

THANKING TOM FALETTI

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to say thank you to someone who has, for more than 20 years, been my right hand on Capitol Hill. Tom Faletti is one of the most decent, honest, and caring persons I have ever known. Tom came to work for me 24 years ago, when I was an unknown second-term Congressman from downstate Illinois and he was a 20-something idealist with a master's degree in public policy and a determination to change the world. We have been a team for 24 years.

Now Tom is preparing to leave Capitol Hill for a new career—not to cash in as a K Street lobbyist but to work at an inner-city high school as a teacher. I know he is going to be an excellent teacher because I know how much he has taught me about how to turn noble ideas into good laws. Among the legislative accomplishments of which I am most proud, almost all of them bear Tom's fingerprints.

Tom Faletti is a quiet, effective person, who has achieved more than many of the most celebrated on Capitol Hill. He is a profoundly good person, too—deeply spiritual, with a deep devotion to his faith, and he is a remarkably patient man. How else could he have survived 24 years with me? One of his greatest personal qualities is his persistence. He has great staying power, and when you consider that many of the historic bills he has worked on require that kind of patience, you understand that is the key to his success.

Tom Faletti grew up in Antioch, CA, about an hour east of San Francisco. He was one of six kids, all boys. His father worked in the accounting department of a steel mill. His mom was mostly a stay-at-home mom who sometimes did child care to help make ends meet. He grew up in a neighborhood surrounded by aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, all living within blocks of each other. It was the Faletti equivalent to Hyannis Port. He met his wife Sonia in the freshman dorm at Stanford University and they have been inseparable ever since. In fact, July 26 was their 30th wedding anniversary.

After earning his master's degree from Berkeley, Tom turned down some good job offers in California because the issues he cared most about, such as ending poverty and hunger, were national issues. He asked his Congressman and my good friend GEORGE MILLER for advice on how to get a job in Washington. GEORGE MILLER replied: You have to be there. So, in 1986, Tom and Sonia packed their belongings and drove across America in their 1978 blue Ford Fairmont. On the way they stopped in Chicago to see the Cubs beat Tom's favorite San Francisco Giants at Wrigley Field—the only time, until then, Tom had ever set foot in my State of Illinois.

Both Sonia and Tom arrived in DC without a job. Within a week, Sonia—who Tom will concede is the much

more talented of the two—landed a job as a teacher. Tom had two interviews with both the U.S. Catholic Conference and Bread for the World. Both of them liked his resume but told him: Tom, you need some Hill experience.

Fortunately for me and the people of my State, Tom heard through a friend of a friend that this fledgling Congressman was looking for a part-time legislative correspondent. Well, my office offered him a job, trying to get rid of the growing backlog of mail in my congressional office. We told him we just had enough money to pay him for 3 months, and we weren't sure what would happen after that. But 3 months later, Tom Faletti turned a routine legislative correspondence assignment into proof positive of his potential. We promoted him to a legislative assistant position handling agricultural issues—not necessarily his forte, but I learned then and have learned ever since you can hand Tom Faletti any assignment and, in a short period of time, he will become a resident expert.

Two years later, the position of health care adviser opened on my staff. Tom jumped at the chance and a real legislative partnership began. Tom's tireless and meticulous work on health care reform and tobacco control has literally saved lives in America. Tom helped to draft the bill which I am so proud of, in which we banned smoking on all domestic airline flights more than 25 years ago.

Neither Tom nor I realized at that moment that that bill was a tipping point. The American people finally opened their eyes and said: If it is unsafe to smoke on an airplane, then why is it safe to smoke on a bus, on a train, in an office, in a hospital? Twenty-five years later, we live in a different nation because that bill came at the right moment. That bill would not have happened were it not for Tom Faletti's good work.

He also drafted a bill that banned smoking in Head Start and other Federal children's programs—unthinkable, but it was considered pretty bold at the time. In 1998, he helped me organize the first International Conference on Tobacco Control that brought together cancer researchers and advocates from nearly 30 nations to help advance the cause of tobacco control around the world.

He also worked to help preserve the historic settlement between tobacco companies and States when it appeared the Justice Department, under President George W. Bush, might gut the settlement.

