

many of my colleagues and of his former colleagues about his abilities and his commitment to improving the state of affairs in business operations at DOD. I am excited by the opportunity he has before him. And I am optimistic about what he will accomplish alongside many others on the team that will form at DOD. But I will be watching closely because this is my duty to the people of Missouri, to the people of America and to the command of our constitution.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

BARACK OBAMA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I want to take a moment to thank President Obama for his service in the Senate. Our new President has some very difficult challenges ahead, as he faces a serious economic downturn, and many critically important national security issues. But he has already shown his ability to handle tough challenges through his outstanding work here in the Senate since his election in 2004.

From the moment he arrived, Barack Obama showed himself to be an outstanding legislator and public servant. I was very pleased to work with him on ethics and lobbying reform issues, first authoring a bill together, and then working together to pass the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act. Passing that landmark legislation took a determined, focused effort over many months, and then-Senator Obama showed that he was both a deeply principled, and very effective, member of this body. I was also pleased to work with him on a number of other issues, including the presidential public funding legislation, and I look forward to his continued support on that issue in this new Congress.

I was proud to support his efforts, along with many other members, on the efforts to support our wounded warriors, which he championed. And, finally, I thank him for his support of my bill, authored with Majority Leader HARRY REID, to safely redeploy our troops from Iraq. His support helped to build momentum for our effort to redeploy the troops from Iraq and move toward a better national security strategy, and I thank him for it.

We will miss his presence here in the Senate, but of course the Nation needs his unparalleled skills, and deep commitment to public service, more than ever as he is now President of the United States. I look forward to continuing to work with him on issues important to the American people, and I thank him once again for his service here in the Senate.

JOSEPH BIDEN

Mr. President, it has been a pleasure to serve with Senator JOE BIDEN for the last 16 years. He is an outstanding colleague and a good friend, and I know that he will make a terrific Vice President. I have been pleased to work with him on so many issues over the years.

For instance, I was proud to support him in his tremendous work on the COPS program. In turn I appreciate his steadfast support of campaign finance reform issues over the years.

Most of all, I want to say how much I have enjoyed serving with Senator BIDEN on the Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees. I also can attest to his mastery of the complicated issues he faced in both committees. It is a huge challenge to take on the chairmanship of a Senate committee, and to do it well, but to serve with such distinction as chair of two of the Senate's most important committees is very rare, and it speaks volumes about JOE BIDEN's service in this body.

I have always found Senator BIDEN to be someone who I could talk with seriously about issues of mutual concern, or when we disagree. He is open-minded and he really listens. That quality will surely serve him well in his new position. He also, in my view, can be uniquely persuasive. He is one of the few Senators who I have actually seen change people's minds during a committee debate. In a policy fight involving complex issues, JOE BIDEN is someone who you want to have on your side.

Now Senator BIDEN becomes Vice President, and I know he will serve the Nation with the same outstanding commitment and skill with which he served the people of Delaware. I thank him for his many years of distinguished service in the Senate, and look forward to continuing to work with him, and President Obama, in the years to come.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in thanking Senator HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON for her outstanding service in the Senate, and wishing her our very best as she becomes our Secretary of State. One of the many reasons I strongly support her nomination for Secretary of State is because I have had the pleasure of working with Senator CLINTON, and I know what a skilled legislator and committed public servant she is. We have worked on a number of issues together over the years, including fighting for family farmers and especially the dairy farmers that are so important to both New York and Wisconsin. Finding common ground, we worked together to make sure dairy markets functioned properly, to improve the milk income loss contract or MILC program, and pushing for country-of-origin labeling, or COOL, legislation for dairy products. I was also proud to support the Paycheck Fairness Act, which she authored, and to work with her on many other issues.

I also had the opportunity to travel with Senator CLINTON and a number of other senators on an official trip to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Pakistan, where we listened to service men and women on the ground, as well as local leaders. On that trip Senator CLINTON deeply impressed me with her depth of knowledge on foreign relations and na-

tional security issues. Later I was very pleased to have her support for my effort with Majority Leader HARRY REID to safely redeploy our troops from Iraq, and I look forward to continuing to work with her on these critically important issues as she becomes our next Secretary of State. Once again, I thank her for her service in this body, and I wish her all the best as she continues her service to the American people.

