

of the Senate, I was sometimes frustrated with the way Bob and Senator Lowell Weicker often voted with the Democrats on almost every issue. This disparity of views within my committee forced me to work even harder to forge worthwhile and well-thought-out bipartisan compromises in order to move important legislation. This proved to be an enormous challenge but one that shaped my career and made me a better legislator. There is no question that challenges and beliefs of Bob and Lowell made me the legislator I am today.

Bob was born in 1913 in Rutland, VT. As a product of the Rutland public schools, he attended Middlebury College and received his first degree in 1935. He graduated from Boston University Law School in 1938 and immediately began what would be a long and distinguished career in public service.

Immediately after graduating from law school, Bob served as a Rutland County prosecuting attorney. In 1942, he left the prosecutor's office to serve our country in World War II. Enlisting in the Navy as a lieutenant commander, he served in active duty for the duration of the war.

Bob returned home to Rutland, VT, in 1947 and became a Vermont state's attorney. He served in that capacity for 4 years before volunteering to serve in our Nation's military in another foreign conflict, this time in Korea. Bob once again served honorably in the Navy from 1951 to 1953.

Returning home again in 1953, Robert began his career in Vermont State politics. I think both Senators LEAHY and SANDERS would agree that Bob was iconic figure in Vermont's political history.

Bob worked in the Vermont Attorney General's Office from 1953 to 1957, serving those last 2 years as Vermont's attorney general. In 1957, he was elected Lieutenant Governor, and in 1959, he was elected to be the State's Governor.

After rising quickly to the top of Vermont state politics, he was elected to Vermont's only seat in the House of Representatives in 1960 and, after being elected to five successive terms, he resigned his seat in 1971 to accept appointment to the Senate, temporarily filling the vacancy left by the death of Senator Winston L. Prouty.

Though he began his Senate tenure as a temporary replacement, Bob would, in many ways, become a permanent part of this institution. He won a special election in 1972 to serve out the remainder of Senator Prouty's term, and he would remain Vermont's Senator for 17 more years, retiring on his own terms in 1989.

As an educated man himself, he was always a champion of higher education. In fact, our Nation's most prominent student loan program was renamed after Bob during his last term in office.

He also played an important role in modernizing Federal disaster relief. In 1988, President Reagan signed into law the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief

and Emergency Assistance Act, which created the system in place today by which a Presidential disaster declaration of an emergency triggers financial and physical assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA. Obviously, Bob was instrumental in passing this landmark legislation.

During his time in Congress, Bob and I worked together to reform parts of the Federal entitlement system and to trim the fat from costly Federal programs. Although he and I would often disagree, I always enjoyed hearing his persuasive arguments to articulate his commitment. Even if you didn't agree with Bob's politics, you had to respect the thoughtful and genuine effort he put in to formulating his opinions and arguing his positions. I appreciated Bob very much for his convictions and his passion.

Mr. President, in Bob, our Nation has lost an elder statesman and a principled leader. His leadership and tireless public service are examples for all of us who have aspired to serve this great Nation. I am grateful for this evening's opportunity to remember his service and to reflect on his example.

LEARNING FROM KATRINA

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, once we were able to see beyond the death, destruction, and suffering that Hurricane Katrina wrought, we saw that America is unprepared for a megacatastrophe. We learned that lesson at the expense of those in the gulf states.

Nevertheless, our vulnerability is not limited to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, or to our Southern Atlantic States.

Fifty-seven percent of Americans live in areas prone to earthquakes, hurricanes, or other massive disasters. We know about the quakes that have rocked California, Oregon, and Alaska. But the largest earthquake to strike the continental U.S. was centered in New Madrid, MO, in 1811. It rattled a swath of land that spanned from Mississippi to Michigan, from Pennsylvania to Nebraska.

Twenty States, including Hawaii, and States that share a shoreline with the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, face the threat of hurricanes or severe storms every year.

New Jersey experienced the second most severe storm in its history just last month. These downpours forced nearly 5,000 New Jerseyans to evacuate their homes and led to the deaths of at least three.

Increasing numbers of people make those areas of vulnerability their homes every day. Eight out of the eleven most costly U.S. natural catastrophes have occurred since 2001.

