

The Senate is going to be forever different for me now. For more than a quarter of a century, part of my workplace has evolved around one of the Senate employees: Martin Paone. First, as I was a new Senator, he was always here to help me feel more comfortable and answer, I am sure as we look back, dumb questions we all ask as new Senators, but he was always a gentleman, always willing to give us the information. For the 9 years I have been involved as Democratic leader, he has been available. During the 6 years I spent on the floor as Senator Daschle's assistant and whip, Marty was always there giving me guidance and advice. He was always so very helpful. It is important to have someone who understands these complicated rules we have in the Senate. He has been a terrific coworker and a good friend and I am going to miss him tremendously. As I have said, the Senate will never be the same with Marty not being here.

So it is bittersweet news that Marty is going to be leaving—retiring. He has served the Senate for 30 years. His story is a remarkable success story. He began his career in the House Post Office to help pay his way through graduate school at Georgetown. Later he moved to the Senate Parking Office before joining the Democratic cloakroom in 1979. With his tremendous intellect and vast knowledge of procedure, it was no surprise that he moved up the ranks to become Secretary for the minority in 1995. It is no exaggeration to say that every single Democrat and a number of Republicans rely upon Marty's expert advice. That has ended. I have been, as I have indicated, one of those who has depended on his expertise. Nothing has happened on the Senate floor, no legislation was considered, no parliamentary procedure enacted without his influence. Countless staff have come and gone over the years, but he has been a constant, steady presence. I am grateful beyond words and express gratitude for his exceptional service. Ruby is someone we see as we come to work every day. She has worked here for many years herself. Marty has three beautiful children: Alexander, Stephanie, and TJ. I have followed their high school athletic careers over the last several years. But he is moving on to new things, new challenges. We will all miss him. We wish him nothing but the best and know he will be a tremendous success.

Although we are sad to say goodbye to Marty, I am pleased to announce we have chosen Lula Davis as our new Democratic Secretary. She is a longtime veteran of this Chamber. Lula has had more than 25 years of Senate service, which began in the office of the legendary Russell Long of Louisiana. Since 1993, she has been a member of the Democratic floor staff. In 1997, she was elected as the first woman ever to serve as Assistant Democratic Secretary. Much like Marty, Lula has risen to become indispensable for all of

us. She has big shoes to fill, but I can't think of a more capable person to take on this crucial role.

Replacing Lula as Assistant Democratic Secretary will be Tim Mitchell. Tim is quiet, always available, so important to me. I appreciate his attention to me on so many different occasions. He has served as floor assistant to the Democratic leader, where he has become a leading expert on floor procedure and legislative process. With 16 years of Hill experience and as a policy adviser for the Democratic Policy Committee, research director for Senator Daschle, and a legislative assistant to the Senate Banking Committee, Tim could not be better prepared for some of these new responsibilities.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that Jacques Purvis, a member of our floor staff, will take on Tim's role as floor assistant. A Howard University fellow, Jacques began his career in my personal office. He is a wonderful, fine young man. He has shown enormous skill and has a bright future ahead of him.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield for a moment?

Mr. REID. I am happy to yield.

Mr. McCONNELL. I would like to extend my appreciation for the service Marty has given your conference. I have found him invariably to be a straight shooter and somebody we could work with to try to make the Senate function. I think he and Dave have enjoyed a good working relationship. I, too, want to wish him well and thank him for his many years in the Senate and congratulate Lula on her appointment.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield?

Mr. REID. I am happy to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to join in this chorus. Prior to my election to the House of Representatives, I served as parliamentarian of the Illinois State Senate for 14 years. It is a very important role in that body, as Marty's role has been here. You don't spend much time before a microphone, but you spend a lot of time preparing the Members to say the right things before the microphone, and Marty has done that I think in the best possible tradition of the Senate.

Time and again, Members on our side of the aisle, and I believe on the other side as well, knew they could trust his word, trust his judgment, that he understood this institution, not just the rules but the history and the tradition. He served this institution well, as his wife has, and I wish him the very best in his new endeavors.

I am also happy to hear Lula Davis is going to replace Marty in his position. She has a tough act to follow, as has been said, but she is an extraordinary woman, who has served this Senate well for 25 years, and I am certain she will continue on in this fine tradition.

Mr. President, I yield back to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REFLECTIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Benjamin Franklin once said:

Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.

This year, I know all 100 Senators will work to enable the words of Franklin to be meaningful, to make us each a better person and, in a cumulative effort, a better Senate.

