

over 1 million acres of dead and dying trees. This bill has been the subject of intense public debate for the past year and a half since I dropped it in. We had a Senate hearing a year ago, a year ago yesterday, I believe it was. We have had townhall meetings, 11 in total, across Montana. We have had unprecedented transparency with this bill, with it being online and explaining and taking input and changing the bill as it has moved forward, making it a better bill. We have taken suggestions from the public, and where we have been able to address those concerns, we have been able to address them straight-up and move forward. It really is a new way of doing business for the Forest Service, for our forested lands, our government-owned forested lands in this country.

It has not been an easy go. This bill would not have happened 10 years ago. It absolutely would not have happened 20 years ago because for the last 30 years we have had gridlock in our forest industry. We have had conservationists and environmentalists and loggers and mill owners and recreationists all fighting with one another, and nothing has gotten done in the last 30 years.

Well, about 5 years ago these folks got together and they said: You know, we have all been losing. Nobody has been winning. We should set our differences aside—and this body should listen to this—set our differences aside, find a common ground, and move forward with solutions. They did exactly that. It was not easy, but they did exactly that—where everybody gives a little but gets a lot. They sat down at those tables and they met, and they met for years, and they came up with this proposal.

Shortly after I was elected, they came to me and said: Would you carry it?

I looked at it, and I said: You know what, this bill makes sense. It makes sense for Montana. It makes sense for the West.

We were on track to get this bill passed until the omnibus was pulled the other night because of a lack of support. Our No. 1 responsibility right now is jobs—jobs, jobs, jobs. This bill helped create jobs, helped put people to work in an industry that needs help.

Regardless of what happens from here, it is going to be critically important that we stay focused on jobs in this body. I will tell my colleagues that I think if we do that and we are successful in that, this country will be a better place. It will be a better place for our kids and our grandkids, and it will be a better place for people right now. Quite frankly, I haven't seen a lot of that working together in the last 4 years. When we have a piece of legislation that really isn't a Democratic piece of legislation or a Republican piece of legislation but, rather, a good piece of legislation, it gets caught up in the process.

I will continue to fight for jobs for everybody in this country, particularly

in Montana. We will continue to work to get this bill passed and bills like this passed because it is good for the country and it gives the agencies—in this case, the Forest Service—the kinds of tools they need to manage our forests.

As I said before, I was going to ask unanimous consent for the passage of this bill. I have been informed that will be objected to, so there is no reason to go through that formality. But I will say we hope to bring it up again, and hopefully next time we will be successful because it is a good bill.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I wish to respond briefly to my good friend from Montana.

First of all, let me say that I, of course, was at the hearings the Senator referred to in our Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Ordinarily, I wouldn't involve myself at all in the internal matters in Montana. Natural resource issues are best decided by the people who live in the particular counties and in the particular States where that resource is located. On this particular issue, however, one of the areas of land included in the landmass my good friend from Montana described in his bill is an area that is referred to as Mount Jefferson. Mount Jefferson and the area included admittedly are entirely within the State of Montana. However, the only way the southern part can be accessed is through the State of Idaho.

I couldn't agree more with my good friend from Montana in saying that we need to keep our eye on the ball, and that is jobs, jobs, jobs.

The particular area in question is not a large area. I think the total amount is 4,400 acres. The amount I am talking about is about 2,200 acres, but it is used intensively by Idaho people engaging in recreation in the wintertime. Under my good friend's bill, that would have been closed out, and the snowmobiling particularly would have been prohibited in this area, which is the south side of Mount Jefferson.

I sincerely appreciate my friend's willingness to talk about this and to work on this particular issue. As we go forward with this—and I have no doubt that his commitment to his State will cause him to continue to work with us on this issue and to deal with this particular bill and the areas of land he is talking about in this bill as we go into the next Congress. I commit to work with him, and I hope we can resolve this issue. As I say, the issue of winter snowmobiling only as far as motorized use of this particular area is of great importance to the people of the State of Idaho.