KEN SALAZAR

Mr. President, I join my colleagues in thanking KEN SALAZAR for his outstanding service to the people of Colorado over the last 4 years. It has been a pleasure to work with him on a number of issues; he is extremely easy to work with, both someone of integrity and great personal decency. In particular, he has been one of the Senate's leaders when it comes to protecting the rights and freedoms of the American people as we work to strengthen our national security. I was proud to work with him and a bipartisan coalition of Senators on the SAFE Act to change flawed provisions of the PATRIOT Act. I also appreciated his critical support of the NSL Reform Act, to address the serious misuse of the FBI's national security letter authorities. I also know Senator SALAZAR's deep commitment to public lands and energy resources issues, and I think he will be an excellent Secretary of the Interior. Again, I thank him for his service in this body, and I look forward to continuing to work with him as he assumes the leadership of the Interior Department.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to say a word of good wishes to the senior Senator, albeit very briefly, from Colorado, KEN SALAZAR, as he leaves the Senate to become Secretary of the Interior.

As the son of 11th generation immigrants, from a family that farmed Colorado's San Luis Valley for a century and a half, no one has a deeper, more powerful connection to what opportunity means in this country than KEN SALAZAR.

I can remember one of the first times I met Senator SALAZAR. After we had exchanged greetings, I said to him, "My family came to America in the 1800s. When did your family come here?"

He replied, "Oh, about 500 years ago."

Indeed, it is remarkable to think that the descendant of a family that settled in the American West almost half a millennium ago will soon be a Member of the cabinet of first African-American President of the United States.

Only in America.

Indeed, though his parents, who served their country in World War II, were not college-educated themselves, they made sure that KEN, his brother, John, and their six brothers and sisters all graduated from college.

To be sure, Senator SALAZAR is a son of Colorado—a small businessman who owned ice cream stores and radio stations and a farmer for more than 30

years. Indeed, he practiced water and environmental law. Our colleague's affection for the pristine, majestic beauty of the Silver State and its people is embedded in his DNA.

Senator SALAZAR also made a mark instantly on this institution. In 4 years, he developed a reputation for bringing people together in common purpose—whether it was advancing renewable energy policy, confirming judges, standing up to abuses at the Justice Department, or championing the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

And I would add that as we work to expand that latter program today, his leadership will be missed.

His time in this institution was short, but he has made those moments count. As Senator SALAZAR seeks to find a balance between renewables and fossil fuels in the administration's energy choices, protect our public lands, and restore integrity to what has been a deeply troubled Department, I am confident that as Interior Secretary he will bring the same temperament to the job that he has brought to his responsibilities in the Senate, never forgetting those who came before us—whose sweat and heart remain at the very foundation of this great country of ours.

And so, today, we thank Senator SALAZAR for his service and wish him well. As he has throughout his life, I have no doubt he will do a remarkable job for our Nation.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL CHERTOFF

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to express my deep gratitude to Secretary Michael Chertoff for the service he has given his country over the past 4 years as head of the Department of Homeland Security.

Secretary Chertoff came to the job in February 2005, upon the retirement of the Department's first leader, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, with an impressive record of public service as a Federal judge, an assistant attorney general, and a prosecutor. He leaves office in the next few days with even greater distinction for shepherding the Department through the growing pains of, shall we say, its toddler years, making great strides to turn the amalgam of 22 agencies—all with different cultures and missions—and 200,000 employees into a single, focused Department. His commitment to the security of the American people remains unswerving, for which he deserves the Nation's appreciation.

