

only about 100 to 200 in favor of acting. The House initially voted down the measures. The economy teetered on the edge of the precipice, but Senators did our duty. Some sacrificed their careers that evening. The economy was saved.

I recount these moments of my tenure to remind us of what this body is capable of at its best. When the chips are down and the stakes are high, Senators, regardless of party, regardless of ideology, regardless of personal cost, doing their duty and selflessly serving the Nation we love are capable of great things.

On my office wall hangs a famous print—the Senate in 1850. There is Henry Clay; there is Daniel Webster, Thomas Hart Benton, John C. Calhoun, William Seward, Stephen Douglas, James Mason, and Sam Houston. Giants walked the Senate in those days. My colleagues, they still do.

In “Profiles in Courage,” John Kennedy tells the stories of eight U.S. Senators whose actions of selflessness and fortitude rescued the Republic in times of trial. Serving in this body today are men and women capable of equal patriotism if given a chance—new profiles in courage waiting to be written. It shouldn’t take a constitutional crisis, a terrorist attack, or a financial calamity to summon from each of us and from this body collectively the greatness of which we are capable, nor can America afford to wait.

We are surrounded today by gathering challenges that, if unaddressed, will threaten our Republic—our growing debt and deficits, our unsustainable energy dependence, increasing global economic competition, asymmetric national security challenges, an aging population, and much, much more. Each of these challenges is difficult, each complex. The solutions will not be universally popular, but all can be surmounted, and I am confident they will be with the right leadership from us and the right ideas. I am confident because I know our history and I know our people. I know all of the challenges we have overcome—the wars, the economic hardships, the social turmoil. I know the character of the American people—our resiliency, our innate goodness, and our courage—and I know we can succeed. But it will not be easy, and it will not happen by itself. It is up to us.

America is an exceptional nation because each generation has been willing to make the difficult decisions and, yes, the occasional sacrifices required by their times. America is a great nation not because it is preordained but because our forebears, both here in the Senate and across the Nation, made it so. For 10 generations, the American people have been dedicated to the self-evident truth that all of us are created equal and have been endowed by our creator with inalienable rights.

From the beginning, it is freedom that has been the touchstone of our democracy—freedom not from the benevolence of a king, not by the forbear-

ance of the majority, not by the magnanimity of the State, but from the hand of Almighty God; the freedom to enjoy the fruits of our labors, the freedom to speak our minds and worship God as we see fit, the freedom to associate with those of our own choosing and to select those who would govern us.

From the hillsides of ancient Athens to the fields of Runnymede, to the village greens of Lexington and Concord, to the Halls of this great Senate, it has always been the same: The innate human longing for independence now finds its truest expression in the American experiment. We are the guardians of that dream.

Each generation of Americans has been called to renew our commitment to that ideal, often in blood, always with sacrifice. Now is our time. Now is the time for us to keep faith with those who have come before and to do right by those who will follow, to lift high the cause of freedom in all of its manifestations within its surest sanctuary—this U.S. Senate.

All of this was put into perspective for me one day on a visit to Walter Reed Army hospital. I was visiting wounded soldiers. There was a young sergeant from Georgia. He had been married 3 weeks before deploying to Iraq. He was missing his left arm and both legs. His wife sat by his side. A look of dignified calm was upon his face. I asked if he was receiving the care he needed. Yes, he said, he was. I asked if there was anything I could do. No. No, there was not. Anything he needed? No.

I had never felt so helpless or so insignificant.

I left his room and made my way to the hospital front door and walked outside into the bright sunshine, sat upon the curb, and cried.

All I could think of was what can I do—what can I do to be worthy of him? What can each of us do? Look at what he sacrificed for America. What are we prepared to give? Is it too much to think that while soldiers are sacrificing limbs on our behalf, that we can look across the aisle and see not enemies but friends, not adversaries but fellow citizens?

With service men and women laying down their lives, can we not lay down our partisanship and rancor but for a while? Can we not remember we are but “one nation under God,” with a common heritage and common destiny? Let us no longer be divided into red States and blue States but be united once more into 50 red, white, and blue States. As the civil rights leader once reminded us: “We may have arrived on these shores in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now.”