The failures of Katrina—from neglected levies to negligent leadership—must be acknowledged and addressed now, before the next catastrophe strikes. We have a moral obligation to learn from that experience.

America needs an integrated program that unifies State and Federal policies to prepare and protect American families from the devastation of natural catastrophes.

There are steps we can and must take—and we must take them today.

We must prevent unnecessary loss of life and property by encouraging State and local governments to enact sensible building codes and land use policies that recognize the exposure to natural catastrophes.

We must support first responders with the equipment, training, and personnel needed to save lives and reduce property damage.

We must educate consumers and provide them the tools they need to prepare for catastrophes and protect their families and homes from harm.

We must establish a rigorous process of continuous improvement by learning from past mistakes and assessing recovery efforts after every disaster to identify ways to continually improve our ability to recover from catastrophes.

My Senate colleagues, the warnings before Hurricane Katrina were shamefully ignored and unheeded, the response was slow and erratic, and this Nation paid an enormous price.

We have been warned. We must learn from the lessons of Katrina and exhibit the leadership America needs to be prepared and protected from catastrophes to come.

PRESIDENT ÁLVARO URIBE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to speak for a moment today about a recent Washington Post editorial and President Álvaro Uribe of Colombia.

I noted with interest the Washington Post Sunday editorial concerning criticism President Uribe has received lately. I believe the Washington Post made some good points and asked the right questions. Like, why do some Americans heap criticism on a man who is one of our few allies in a region dominated by the likes of Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro and who has dedicated himself to ending the violence in his country and bringing justice to Columbia?

I agree with the Washington Post, that perhaps we should be more discerning in who we criticize and treat those who would be friends to the United States with a little more deference.

Additionally, I ask unanimous consent that an editorial concerning President Uribe from the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, May 6, 2007]

ASSAULT ON AN ALLY: WHY ARE DEMOCRATS SO "DEEPLY TROUBLED" BY COLOMBIA'S ÁLVARO URIBE?

Colombian President Álvaro Uribe may be the most popular democratic leader in the

world. Last week, as he visited Washington, a poll showed his approval rating at 80.4 percent—extraordinary for a politician who has been in office nearly five years. Colombians can easily explain this: Since his first election in 2002, Mr. Uribe has rescued their country from near-failed-state status, doubling the size of the army and extending the government's control to large areas that for decades were ruled by guerrillas and drug traffickers. The murder rate has dropped by nearly half and kidnappings by 75 percent. For the first time thugs guilty of massacres and other human rights crimes are being brought to justice, and the political system is being purged of their allies. With more secure conditions for investment, the free-market economy is booming.

In a region where populist demagogues are on the offensive, Mr. Uribe stands out as a defender of liberal democracy, not to mention a staunch ally of the United States. So it was remarkable to see the treatment that the Colombian president received in Washington. After a meeting with the Democratic congressional leadership, Mr. Uribe was publicly scolded by House Majority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), whose statement made no mention of the "friendship" she recently offered Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. Human Rights Watch, which has joined the Democratic campaign against Mr. Uribe, claimed that "today Colombia presents the worst human rights and humanitarian crisis in the Western hemisphere"—never mind Venezuela or Cuba or Haiti. Former vice president Al Gore, who has advocated direct U.S. negotiations with the regimes of Kim Jong II and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, recently canceled a meeting with Mr. Uribe because, Mr. Gore said, he found the Colombian's record "deeply troubling."

What could explain this backlash? Democrats claim to be concerned—far more so than Colombians, apparently—with "revelations" that the influence of right-wing paramilitary groups extended deep into the military and Congress. In fact this has been well-known for years; what's new is that investigations by Colombia's Supreme Court and attorney general have resulted in the jailing and prosecution of politicians and security officials. Many of those implicated come from Mr. Uribe's Conservative Party, and his former intelligence chief is under investigation. But the president himself has not been charged with wrongdoing. On the contrary: His initiative to demobilize 30,000 right-wing paramilitary fighters last year paved the way for the current investigations, which he and his government have supported and funded.