In the early 1990s, Tom Faletti helped draft what may have been the first meaningful regulation of tobacco.

It was the simple statement that captured where we ended up so many years later, and it said:

The Food and Drug Administration shall regulate tobacco but shall not ban it.

That was the political sweet spot, the middle ground where we eventually ended up many years later.

At the time it seemed impossible, but FDA regulation passed last year and is now the law of the land.

In 1992, Tom helped draft a bill called health status rating in the small business health insurance market. That bill said simply that insurers can't charge more because of a preexisting condition. Have you heard that phrase before? Do you remember that cause? It was the propelling force behind our health care reform that we just completed. People suggested then we could not prevail.

Tom knew where we needed to be as a nation, and today that bill—with minor changes—is the law of the land. It was included in the historic health care reform that President Obama signed into law.

Tom has helped achieve lifesaving change for America in so many other ways, including increasing organ donations and improving health care for veterans and their family caregivers.

In the early 1990s, he drafted a bill to create a pilot program of long-term substance abuse treatment centers for women where they could bring their children with them, thus removing one of the main impediments to women receiving lifesaving treatment.

The list of accomplishments bearing Tom Faletti's imprint goes on and on.

When President Obama invited me to the White House a little over a year ago to see him sign the Family Smoking Prevention and Control Act, granting FDA the very power to regulate tobacco, which Tom Faletti called for so many years ago, I invited Tom to be by my side. I can recall a dinner a few months ago when I was given recognition for all the work I have done in the field of tobacco and looking out over the audience and all the people who have been helpful and spotting Tom. I told the people there—and I say it today—that none of this would have happened without Tom Faletti.

When President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act last March, I again asked Tom Faletti to join me at the White House and witness that historic event and see the new law, including the preexisting conditions.

No member of my staff—or any other Senate staff—worked harder, over more years, to make those two great achievements a reality.

There is one downside to finally winning so many long-fought battles; that is, Tom has decided to retire—well, to retire from the Senate. He has decided it is time to try a profession that he told me he always wanted to try, to become a high school teacher. He is going to teach at Archbishop Carroll, an inner-city Catholic high school in Washington, DC. I was not surprised because Tom has been a teacher for as long as I have known him. He taught hundreds of my staff everything from spelling and grammar to the inside information on moving a bill and changing a nation.

I know Tom and Sonia decided long ago that life on Earth is about more

than material wealth. The lure of K Street never touched Tom Faletti. Instead of cashing in on his time in the Senate and his amazing experience on Capitol Hill, Tom is actually leaving the Senate to take a pay cut and teach in an inner-city high school. Those of us who know and love him are not surprised.

He will be teaching government and political science to 11th graders and a religion class on social justice—his great passion.

Tom said above the chalkboard in his classroom he will hang a sign that reads: "You can change your world." Tom has proven he can change the world because he has changed America. He wants to show his students how they, too, can reach that goal in their lives.

Tom will not need a textbook for that lesson. He can teach from his own experience because that is what Tom has done for 24 years as a dedicated staff member in the House of Representatives and the Senate. I was always proud to be Tom's friend and to learn so much from this good man.

I thank Tom for his service, and I thank his wife Sonia and their children, Timothy, Joanna, and Luke, for sharing him with us for all these years. I wish him the best of luck, and I say to the students at Archbishop Carroll: Listen carefully to Tom. I have for 24 years, and it has worked out pretty well.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

CYBERSECURITY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I will speak about a topic that is central to our national security and economic prosperity and which gets far too little notice and attention; that is, the vulnerability of America's network information systems, and the economic danger and national security risks we face from cyber-theft, cyber-piracy, and cyber-attack.

We live in a wired society. If we sever those wires and the social, economic, and communications linkages that make our way of life possible, we will cease to function. I am gravely concerned that we are not taking the necessary steps to guard against this threat, which I believe is the greatest unmet national security need facing the United States.

Earlier this month, the Intelligence Committee Cyber Task Force submitted a classified final report to the chair and vice chair of the Intelligence Committee. It was an honor to chair this bipartisan initiative and to serve

with my distinguished colleagues, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SNOWE. I thank them for their diligence, their leadership, and their important contributions to this effort. They were excellent and we made a good team.

