

lies ahead of them, and that he has done everything in his capacity and power to ensure that they are ready to serve the Nation and lead the Army.

I have been privileged to be his friend, to know both him and his wife Judy, to be a beneficiary of their warm friendship and their kindness.

As he retires from the U.S. Army, ending the last class of 1971 graduates in active service to the Army and the Nation, I congratulate him and thank him.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL PATRICK FINNEGAN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary officer and gentleman—my dear friend BG Patrick Finnegan.

Pat Finnegan and I go back a long way. We were classmates from the class of 1971 at West Point. We went to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University together. We went to the infantry officer basic course together, the airborne school. In fact, I was Lieutenant Finnegan's platoon leader.

Pat went on to serve first as an infantry officer and then as a military intelligence officer. He was so talented and so obviously marked for big things that he was selected by the Army to attend the University of Virginia Law School. There he demonstrated his great legal mind and talent by his remarkable success in the classroom. He was a member of the Law Review, and then went into the Judge Advocate General Corps. He served with distinction, never serving a Washington billet, but always with the troops in the field, overseas in Germany, but particularly with the Special Operations Command, those warriors who are the tip of the spear for our military forces.

Pat returned to West Point as a full colonel to become the head of the Department of Law. There he nurtured a generation of cadets. His success was such that he was the most obvious and the best choice to become the dean of the Military Academy, and he assumed those duties. For the last several years he has led the academic department at West Point with distinction.

West Point has been selected by Forbes magazine as the best undergraduate institution in the country. It has been recognized in terms of the scholarships awarded to its students and in terms of the excellence of its academic programs.

Pat contributed a lot more than just academic expertise. He and his wife Joan and their children and their grandchildren were a large part of the fabric of the West Point experience. They were there cheering on the cadets at their athletic events. They were there in the good times and the bad times of cadets. They were a source of inspiration and encouragement for class after class at West Point. Pat and Joan have left an indelible mark on the academy. They have done it with great

learning and great character, and they have inspired all of us with their dedication to the Army, to the country, and a dedication to each other and to their children.

It is with a great deal of pride that I salute BG Patrick Finnegan on his retirement from the U.S. Army and salute him also upon his appointment as president of Longwood University. Longwood will never regret their choice of a distinguished soldier and a great gentleman as their new president.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING GULF BIRD HABITAT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, as you well know, it has been 3 months since the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in a massive fireball, killing 11 workers and injuring 17 others. But the extent of this tragedy is still beyond comprehension for everyone in this country. Since then, as we all know, as much as 50,000 barrels of oil per day has flowed into the Gulf of Mexico. At that rate, the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska has been duplicated every 4 days. I don't think that when this started, anyone thought that was possible.

There are many resources down there, as we know. It was slow going at first, but now we see more than 6,800 vessels, 117 aircraft, 3 million feet of boom, and more than 45,000 personnel.

In May, I went on an aerial tour of the spill while I was in New Orleans. I saw firsthand the miles and miles of oil slick covering the gulf, threatening the livelihoods of millions of people in the gulf coast as well as some of our Nation's most precious wildlife.

Our priorities are clear. First, we have to plug this well. We know there are some efforts underway as we speak, as well as a long-term plan of pushing some cement in there, that we know may not be completed until mid-August.

The second is that BP and others responsible must pay so that the taxpayers of our State of Minnesota as well as States across the country are not on the hook. The \$20 billion the President and others negotiated with BP was a very strong start because, as we know, what happened with the Exxon Valdez—20 years later, a lot of those families still had not gotten their money. Mr. President, 8,000 of the plaintiffs and fishermen died before they got their money in that case.

Third, we need to figure out what happened so this never happens again.

Fourth, we need to reform the agencies that were supposed to be the watchdogs but turned out to be the lapdogs and redouble our efforts to diversify the energy supply.

