during the balance of this fiscal year to be able to treat our Nation's veterans in an effective and timely manner, my amendment to add \$430 million to the VA health care account was not included in the final compromise.

Back in April and May, when we debated the supplemental appropriations measure here in the Senate, I was delighted that my amendment, cosponsored by 21 of our colleagues, to secure a relatively modest amount of emergency funding for VA health care was included in the legislation. The reasons we gave then in support of this funding were clear, and they remain so today.

First, Vet Centers and other mental health programs need to be given more support if VA is to continue to be able to reach out to veterans in need of re-adjustment counseling or other psychological treatment, especially those returning from service in a war zone.

Secondly, across the VA system, facilities need some additional funding to ensure that VA is able to continue to provide quality of care and availability of services for all veterans.

At the time of the Senate debate, after a slight modification to the amendment so as to require the President to request the emergency funding in order for VA to receive it, the Senate voted 84-13 to adopt the amendment and include it as part of the supplemental package.

My colleagues indicated their overwhelming support of the measure through that vote. In light of that show of support, the failure to include this VA funding in the pending meas-

ure is all the more regrettable, all the more unacceptable.

Having just traveled to Iraq to see for myself what the situation is like on the ground there, I am even more steadfast in my belief that VA must have the resources it needs to care for returning servicemembers.

Programs to transition our men and women in uniform who require mental health, prosthetic rehabilitation, or other specialty health care services back into civilian life are a clear, continuing part of the overall cost of war. These services are more important than ever, and we must do our part to support them.

Although we did not succeed in keeping this additional funding in this measure, we will not give up the fight and will do our utmost to ensure that VA has the funding it needs.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAQ

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to talk about all of the interesting things going on in Iraq. We saw yesterday the surprise, very important visit by the President to the new Iraqi Cabinet under Premier Nouri Kamal al-Maliki. This marks one more significant step in efforts to bring national unity to Iraq. We all must remember that just a few short years ago, Iraq was ruled by a murderous tyrant, Saddam Hussein. According to the Iraqi Survey Group's Charles Dilfer, Iraq was a far more dangerous place even than we knew. We may not have had the intelligence right, but the intelligence was focusing on the fact of how dangerous this place was. Dilfer said that Iraq was overrun with terrorists, like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi who was then in al-Ansar Islam and later changed that to al-Qaida in Iraq, the butcher who brazenly beheaded innocent Americans and others on television.

Dilfer said that Saddam Hussein had the ability to produce chemical and biological weapons that he had in the past and he was willing and able to sell them to terrorists who could deliver them to our country. This milestone, unfortunately, received not enough attention or appreciation in the media. This is not an isolated example of people trying to downplay good news in Iraq. As Peter Wehner wrote in the Wall Street Journal on May 23:

Iraqis can participate in three historic elections, pass the most liberal constitution in the Arab world, and form a unit government despite terrorist attacks and provocations. Yet, for some critics of the President, these are minor matters.