Having come back from my time in Nevada, I think it is an opportunity for me to reflect briefly upon 2007, the first year of the 110th Congress. This past year made one thing clear: We in the Senate are at a constant crossroads, with two paths from which to choose. One path is bipartisanship. The other is obstructionism. One path leads to change, the other to more of the same. This is not directed toward Republicans only but certainly Democrats also. Bipartisanship is a two-way street and we have to understand that. One path leads to change, the other to more of the same; the other to finger pointing.

When we chose bipartisanship last year, we made real progress. For whom did we make real progress? We made it for the American people.

With bipartisanship, we passed the toughest ethics bill in the history of our country to ensure a government as good and as honest as the people we represent. With bipartisanship, we finally passed the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to support our first responders and secure our most at-risk cities. With bipartisanship, we provided our veterans with the largest health care funding increase in history.

When we sought and found common ground, we passed the first minimum wage increase in 10 years to help the hardest working Americans make ends meet. When we sought and found common ground, we helped struggling homeowners, a few—we have a lot more to do—to at least be aware of and avoid foreclosure. When we sought and found common ground, we enacted the largest expansion of student financial aid since the GI bill. When we sought and found common ground, we passed an energy bill that will lower gas and electricity prices and begin to stem the tide of global warming. Could we have done more with that Energy bill? Of course, we could, and we are going to try in the next few months to enlarge upon it.

Time and time again, we have proved that bipartisanship works. Far too often, unfortunately, others chose the other path—the path of being an obstructionist. We saw that on Iraq. Most Republicans chose to stick with the President's policy that has devastated our Armed Forces, compromised our security, and damaged our standing around the world. We saw it on Medicare drug prices. We were unable to get

done something that is so common sense. The American people say: Why couldn't you do that? What we wanted to do was allow Medicare to negotiate for lower priced drugs. We couldn't get it done. We saw it on children's health. We tried, and we had good bipartisan cooperation. We passed it, but the President vetoed it, and we were unable to override that veto. It is often we see how destructive partisanship can be. So let's hope the old way of doing business is no longer this year's way of doing business.

Many of last year's problems have grown worse—all we have to do is look at the morning newspaper—and many new ones have arisen. Last year, the subprime lending issue was not part of our mantra. Now it is in every speech anyone gives in the political world. We can no longer turn to the old playbook of political posturing. We must end that. We have to do better.

What are the new and growing challenges? We don't need an economics professor or philosopher to tell us: A walk through a neighborhood most anyplace in this country to see the sea of for sale signs, foreclosures are all over this country. All it takes is a trip to a gas station or even drive by a gas station to see people are paying over \$3 a gallon most everyplace in this country.

All it takes is a glance at the headlines in the newspaper to see the rising violence and turmoil all across the globe.

Like all of my colleagues, I spent a lot of time back home, and we talked about that. Mr. President, in Nevada, things have changed. But to show you, in a sparsely populated State such as Nevada, similar to the State of my colleague, the Presiding Officer—Nevada is a sparsely populated State. To show how people are so concerned about this country, in an hour and a half on Saturday, 30,000 new Democrats registered to vote in Nevada. In an hour and a half, during the caucuses we had, 30,000 new Democrats registered to vote. Think about that. In the State of Nevada, there were 30,000 new Democratic registrants in an hour and a half. Why? Because we have an economy that is sliding toward recession. Hundreds of thousands of families are at risk of losing their homes—millions, really, not hundreds of thousands. The price of gas and heating homes is skyrocketing to alltime highs. New threats of violence, war, and terrorism are emerging at home and abroad.

Regarding the war in Iraq, it is debatable now how much we are spending there. Is it \$10 billion or \$12 billion a month? And now we have, during this break we have had, a Republican frontrunner for the Republican nomination for President who says we will have to be in Iraq for as long as 40 more years. This war will soon be going into its sixth year. We are now an occupying force in Iraq.

So together we must address these growing challenges, both foreign and domestic.

At home, the first thing we have to work on is the economic stimulus package. During the break, I spoke to the Secretary of the Treasury at least eight or nine times. He is concerned, and we are all concerned. To be effective, this stimulus plan must be timely, targeted, and temporary. It must be timely because America needs relief right now. It must be targeted because for too long the Republican approach has been to put money in the pockets of corporations and the wealthy rather than the working families who need it most. It must be temporary because, as important as it is to help people right now, we don't do ourselves or our economy any favors by saddling our children and grandchildren with mountains of debt, as has happened over the past 7 years.

If the President and congressional Republicans work together with us to pass this short-term stimulus plan that follows these principles, we can make a real and immediate difference in people's lives and perhaps stave off this looming recession. I call upon all of my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—to come together to pass the stimulus package this work period. We have 4 weeks, and we must do it during this 4-week work period. We will meet with President Bush today to continue working out this plan.