We spent 6 months investigating cybersecurity threats and our current posture for countering those threats, with a particular focus on the intelligence community. It was a very sobering experience.

There is a concerted and systematic effort underway by nation states to steal our cutting edge technologies. At the same time, criminal hacker communities are conspiring to penetrate financial industry networks, rob consumers of their personal data, and transform our personal computers into botnet zombies that can spread malware and chaos.

It is difficult to put a precise dollar figure on the damage and loss these malicious activities are causing, but it is safe to say it numbers in the many tens of billions of dollars—perhaps as high as \$1 trillion.

I believe we are suffering what is probably the biggest transfer of wealth through theft and piracy in the history of mankind.

In addition, we face the risk of attacks—attacks designed to disable critical infrastructure, with grave potential harm to our national security and to our financial, communications, utility, and transportation sectors.

The intelligence community is keenly aware of the threat and is doing all it can within existing laws and authorities to counter it. The bad news is the rest of our country—including the rest of the Federal Government—is not keeping pace with the threat.

I am encouraged by the growing interest in Congress, where there are now more than 40 bills pertaining to cyber. I want to commend Senator ROCKEFELLER and Senator SNOWE, in particular, for being at the leading edge of the Senate's efforts. They have spent more than a year fine-tuning their legislation, which speaks of their commitment to protecting the country and their recognition that we cannot reduce our vulnerabilities without careful study and thoughtful engagement.

Much of the current debate on cybersecurity in the Congress focuses on executive branch organization dealing with this threat. This is obviously an important issue, and it is one that we must resolve sooner rather than later. But the question of how this all gets organized within the executive branch is merely one of the many problem areas we saw during the course of the work of the task force.

What are these other areas? Well, first of all, an overarching issue, we must raise the public's awareness about cyber-threats; otherwise, we face an uphill battle trying to legislate in this challenging and sensitive policy sphere.

What is the problem? Well, threat information affecting the dot.gov and

dot.mil domains is largely classified—often very highly classified—and entities in the dot.com, dot.net, and dot.org domains often consider threat information to be proprietary and disclosing it could be a risk to their business. So the result overall is that the public knows very little about the size and scope of the threat their Nation faces.

If the public knew the stakes—knew the cyber-criminals, for example, have pulled off bank heists that would make Willie Sutton, Bonnie and Clyde, and the James Gang look like a bunch of petty thieves, they would demand swift action. If they knew the extent of the cyber-piracy against our intellectual property, and the economic loss that has resulted, the public would demand swift action. If they knew how vulnerable America's critical infrastructure is and the national security risk that has resulted, they would demand action. It is hard to legislate in a democracy when the public has been denied so much of the relevant information.

The first key point is public awareness. We have to share more information with the public about what is going on out there.

Second, we need to establish basic rules of the road. One of the signal features of our cybersecurity risk profile is that the overwhelming majority of malicious cyber-activity could be prevented if some computer users installed simple antivirus protections and allowed automatic updates of their software.

If we followed basic rules of the road, there would be a national security advantage: The Federal Government could focus its cybersecurity efforts on that narrower subset of threats that can evade commercial, off-the-shelf technology. There would be economic advantage from the potentially massive reduction in cyber-crimes, such as identity theft and credit card fraud.

Third, we need to empower the private sector to adopt a more proactive stance against cyber-threats. I am from Rhode Island. My State was founded as a sea trading State. When our traders were attacked by pirates, they got out their guns and fought back. Under current law, companies under cyber-attack can do little more than batten down the hatches. We need to look for more ways to help American companies better defend themselves.

Our courts provide one option. Creative technical experts and smart lawyers at Microsoft were able to mount a very impressive counterattack against the Waledac botnet by obtaining a Federal court order requiring that VeriSign, the domain name registrar, cut off domains associated with the botnet. This disrupted the botnet's command-and-control function, and it highlights an important possible role for our judicial branch.

Additionally, we need to establish lawful and effective means for industry sectors to band together with one another and engage with each other in