

wheat, barley, and alfalfa, and he used to run some cattle. But the continuing drought has hurt his operation. The reservoir near his operation, Bynum Reservoir, has been almost empty for the past 5 years because of this drought, and in 2005 Tom had to sell off his 120 head of cattle he used to run on his ranch. In February of this year, Tom wrote me this letter. What it says is:

I am writing to you in need of your assistance. I own and operate a small farm and ranch north of Choteau. Because of the continuing drought conditions in this area, making it from one year to the next has been a real challenge. In my present circumstances, it may become impossible [to stay in business].

Now Tom is in danger of losing his crop insurance and is looking for help from me, and from us, and from the President, to help him through these difficult times.

Another farmer in Montana, from Dagmar, wrote about conditions last year during the growing season. He writes that it is a foggy morning, no meaningful precipitation, but it cooled down some, which is good news in the heat of summer with little moisture. But the damage was done. Some of the late seeding re-crop had the top half of the head burnt right off.

What does that mean, in a nutshell? He is not going to cut much of a crop and it is not going to have much quality when he does get it in the bin. What does that mean in reality? That means no money to pay expenses, to pay for insurance, to pay for heating, to pay for seeding costs; no money to buy groceries, to pay that operating loan or mortgage loan.

That is why it is so critically important that the President of the United States sign this supplemental. Farmers and ranchers in Montana and throughout this country have suffered long enough. They have dedicated their lives to feeding the world, and it is the very least we can do to provide them with the assistance they need to keep going.

Before I finish, I want to talk a little bit about our great men and women who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have done everything we have asked and they have done it very well. This supplemental bill also gives our troops all the funding they need, and more, to meet the needs not addressed by the President's request. It provides a plan to get our troops out of the Middle East in this civil war they find themselves engaged in, and back to fighting the real war, the war on terrorism.

It sets a goal, not a deadline, of being out of Iraq by the spring of 2008. But it allows our troops to continue to train the Iraqi security forces, to conduct operations against terrorist groups, and to protect United States assets. This is hardly handcuffing the President of this country. This is a responsible plan to continue our fight against terrorism while getting our troops out of this Iraqi civil war.

For these reasons, I urge the President of the United States to sign this emergency supplemental into law. No more excuses, sign the supplemental. Our troops, our farmers, the people of this country, deserve no less.

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. ALLARD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I understand we are in morning business, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

BIPARTISANSHIP

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I came to the floor today to express my surprise that any Member of this body could attempt to characterize the current political situation as one in which the administration is failing to work with Congress. Any realistic discussion of today's political climate must revolve around the fact that the current majority has refused to work in any meaningful way with the minority party. The most blatant example of this is in the use of cloture by the majority leader to avoid consensus on the consideration of legislation.

In the 110th Congress, the majority leader so far has filed 24 cloture motions. During the same timeframe in the first session of the 109th Congress, Republicans had only filed five cloture motions. In the 108th Congress, by this date Republicans had only filed five cloture motions.

Just as surprising were the circumstances that surrounded General Petraeus's briefing yesterday. What I found remarkable was the original instinct of the Speaker of the House and our Senate majority leader was to avoid meeting the general here on Capitol Hill. Can you imagine that? The most important issue of our day is Iraq and the man we unanimously approved to lead our efforts is not worth their time to hear from? The only explanation for this is that the disdain felt by the majority in working with the minority and the administration was also extended to working with our military.

Of course, once it was clear that there was public outcry in not meeting General Petraeus, they relented. But what was also evident is there was an effort to avoid actually believing anything the general had to say about the situation on the ground. General Petraeus is not giving us information that has been filtered through some political process. He is giving a factual and sobering account of what is happening, block by block, in Iraq.

Yet the other side of the aisle, with a few exceptions, wants to cover their

ears and not listen to the facts. They would rather pretend they know what is going on in Iraq rather than hear it from the general again.

The situation in Iraq is a dynamic and ever-changing one, and after yesterday's briefing, it is more clear to me than ever that we must resist arbitrary deadlines to our fight in Iraq.

But my Democratic colleagues would rather play politics with our men and women in the field and score a few points for the far left wing of their party. They would rather play politics on the Senate floor than work to pass meaningful legislation.

I ask the majority leader and the other side of the aisle to put politics aside and do the right thing, work in a truly bipartisan manner to do what the American people expect us to do.

This obstruction and unwillingness to work in a truly bipartisan effort to provide funding to our troops who are even now in harm's way is outrageous and disappointing.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FORMER SPEAKER JOHN O'BRIEN

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate and pay tribute to the life of a great Washingtonian, a great American, and someone who in the State of Washington will be remembered for his great contributions and who will be remembered across our country. I am talking about our former Washington State Speaker of the House, John L. O'Brien, who died this past week at the age of 95. Speaker O'Brien actually passed away on the last day of this year's legislative session, almost an appropriate dedication for him for the remembrance of his service in our State government.

I am proud to say John L. O'Brien was a good friend, a mentor, and someone who imparted a lot of political wisdom in the State of Washington. He served in our State legislature for 52 years, from 1939 to 1993, and he served as speaker of the house for a chunk of that period, 1955 to 1963. He served under nine different Governors. At one point in time, I believe, he held the record in our country for the longest serving State legislator.

He did a tremendous job as majority leader; I am sure at times as minority leader; as speaker, as I mentioned, speaker pro tem. I believe he served on every single committee in our State legislature. He led our State's government through some great challenges

for us and for our country. He literally was in office when the United States went to declare World War II in 1954. He was speaker when the first flight of the Boeing 707 was completed. He saw the Space Needle completed for the World's Fair that was held in Seattle in 1962. He was there when Microsoft was founded. He led our State through the challenging times responding to Mount St. Helen's eruption in 1980. And he was there to lead our celebration as Washington State celebrated our 100th anniversary as a State in 1989.