While we await the results of the discussions on the stimulus package, we will begin this year by addressing other important issues, such as Indian health. We have to do this. The sickest and worst health care in America is on Indian reservations. That is why we are doing this. Native Americans all over America have the highest rate of diabetes, tuberculosis, and other dread diseases. We must address the health care of the poorest of the poor. They are the poorest of the poor—Native Americans.

This legislation will allow Indian and tribal health providers to offer long-term health care services and even hospice care and will provide diabetes and youth substance abuse programs to urban Indians and will encourage State-tribe agreements to improve health service delivery. We would like to finish that as soon as possible. After we finish that, we will return to the foreign intelligence surveillance bill.

Mr. President, we must pass a FISA law that gives our law enforcement officials the tools they need to fight terrorism, without infringing on the fundamental rights of law-abiding Americans. We have always been willing to work with the President to give him the constitutional authority to meet the post-9/11 challenges. All he had to do was tell us what he needed. It wasn't until we read in the New York Times that he was doing things that were contrary to law that we decided we had to do something legislatively. If he had come to us, we would have done anything we could to maintain the framework for a constitutional form of government to help whatever problems there might be.

With the current law set to expire soon, Democrats are resolved to replace it with a new and stronger one. Senator ROCKEFELLER, Senator LEAHY, and their committees—both Democrats and Republicans—believe the law needs to be changed. Hopefully, we can do that. Last month, I requested a 1-month extension of the current law to allow lawmakers additional time to do just that. The present law expires in just a few days, on February 1. That request I made to extend the law was objected to. With just a few days left before the expiration, I will renew my request for an extension. After we act, the House has to act on this bill. They have not done that. The failure to extend the present law for 1 month could lead to the law no longer being something that guides what happens in this country. Some may want that. I think the majority of the Senate doesn't want that. We need time to do that.

The Defense authorization bill—we have to finish that this work period. Hopefully, we can do it by unanimous consent. I personally thought the veto was unnecessary. I think the Iraqi Government, which we have funded with hundreds of billions of dollars, should stand up and be responsible for what has taken place in that country in years past.

I have had one serviceman from Nevada, who was tortured in the first war, who sought compensation in court, and the Bush administration joined in fighting the relief he sought. We tried to do things legislatively to help, and the Bush administration stopped that. He did veto it. We are where we are. Iraq's treatment of American servicemen during the first Gulf war was important. The bill should not have been vetoed. It was.

We will be as agreeable as we can be to get this money. Hopefully, today we can finish this legislation. It is something we need to do. The Wounded Warrior legislation is in here and an additional pay raise for the troops. We will do what we can on that.

There are other things we look forward to this coming year. We want to make sure we do something about product safety legislation. We want to have toys, for example, that are sold that are safe and that don't make kids sick. We will also look at patent reform.

So we have a work-filled legislative session that I have outlined. We have a number of things we cannot put off, and we are going to have to spend some long hours here in the Senate. Hopefully, we won't have to work weekends. I hope that is not the case. FISA, for example—I have had a number of Senators say they want to go to these very important discussions in Doha that start this week. We cannot do that unless we somehow resolve this FISA legislation, either extending it or completing our work. We may have to finish that work this weekend. We have energy legislation on which we have indicated we are going to move forward.

We won't do it this work period, but we have a bipartisan piece of legislation that came out of the Environment and Public Works Committee dealing with global warming; it is the Lieberman-Warner legislation. We need to get to that. We have to be concerned about children's health and what we can do in that regard.

Can we accomplish these goals? Yes, we can. It won't be easy, and it cannot be done if we resort to the same business as usual. We have a shortened time period. We have the Presidential election coming up, and we have contested Senate seats that take a lot of the time of incumbent Senators and the challengers. Last year, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle broke the 2-year record of filibustering in just 1 year. I hope that isn't the case this year, that we don't break another record.

Our work has begun in this new year and new legislative session. Hope springs eternal, and I repeat what I have said before: If we accomplish things here, there is credit to go around to both Democrats and Republicans. Everybody can claim credit for what we do. If we are not able to pass legislation, there is blame to go around for everybody. I hope we can move forward on the important legislation that faces this country and needs to be done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 110TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, first, I welcome back the distinguished majority leader. It is good to see him and good to be at the podium again, refreshed and ready for act 2 of the 110th Congress. Republicans are eager to get to work on the unfinished business from last year, and we are determined to address the other issues that have become more pressing or pronounced since we stood here last.