My friends, the time has come for the sons and daughters of Lincoln and the heirs of Jefferson and Jackson to no longer wage war upon each other but to instead renew the struggle against the ancient enemies of man: ignorance, poverty, and disease. That is why we

are here. That is why. If I have been able to contribute even a little to reconciliation among us, then I have done my duty.

My prayer is that in the finest traditions of this Senate—both in my time and my father’s time and in days before—we may once again serve to resolve our differences, meet the challenges that await us, and in so doing forge an American future that is worthy of our great past. So that when our children’s children write the history of our time, they may truly say of us: Here were Americans and Senators worthy of the name.

I thank you.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I would like to speak for the next 5 minutes. I understand Senator VOINOVICH is on his way, but I would like to speak for the next 5 minutes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, this Senate is not going to be the same place without the Senator from Indiana. In fact, it will be a lesser place because he has been such an outstanding Senator. I wish to let him know he will be very much missed. He contributed enormously, in his very quiet and dignified but powerful way, to many important issues, both domestic and international. We look forward to hearing a lot more from Governor Bayh and Senator BAYH in the years to come.

LOW INCOME HOUSING FIX

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank the leadership on both sides for giving me an opportunity, in just a few minutes, to have a portion of the time when it comes to the discussion of the bill we are going to be voting on at noon. But I thought before I got to that time I had been allotted in the unanimous consent agreement—and I am very grateful to the leadership on both sides for giving me that opportunity—I would take a minute to give a preview while there was no one on the floor asking for time now.

This massive tax bill has been negotiated by many people of good will. I see the Senator from Montana, the Finance Committee chair, who has been at the table in these negotiations, and Senator MCCONNELL and Senator KYL and Senator REID—men who have truly worked very hard. There were representatives from the White House in these negotiations. I know in their minds they did their very best. I have had some serious issues with portions of the package. I have expressed those on the floor of the Senate on behalf of the constituents I represent. I think I have made my points. I think they have been very clear. I appreciate the

opportunity, as a Senator, to be able to voice those complaints.

I am not on the floor right now to talk about the major pieces of that tax package with which I strongly disagree. I intend to vote for it. I signaled that in the vote 2 days ago. I am unhappy with many pieces of it, but that is not why I am here to speak today. I am here to ask the Members of this Senate to consider, when I ask unanimous consent later this morning, to grant unanimous consent to fix a mistake. I am going to ask, in just a few minutes, for the Senate to fix a mistake that was made in the negotiations. I am going to need all 100 Senators to say yes in order to fix this mistake.

Senator VITTER, Senator SHELBY, Senator SESSIONS, Senator COCHRAN, and Senator WICKER—all the Senators from both parties in all the Gulf Coast States that are affected by this amendment—join me in this request. There is not any difference of opinion among those of us who represent these States. Only these States are affected by this amendment. It is very narrowly crafted. It has to do with a placed-in-service date for low-income housing; that is all, low-income housing.

We lost, as many people will recall, 6 years ago, over 250,000—not 5,000, not 25,000, not 50,000 but 250,000—homes in the aftermath of Katrina, Rita, and the great flood that ensued. It is only 6 years ago that happened so, of course, we are still trying to build housing, private, stand-alone, single-family housing, multifamily housing, housing for seniors. It is a huge work. In fact, it may be the largest single residential building program going on in this century, maybe not after World War II—I don't have the figures—but it has been a huge residential rebuilding program.

This GO Zone package was crafted with the help of almost every Senator in the aftermath, and we are grateful. It had basically three main components, what I call bonds for big infrastructure project development, bonds for historic credits, because many of these neighborhoods—particularly Waveland, New Orleans, some of these historic places along the gulf coast—were destroyed. We wanted to preserve, when we rebuilt, the historic nature, so we asked the Senate and were granted historic preservation credits: the low-income housing tax credits to replace the thousands of low-income units for seniors, for the disabled and for the poor and the working poor. In this package, the negotiators got everything, but they forgot and left out—out of the total \$800 million for the GO Zones for all the Gulf Coast States, for everything I just described—they forgot to extend the placed-in-service date for the low-income housing projects.