Leading the Department of Homeland Security is one of Washington's toughest jobs and probably one of the most thankless. The Department of Homeland Security carries with it the awesome responsibility for safeguarding the Nation against terrorist attacks and natural disasters. It incorporates many different agencies, with missions critical to the American people, ranging from emergency management; to

immigration and border security; to air, rail, and highway travel security; cybersecurity; science and technology; biological and chemical security; and infrastructure protection. Unfortunately, the Secretary gets no credit for terrorist attacks that have been averted and, of course, would be blamed if an attack were to occur. Let me say that I believe our country is safer than it was when Secretary Chertoff began his tenure at the Department, and it is in part due to his attentive and forceful leadership—and the dedicated service of the men and women he had led—that the country has been spared from another terrorist attack. His contribution toward efforts to disrupt the plot to destroy airplanes en route from Great Britain to the United States in August 2006 is especially noteworthy.

Secretary Chertoff brought a rigorous, clear-eyed intensity to the Department's many challenges. He has worked hard to set priorities for the Department and lay out a roadmap to achieve goals. While we in Congress have not agreed with all of his decisions, he has spoken clearly about his goals and been honest with us and the American people about the difficult tradeoffs involved in many aspects of homeland security.

Obviously, the Department is still a work in progress with many challenges ahead. But the Secretary has made an indelible mark in a number of areas. I will mention just a few that are of deep importance to me. First, I would note that it has been under Secretary Chertoff that the serious work of protecting the government's information technology infrastructure began. Our enemies and economic competitors are highly skilled at using computer systems to try to gain advantage over us. Secretary Chertoff realized this, took the threat seriously, and moved to secure government networks in a coordinated, comprehensive way through the creation of the comprehensive national cybersecurity initiative, CNCI. CNCI is still in its nascent stages and many other agencies have responsibility for its success, but I am pleased the Secretary moved with resolve to improve our defenses against cyberintruders.

Under Secretary Chertoff's leadership, DHS has made important strides in improving its financial management. DHS has taken important steps toward improving its grades from OMB on information security, and, I am told OMB's latest data will show that the morale of the Department's employees has definitely improved.

To his credit, Secretary Chertoff learned from his Department's mistakes responding to Hurricane Katrina and set to work to recreate FEMA, and enable it to leverage DHS' many other significant resources, so that it can become, for the first time in its history, an emergency management agency capable of responding to a catastrophic disaster.

The fact is that today, FEMA is not the same agency it was in 2005. That's

because the Secretary has been an instrumental ally in implementing legislation I was honored to draft with my colleague on the committee, Senator COLLINS, to transform FEMA into a stronger, more accountable, and more coordinated agency. It is now elevated to a special status within DHS—like the Coast Guard—so that its authorities and assets cannot be changed without congressional approval and its administrator is the President's principle adviser in an emergency. Key FEMA officials now are required to have relevant emergency management experience; its preparedness duties are united with its response functions so that the same people who prepare for emergencies also respond to them. FEMA now has responsibility for dispensing \$2 billion in homeland security grants and its 10 regional offices are getting stronger by the day. To the Secretary, I would say that the Department's much improved internal coordination and coordination with State and local officials during the 2008 hurricane season attests to the improvements that have been made.

There are many other areas in which Secretary Chertoff's leadership has been instrumental, including border and port security, chemical security, information-sharing, and developing the architecture to protect the nation of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction. And, of course, all Americans who travel by air have been made safer by the Secretary's focus on improving the Transportation Security Administration.

I cannot talk about all of the Secretary's accomplishments today. But I would be negligent if I did not thank him for his assistance in achieving a goal that has a very low national profile, but which has significant ramifications for the 200,000 employees at the Department. I am talking about efforts to consolidate most of the Department's headquarters under one roof at St. Elizabeths Hospital campus in southeast Washington. The Department's headquarters is spread throughout more than 70 buildings across the Washington area, making communication, coordination, and cooperation between its component parts a real challenge. A unified headquarters would allow employees to work more efficiently and interactively and is a critical cornerstone of the efforts to improve management and integration at the Department. I am pleased the National Capital Planning Commission recently approved a master plan for a consolidated headquarters at St. Es. I expect construction to begin later this year, and I thank Secretary Chertoff for his leadership in this effort.

In the short time since it was created in 2002, the Department of Homeland Security has become an equal among the most important government agencies responsible for our national security, such as the Department of Defense. Secretary Ridge launched the process and admirably led the Department through the initial challenge of