But John O'Brien also was a man who thought about the future, and he has an unending list of accomplishments that literally touched the lives of thousands of Washingtonians. He changed the course of history in our State by his generosity, by his leadership, by his commitment, his inspiration.

I know my remarks will not do him justice, but I just want to say that he did a lot in a time and period of making sure that despite the lofty position he held in the house, he never lost track of what the constituents of his district and of our State cared about. He worked on property tax relief for seniors and low-income individuals. He fought for prescription and over-the-counter drug information labeling so that seniors knew what kind of products they were purchasing. He was a champion of State employee collective bargaining and workplace safety issues. He sponsored Washington State's first clean air act. That might sound like something lots of people do, but he actually sponsored that legislation in 1940. So he was ahead of his time in thinking about Washington State's environment and how to preserve the pristine quality of life that is so important to us.

He helped to establish one of the first programs in the Nation to commit a percentage of our construction budget for the creation of art. He helped save and restore Franklin High School. He worked to make sure we established a drug-free zone and got legislation passed removing the sales tax from items sold at charitable auctions.

John O'Brien represented one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Seattle, an area called the Rainier Valley. The Rainier Valley began as an Irish and Italian community of immigrants, and with Speaker O'Brien's leadership, it helped to incorporate various waves of new immigrants from various communities: the Chinese-American community, Japanese, Filipino, African American, Orthodox Jews, Vietnamese, East African, and Hispanic citizens. Now, it is, as I said, one of the most diverse areas of our State.

When the Seattle Times ran a story about Speaker O'Brien's life and how his values were shaped, they said:

Mr. O'Brien was just 7 years old when his Irish immigrant father, a detective with the Seattle Police, came home after a particularly tough day on the job. He turned to his eldest son and asked, rhetorically, "What will ever become of you if something happens to me?"

Two years later his father was shot and killed while on duty. That left the young Mr. O'Brien to help his mother, also an Irish immigrant, care for their siblings. By the time he was a teenager, he was bringing home a paycheck as a truckdriver for Keefe's Grocery in Rainier Valley. He went on to start his own accounting firm.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer quoted former Governor Dan Evans, who knew John O'Brien well, who said:

He knew how to lead and occasionally when things got rambunctious, he had to have a heavy gavel to get things back in order.

Evans remembered one time when he challenged an O'Brien ruling, O'Brien slammed his gavel down so hard the head snapped off.

While O'Brien was a fiscally conservative Democrat, he understood what the role of the speaker required of him. He was always ready to have a good time.

I remember that if there was ever anybody who captured the saying, "when Irish eyes are smiling," it was John O'Brien because he had a twinkle in his eye and a way to get people engaged. When I entered the State legislature at the age of 28, I was the youngest member at the time, and he was the most senior member of our legislature. Knowing of my Irish heritage background, he got me to commit to him that I would participate in St. Patrick's Day celebrations in his office by doing the Irish jig if, in fact, he produced someone with a bagpipe.

Well, unbeknownst to me, our secretary of state, Ralph Monroe, of Scottish heritage, had such bagpipes stored in his office and was quite frequently seen in the halls of Olympia playing the bagpipes. So on St. Patrick's Day I did participate in Speaker O'Brien's St. Patrick's Day celebration, as did our secretary of state, Ralph Monroe, and many others.

I hope to this day that there is not a picture of my rendition of my Irish heritage dance. But I know I will always remember on St. Patrick's Day John O'Brien and his great service and his heritage in our State.

On the last two pages of his biography, "Speaker of the House," Speaker John O'Brien sums up his philosophy on how to survive in a legislature. He said:

Do your best, count the votes, and, win or lose, move on to other pressing issues.

He said:

It might stay with you for a while, but as far as being disappointed, you cannot let it remain as a personal matter because there's always another rollcall. There's always another day.

We can find inspiration in Speaker O'Brien's service as we face tough legislative issues here and as we face our vote today. No matter on what side of the political aisle you stand, we can all join in honoring the inspiration from others who have served and honoring the life of Speaker John L. O'Brien for his lifetime of public service.

My thoughts are with his family: his wife Mary, their six children, John O'Brien, Jr., Laurie, MaryAnn, Karen, Jeannie, and Paul, and to their grandchildren.

John O'Brien was a great Washingtonian, a great citizen of our country, and we will miss him, and we will try to live up to his accomplishments and to his legacy.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Ms. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the introduction of S. 1236 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

TRIBUTE TO JOHN O'BRIEN

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to take a couple of minutes to speak and to honor the life and legacy of a great leader from my home State of Washington. He was the former Speaker of the House, John O'Brien, and he passed away just this past weekend.

It is no exaggeration to say that John O'Brien had one of the longest and most accomplished careers of anyone who served in our Washington State Legislature. I was really lucky to have an opportunity to work with him when I was in the Washington State Senate and he was serving in the House. He was one of those people whom, whenever he walked into a room, everyone noticed. I always thought he was just so tall, but then I am only 5 feet tall, so to me he was tall. But it is amazing to me how many people say that his stature brought the respect of everyone who ever met him, and it certainly was true for me and for so many of us.

As Speaker of the House, he was known to be very tough but always fair. He was always firm, and he was always compassionate. I think I learned most from him that when you know the rules and use them for the betterment of all people, that is the kind of power which leaves you with a legacy everybody admires.

John leaves us many legacies. He leaves us a record of long and distinguished service in the State legislature. There is a building on our capitol grounds in Washington State that bears his name. He leaves behind laws that made our State a better place to work, to live, and to raise a family. Most importantly, he left a legacy of service that lives on in all of us who were lucky enough to serve with him and to be inspired by his leadership. It is the kind of legacy that any elected official would be proud of.