As a result, and I see Senator VOINOVICH on floor—and I know he is in line to speak—as a result, if we do not fix this today—it is not truly an amendment, it is a correction to the underlying bill—these projects will

come to a halt. There are 77 of them. They are narrow. It does not open Pandora's box. It fixes a mistake. I have testimony from the Senator from Montana, I have testimony from the White House, I have testimony from the Republican leadership that it was not their intention and that they did not understand clearly enough that if this placed-in-service date was not extended, these projects—they thought they could go on. They cannot. They will come to a halt.

It is only low-income housing projects, only in the gulf, and there are only 77 of them. Not all of them will collapse, but the largest will because they cannot be corrected. They cannot be built in this year alone. We need to give them 2 years to be built. If we can do that, the great redevelopment of the city of New Orleans and the region will continue.

Please, in the next hour, my colleagues, contemplate this. I am going to ask for your unanimous consent. I hope I can get it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. I know there is an order for the Senator from Ohio to speak. I would ask for the Senator's indulgence for maybe 15 or 30 seconds.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Sure.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I have discussed this matter with the Senator from Louisiana. She is right. These projects cannot be built fast enough. There is just not enough time. The placed-in-service date should be extended an extra year. It is not expensive at all. I hope we can find some way to accommodate this need.

The people in Louisiana and the whole gulf coast need this extended service date because, otherwise, these homes will not be built. I hope we can find some way to pass what the Senator from Louisiana is suggesting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise today to say farewell to the Senate after 12 years. I would like to take time to convey my heartfelt thanks to all of those who have helped me during my time in the Senate and to reflect briefly on the work we were able to get done, work that I think made a difference for the people of my State and our Nation.

I also will share a few observations with my colleagues, both those who are staying as the 112th, as well as Senators yet to come. At this stage in my life, I look back on my 44 years in public service and I cannot help but thank God for the immeasurable blessings he has bestowed upon me. Each time I walk the steps of the Senate, I look up at the Statue of Freedom on the top of our Capitol dome, and I think of my grandparents who came to America

with nothing but the clothes on their back. They could not read or write and spoke only a few words of English.

I have to pinch myself as a reminder that this has not been just a wonderful dream. The grandson of Serbian and Slovenian immigrants who grew up on the east side of Cleveland is a U.S. Senator. Only in America.

Truly none of us should take for granted the economic and political freedoms we have. My dad used to say the reason we have more of the world's bounty is because we get more out of our people because of our free enterprise and educational systems. Mr. Gudikuntz, my social studies teacher, said: A democracy is where everyone has an equal opportunity to become unequal.

So during my final days in the Senate, I think of the people in my life who have gotten me up the steps to this hallowed Chamber: My wife of 48 years Janet is God's greatest blessing to me. She has never pulled or pushed me, but she has always been at my side; my three children on Earth, George, Betsy and Peter, and my angel in Heaven, Molly, and my eight grandchildren, my siblings and their extended families. It is not easy to have a father, brother, or uncle in this business. The people of Ohio who have facilitated my election to seven different offices, who have stuck with me even though on occasion they have not agreed with me, have my deep appreciation. I can never thank them enough. I hope they know that every decision I have made and every policy I have crafted, although not always the easiest or most popular at the time, was aimed to improve and make a positive difference in our lives. I am very humbled to have been given the privilege to serve them through the years.

Here in the Senate, my wonderful staff, both in Ohio and in Washington, I am so proud of what they have done for me and the people of Ohio. I take fatherly pride in having had the chance to touch their lives and see them grow. I also think of our colleagues in the other Senate offices who have helped and cooperated with them as we worked together to solve our Nation's problems, meet challenges, and seize opportunities. My colleagues and I should be most humble; for all we are is a reflection of these wonderful, loyal, hard-working individuals.

I also thank all of you in this Chamber for your courtesies you have extended to me. I miss my first 2 years when I presided over the Senate, the first one to get to 100 hours in the chair. It was a wonderful time, and thank you all for what you have done for me over the years.

The folks in the Attending Physician's Office have taken care of me physically. Our two great Chaplains, Lloyd Ogilvie and Barry Black, along with the wonderful priests at St. Joseph's on the Hill have helped me grow spiritually. I have to mention JIM INHOFE, hosting our Bible study each