I thank the Senator for his courtesies thus far, and I look forward to working with Senator TESTER in the next Congress on this issue.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate the remarks of the good Senator from Idaho. I understand the Senator's concern as we have talked about the Mount Jefferson issue before. Overall in the bill, just for the record, we have added 370,000 acres of recreation area for exactly that—snowmobiles. That doesn't solve the problem on Mount Jefferson of the 4,400 acres, but we will continue to work with the Senator from Idaho and move forward to try to get something as close to what meets the needs of everybody as we can. As Vince Lombardi once said, the recipe for failure is trying to please everybody.

I thank the good Senator from Idaho. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

BYRON DORGAN

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, with the close of the 111th Congress, the Senate will lose one of its most popular, articulate, and outspoken Members. I will lose a kindred spirit and a fellow progressive populist, BYRON DORGAN, who has spent his entire four decades in elected office fighting on behalf of family farmers and ranchers, struggling small businesses, ordinary working Americans, and anyone who has been run roughshod over by big business, big banks, or big government.

Both Senator DORGAN and I are proud of our roots in the rural upper midwest. I was raised in Cumming, IA, population 162. He was raised in Regent, ND, population 211. BYRON always liked to joke that he graduated in the top 10 of his class of 9 students.

Senators on both sides of the aisle have come to respect and admire Senator DORGAN's distinctive voice here in the Senate, a voice that mixes keen intelligence with a great sense of humor, plus a gift for making his arguments with colorful, compelling stories and language. Throughout his more than four decades in public service, he has used that voice to speak out powerfully for farm country in rural America. He has fought hard for policies at the national level to give rural families a better chance at success. He has been a strong supporter of the farm bill's safety net provisions, including countercyclical support for farmers to get them through hard times, and he has been equally outspoken in championing strict limits on Federal farm payments to ensure that the lion's share goes to small family farms, not big agribusiness and absentee farm owners.

As a senior member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and chair of the Appropriations Committee's Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, Senator DORGAN has always been an outspoken champion of clean, renewable, homegrown energy, including wind and solar and biofuels.

He likes to boast that North Dakota is "the Saudi Arabia of wind." Well, my folks in Iowa might dispute that claim, but we get the point. BYRON and I have both been strong advocates of building a nationwide distribution grid for wind- and solar-generated energy.

I wish to make just one more point about Senator DORGAN. I guess I can say this now since he is retiring and a political opponent won't be able to use it against him. BYRON DORGAN is an intellectual. He has a passion for ideas and knowledge. He even writes books—actually, really good books, the kind that show up on the New York Times bestseller list. I am a great fan of his 2007 book entitled "Take This Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed and Brain-Dead Politics Are Selling Out America." If you want a blistering and I think dead-on account of the causes of the crash of 2008, read BYRON's other book entitled "Reckless! How Debt, Deregulation, and Dark Money Nearly Bankrupted America."

I consider BYRON DORGAN a great friend, a great Senator, and a great advocate for all working people in this country. He has accomplished many things in his three terms here in the Senate, but I can think of no greater accolade than to say simply that he is a good and decent and honest person with a passion for social justice and a determination to make life better for ordinary Americans.

When the 111th Congress comes to a close, of course, my friendship with BYRON will continue, but I will miss his day-to-day counsel and good humor. I join with the entire Senate family in wishing BYRON and Kim the best in the years ahead.

KIT BOND

Mr. President, with the retirement of Senator KIT BOND at the close of this Congress, the Senate will lose one of its most respected veteran Members, and a truly distinguished individual with a distinguished career in public service will come to an end. Of course, we would expect big things from a young man who graduated with honors from Princeton and first in his class at the University of Virginia Law School, and KIT BOND did not disappoint.

At age 30, he became assistant attorney general of Missouri, serving under former Senator John Danforth. At age 33, he was elected Governor of the State of Missouri, serving two terms. In 1986, he was elected to the Senate, where he has now served for nearly a quarter of a century.

Over the years, KIT BOND has been a great friend and a frequent collaborator, especially on the Appropriations Committee. For example, in 1993, when the Midwest was devastated by historic floods, Senator BOND was the senior appropriator in the minority party from the nine impacted States, and I was the senior appropriator in the majority party. We took the lead in the Senate, working together very effectively to rally Federal assistance to victims all across the stricken Midwest.