I have focused on addressing this disaster because I believe we owe it to the taxpayers and because this disaster has devastated the resources that belong to all Americans. Now, as we face the worst environmental disaster in our Nation's history, we cannot lose sight of a piece of it that I don't think has gotten enough attention. Why? Because we have not even seen it play out yet. We have seen that wildlife down there right now. We have seen the pelicans drenched with oil hobbling on the beaches. We have seen all that. But what we have not seen yet—and we have no idea of the extent of the problem yet—is what is going to happen to the 13 million migratory birds, waterfowl coming from Minnesota, coming from Wisconsin, that winter in the gulf coast in those marshes.

At first, no one, understandably, focused on the unsettling proposition that millions of birds that winter in the gulf every fall and winter will be faced with toxic shorelines and toxic marshes, but as the oil laps up on the shore, we have to face this unacceptable but real problem right now.

As you know, in our State we know summer has arrived when we hear the loon calls from our 10,000 lakes. Minnesota is home to half a million ducks and the largest population of loons in the continental United States. Hunting and wildlife watching is part of our heritage, but it is also an important part of our economy. Waterfowl hunting contributes almost \$50 million in economic activity in Minnesota every year, and Minnesota has the third highest birding participation rate of all States, at 33 percent or 1.5 million people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is heading up the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program, which will come up with an estimate of restoration costs that will be sent to BP for them to pay to help clean up the shorelines, the estuaries, and the marshes. Additionally, the new escrow account that has been created will help ensure that the claims process for individuals and businesses runs smoothly and efficiently, and it will also help ensure that claims by government—State, local, and tribal—that are submitted to BP will not be delayed by a slow claims process.

But, while the Unified National Incident Command is doing all it can to stop the leak, it is important that we simultaneously do all we can to protect the habitat of the birds and the ducks in the gulf that support our hunting and birding economy in this country.

In just a few weeks, millions of birds will begin to migrate south from Canada, from the Great Plains and parts of the Midwest. They will fly hundreds or even thousands of miles to the gulf coast, where they spend their winters.

Remember, all we have seen so far is just the birds that live down there in the heat. Think of when all the birds go down there. This is what they are going to find. They are going to find that beaches that used to have beach balls are now filled with tar balls. So many of them go to the marshes and the wetlands, and the oil is starting to creep into those marshes. We cannot really put up a sign for those birds that says: Hey, go to Mexico instead. There are naturally other places they could go, but, guess what. They can't read. Nor are we going to be able to put some big net up to stop them from flying to those places. I talked to people, experts on this, from Ducks Unlimited and other places. These birds do not have the instinct to avoid those oily areas. They are going to just plow back in where they went last winter. That is why a bipartisan group of Senators joined me in sending a letter to Secretary Salazar to ensure that proper attention and coordination is also made with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and conservation organizations that are working to protect the habitat of migratory birds.

I am pleased that just this week, the National Incident Command announced the launch of a new Web site, restorethegulf.gov, dedicated to providing the American people with clear and accessible information and resources related to the BP oilspill response and recovery.

It is also important that as we focus on stopping this terrible leak, we also prepare for the serious and imminent threats to the birds and wildlife that play a critical role in the regional gulf economies and to the more distant regional economies in places such as Minnesota and Wisconsin.

In just a few weeks, we must be ready for the mass influx of ducks and birds in the gulf region. If we fail to prepare, countless unsuspecting birds, wildlife, will not return to Minnesota and our ecosystems and economies will feel the impact, not just in Minnesota but throughout the country; not just in Louisiana, not just in Florida. It will spread. We will continue to push, with the recovery efforts, to make sure there is adequate focus on this important issue.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

FINANCIAL REGULATORY REFORM

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to spend a couple of minutes, a few minutes this evening, if I can, talking about the Wall Street reform, the fi-

ancial reform bill. I want to begin by thanking the Presiding Officer who, while not a member of the committee, played a very active role during the consideration of the legislation on the floor of this body a number of weeks ago.