In fact, most of those who attack Mr. Uribe for the "parapolitics" affair have opposed him all along, and for very different reasons. Some, like Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), reflexively resist U.S. military aid to Latin America. Colombia has received more than \$5 billion in economic and military aid from the Clinton and Bush administrations to fight drug traffickers and the guerrillas, and it hopes to receive \$3.9 billion more in the next six years. Some, like Rep. Sander M. Levin (D-Mich.), are eager to torpedo Colombia's pending free-trade agreement with the United States. Now that the Bush administration has conceded almost everything that House Democrats asked for in order to pass pending trade deals, protectionist hard-liners have sized on the supposed human rights "crisis" as a pretext to blackball Colombia.

Perhaps Mr. Uribe is being punished by Democrats, too, because he has remained an ally of George W. Bush even as his neighbor, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, portrays the U.S. president as "the devil." Whatever the rea-

sons, the Democratic campaign is badly misguided. If the Democrats succeed in wounding Mr. Uribe or thwarting his attempt to consolidate a democracy that builds its economy through free trade, the United States may have to live without any Latin American allies.

2007 NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I recognize May 8, 2007 as National Teacher Day.

Teachers play a vital role in our society. They are a driving force in the course this great Nation takes. The molding of young minds is a daunting task. Yet teachers willingly accept the challenge with open arms. Being a former math teacher, I know the great challenges teachers face every day. Teachers often have thankless jobs, getting little appreciation for the myriad of tasks they do on a daily basis. They tie shoes, wipe noses, dab tears, and provide comfort all without asking for anything in return. Teachers are disciplinarians, educators, and friends. Their job is truly invaluable and priceless. Teachers give each student a toolbox full of essential tools to use, training them for many of life's situations that might come their way. These tools give students the confidence to face each day prepared for living.

Historian Henry Adams said, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." I couldn't agree more. Educators all over the country teach and train America's next generation. Students are given direction and guidance for their futures from their teachers. Teachers can be very influential in the lives of their students, and thus influence generations of people to come.

Let me take this opportunity to recognize Ms. Tamara Tiong for her recent nomination for the National Teacher of the Year Award. Ms. Tiong is a special education teacher at Dulce Elementary School in Dulce, NM, and has taught for 8 years. She is a shining example of what all teachers strive to be: challenging, encouraging, and compassionate. I thank Ms. Tiong today for her great service and wish her many more years of teaching and training America's youth.

Join me today in saying thank you to our teachers for all they do. They deserve our thanks and support. Thank you, teachers, for every life you have touched and every life you will touch in the future.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate took two rollcall votes. The first vote was on Senator COCHRAN's second degree amendment, S.A. 1010, to Senator DORGAN's prescription drug importation amendment, S.A. 990. The Cochran amendment passed the Senate by a 49 to 40 vote. The second vote was on the motion to invoke cloture on the committee substitute

amendment to the Prescription Drug User Fee Amendment Act of 2007, S. 1082, which was agreed to by an 82 to 8 vote.

Although I was unable to be present for these two votes, I would like to state for the record how I would have voted. I would have opposed Senator COCHRAN's amendment which requires the Secretary of HHS to certify that drug importation would not pose any safety risk to consumers. As a matter of practice, the Secretary is not able to certify that any drug from any facility, here in the United States or abroad, would not pose a safety risk. As such, this amendment effectively would block the implementation of Senator DORGAN's amendment.

The fact that the Cochran amendment passed is unfortunate. It is unconscionable that Americans are paying on average twice as much for life-saving drugs as citizens of other countries, and our State and Federal health programs are struggling to bear these costs.

Finally, my HELP Committee colleagues have spent months negotiating and drafting the Prescription Drug User Fee Amendment Act, which contains a number of critical reauthorizing and drug safety provisions. I would have voted in favor of cloture on this bill and look forward to its passage later this week.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On August 22, 2002, in San Francisco, CA, Jack Broughton and his female companion, Jean Earl, beat two women outside a gay poetry event. Police reported that Earl began kicking and punching people while shouting anti-gay epithets at the event's participants. After being kicked out, Broughton and Earl beat a 34-year-old woman outside. Broughton then punched the first victim's partner, who joined in the scuffle. The first victim suffered minor injuries, for which she was treated at a hospital.

According to reports, the victim's were attacked solely because of their sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Matthew Shepard Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.