Over the years, we have worked together to improve the locks and dams along the Upper Mississippi. I can say I think we are both proud of our work in the early part of this decade, forging an agreement to authorize the modernization of five of the critical locks so that our goods can move more efficiently up and down the river. We worked very hard for about 4 years to bring together a remarkable coalition of industry and agriculture and the environmental community to make this project possible.

Senator BOND and I are members of a breed of Senators affectionately known around here as "pavers." We both believe very strongly that it is a cardinal responsibility of the Federal Government to invest generously in a first-class national transportation infrastructure—the roads, the bridges, the locks, the dams, and so on—what we call the arteries and the veins of commerce.

Senator BOND and I have also collaborated frequently to boost the rural economy and improve the quality of life of the people who live in our rural communities. In particular, we have used funding through the Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee of Appropriations to approve housing for people of modest means, with a particular focus on rural areas. On this score, I would note Senator BOND was a "compassionate conservative" long before that term came into fashion. He cares deeply about the well-being of the less fortunate in our society, giving them both a helping hand and a hand up. In the mid-1990s, I was proud to work with Senator BOND on the first bipartisan welfare reform bill, modeled, I might say, on the very successful welfare-to-work program we had in Iowa.

Over the years, Senator BOND has recruited and retained an exceptionally talented staff.

In particular, I will cite Jon Kamarek, his outstanding lead staffer for many years on the Appropriations Committee, with whom I have had the pleasure of working on many occasions. I know Senator BOND also places great store by his long-time staffer and current chief of staff, Brian Klippenstein—who, by the way, had the good sense to marry a Democrat from the State of Iowa.

Mr. President, the Senate has been fortunate to have a Senator of KIT BOND's high caliber and character for the last 24 years. In so many ways, he represents the very best in this body—a passion for public service, a willingness to reach across the aisle to get important things done, and an insistence on the highest ethical standards. He has always been determined to do the right thing for the people of Missouri and the entire United States.

For me, it has been a great honor to be his friend and colleague for the last 24 years. Our friendship, of course, will continue. And I wish KIT and Linda the very best in the years ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks, Senator HARKIN be recognized again, followed by Senator CARPER, and then Senator BROWN.

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

COMMENDING CONGRESSMAN PATRICK J. KENNEDY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise to make a few brief remarks in honor of Congressman PATRICK JOSEPH KENNEDY of Rhode Island.

With PATRICK's departure from the House of Representatives to seek new challenges and enjoy some well-earned time out of the political spotlight, my home State of Rhode Island is losing a champion for working families and our country is losing a public servant who did as much as anyone else to care for and lift those in the shadows of life.

It is a moment to thank PATRICK for his many contributions to the lives of Rhode Islanders over his 16 years of service in the House but also a moment to reflect on his unique place in the political history of our country.

After all, the 112th Congress will be the first in more than half a century in which no member of the Kennedy family is serving in either the House or the Senate.

In Rhode Island, a State that he adopted, and that adopted him—he first entered public service at the young age of 21, winning his congressional seat a few short years later in 1994, one of only four GOP seats Democrats won in that election.

Over the years, PATRICK continually faced capable and well-funded opponents, but his constituents had come to recognize and welcome his humble dedication to their lives, re-electing him seven times. He was my younger, but senior, colleague on our delegation.

The arena of politics is combative—all the more so when your last name is Kennedy—but PATRICK persevered, and he persevered despite his own health and addiction challenges.

And instead of running from those challenges, instead of hiding from those challenges, PATRICK had the courage and wisdom to realize that the problem he was experiencing was a problem shared by millions of families in America. Instead of hiding from public scrutiny, he stood tall—not only on his own behalf, but also on behalf of Americans who needed a champion to bring their struggles to the forefront of the national agenda.

With that, PATRICK's campaign for mental health parity took fire, resulting in passage of the landmark Mental Health Parity Act of 2008, an achievement Speaker NANCY PELOSI described as "the legislative feat of the century."

In that fine cause, PATRICK had the chance to work with a towering champion of civil rights, the lion of the Senate, his father.