We face a number of urgent challenges domestically and internationally, and there will be a strong temptation to politicize them or put them off as the current administration comes to a close and a new one prepares to take its place. This would be an irresponsible path, and it is one we should not take. We have had a Presidential election in this country every 4 years since 1788. We won't use this one as an excuse to put off the people's business for another day.

We have our differences in this Chamber. But Americans expect that when we walk into this well we will sort through those differences and work together toward common goals. And here are a few things we should be able to agree on: We need to show America that Government can live within its means by keeping spending low; that we can protect their quality of life without raiding their wallets with higher taxes; that we won't push

problems off to future Congresses; and that we will not take chances with their security.

As we do all this, we can be confident of success—confident because we have faith in this institution, and confident because of what we learned the last time around. Personally, I think there are a lot of lessons we can take away from last year, and that if we're smart we will learn from them. We all know what worked and what didn't work. We all know the formula for success and the formula for failure. So this year even more than last year, success and failure will be a choice.

I think we can agree, for instance, that we all worked best last year when we worked together. Last January our Democrat colleagues presented us with a minimum wage bill that didn't include needed tax relief for small businesses. It didn't pass. But when they did include the tax relief these small businesses deserved, it did pass—by a wide margin.

Our friends gave us an energy bill that would have meant higher taxes and higher utility rates. It didn't pass. But when they agreed to remove these objectionable provisions, it did—by a wide margin. Senate Democrats also tried to use a looming AMT middle class tax hike as an excuse for a giant tax hike elsewhere. That didn't get very far. But when we all agreed to block the AMT expansion without a new tax, together we prevented a major middle class tax hike.

The temptation to partisanship was strongest on issues of national security. By the end of the year, the majority had held 34 votes related to the war in Iraq and its opposition to the Petraeus Plan. Yet whenever Republicans defended the view that Congress should not substitute its military judgment for the judgment of our military commanders, or cut off funds for troops in the field, we moved forward. With the recent success of the Petraeus Plan, the chances of such votes passing this year have not improved. It was wrong to tempt fate when our progress in Iraq was uncertain. It would be foolish to do so when progress is undeniable.

So there is a pattern here, a pattern for true accomplishment. And now that we know it, we shouldn't hesitate to follow it. Not this November. Not sometime this summer. But now.

As we move into 2008, the problems we face are big, they're real, and they are urgent. And Americans expect competence, cooperation, and results. We know from experience that it's in our power to deliver. And it's in everyone's interests that we do. So on behalf of Senate Republicans, I want to begin this session by extending the hand of cooperation to our colleagues on the other side. As we begin this second session, we need to focus on our common goals.

We need to come together to protect and defend Americans from harm. We need to come together to meet the eco-

nomics challenges of the moment. And we will need to come together to protect Americans' quality of life by keeping taxes low, and by working to relieve anxieties about healthcare, tuition, the cost and quality of education, jobs, and the fate of entitlements.

On the economy, Republicans are encouraged by recent talk on the other side of a willingness to work with us on an economic growth package. Now it is time to prove this is more than just talk. We need to move ahead with a plan that stimulates the economy right away and which is consistent with good long-term economic policy.

An effective plan will focus on growing the economy and securing jobs. It will be broad based for maximum effect, and it won't include wasteful spending on programs that might make us feel good but which have no positive impact on the economy.

Republicans in the 110th Congress have shown that we will use our robust minority to ensure we are heard. And we will use our power to reject any growth package that's held hostage to wasteful spending. Americans are concerned about the state of the economy, they are looking to us to act, and acting now will be far less costly than waiting for more troubles to gather. Time is short. We need to put together a bipartisan package that helps the economy, and do it soon—without raising taxes and without growing government.

In the longer term, Congress can keep the economy stable by keeping taxes low and by assuring families, retirees, and small businesses that current rate reductions and tax credits will continue. We can prepare for the future by making sure every child in America gets a good education through reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act and by completing action on the Higher Education Act.

Our friends should also resist the temptation to increase taxes on dividends and capital gains; agree early that we would not offset a patch for the alternative minimum tax with a massive tax elsewhere; extend the current expanded child tax credit; and end the marriage penalty for good.

We can also boost the economy by boosting trade, which broadens the market for U.S. goods. Last May, Democratic leaders agreed to allow passage of four free-trade agreements if the Administration negotiated increased worker rights and stronger environmental protections. The administration did its part by negotiating the changes. Yet so far, only one of the four FTAs from last year, Peru, has passed. Now it is time for the Democrats to uphold their end of the bargain and pass the remaining three FTAs: Panama, South Korea and Colombia.

We can help the economy by keeping spending low. Republicans will do our part by making sure, as we did last year, that government spending bills don't exceed fiscally responsible levels even as they meet the Nation's highest