There will be a debate again, I know, tomorrow before we actually vote on final passage of the bill. A lot of this I will talk about this evening I have discussed in the past over many weeks and months that have brought us to this particular moment, where within the next 24 hours we will make a final decision as to whether this body is prepared to endorse the efforts to reform our financial system in this country so that we never ever again subject the American people to what they were subjected to in the fall of 2008 where the Congress of the United States, along with President Bush, asked the American taxpayer to write a check for \$700 billion to bail out financial institutions which, through their own misfeasance and malfeasance, as well as those of regulators who failed to act, put this country and in fact the globe at financial risk.

I shall never forget as long as I live the meeting in mid-September in the offices of Speaker NANCY PELOSI, along with Democrats and Republicans, and their respective committees in Congress, where the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and the Secretary of the Treasury under President Bush announced to all of us that if we did not act within a matter of days, and I am literally quoting the Federal Reserve Chairman and the Secretary of the Treasury, that if we did not act within several days, the entire financial system of this country and maybe a good part of the world would melt down, were their words.

So we acted over the next several weeks. There are a number of Members here who were deeply involved in that effort. The country reacted with great outrage over how we had ever gotten to that position and what steps we were going to take to see to it that we would never ever again subject our Nation not only to the cost of bailing out these firms but also the cost that has ensued as a result of the financial collapse to jobs and homes, retirement accounts, ability of families to educate their children, all of the effects that have been visited upon the American people and many others as a result of events that began to transpire years ago, culminating in the difficulties we saw in the fall of 2008.

Before I begin any remarks about the bill itself and what we have tried to achieve, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Arkansas, Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN, who chairs the Agriculture Committee. She shared a responsibility with me in this bill, and while the bulk of the titles came out of the Banking Committee bill, a very critical piece of this legislation involved the participation of the Agriculture Committee. She and SAXBY

CHAMBLISS, my colleague from Georgia, along with their colleagues on the committee, worked very hard and I thank them and their staffs for the work they have produced in order to make this a stronger and a better bill.

I want to thank my House counterpart, BARNEY FRANK of Massachusetts, who chairs the Financial Services Committee of the other body. He, along with Chairman PETERSON of the Agriculture Committee, did a very good job in pulling together the House version of this bill. They actually completed their work back in December of last year. The House moved more quickly for all of the reasons that Members are aware of, the rules of the institution and others that facilitate the rights of the majority to basically move along through the underbrush without the nuances that the Senate provides for in terms of the consideration of legislation.

I sat, along with my Senate colleagues from the Banking Committee and the Ag Committee, for 2 long weeks, almost 70 hours in a conference committee. For those who wonder what a conference committee is, very simply it is when the Senate acts on a bill and the House acts on a bill, and you need to resolve the differences between the two, we meet in what is called a conference committee.

The leadership of both Chambers appoints conferees to represent the interests of the respective Chambers, as you then sit down and try and iron out those differences. Chairman BARNEY FRANK chaired that conference committee. There were 42 of us, Members of the House and the Senate, who got together for that lengthy period of time, including one all-night session, to produce what is in front of us today, and that is this. This is the conference report that reflects the work of both bodies over many months in trying to craft a series of ideas and proposals that would minimize, if not all together prohibit, the tragedy we have been through over these last several years.

I would also be remiss at this juncture if I did not thank the members of the Senate Banking Committee who spent a lot of time together over the last number of years. I became chairman of this committee about 30 months ago, in January of 2007. My great friend and colleague with whom I served for so many years from Maryland, Paul Sarbanes, retired from the Senate. The ranking member, Senator SHELBY, was chairman of the Banking Committee for about 4 years prior to January of 2007. So on the seniority system, I reached the elevated status to become chairman of this committee at a critical moment when obviously the bottom began to fall out of our economy. Since January of 2007, our committee has had around 80 hearings on this subject matter alone that has produced the ultimate product before us here this evening and tomorrow.