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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Today I will read George Washington's "Prayer for the United States of America," exactly as it appears in the chapel at Valley Forge.

Almighty God: We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to the government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy Nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, Senator SHAHEEN will be recognized to deliver Washington's Farewell Address. This is the 150th anniversary of that tradition, and we are very pleased that Senator SHAHEEN is going to do this. No one could be more exemplary of his service than she.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the address, the Senate will be in morning business until 4:30 p.m. today.

At 4:30 p.m., the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Margo Brodie to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York. At 5:30 p.m., the Senate will vote on confirmation of the Brodie nomination.

I ask unanimous consent that following the vote and resumption of legislative session, the Senate be in a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators PRYOR and ALEXANDER or their designees.

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

REMEMBERING SENATOR RAGGIO

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last week Nevada lost a great statesman and I

lost a friend and mentor. William Raggio was the longest serving State senator in Nevada's history. He died last week while traveling in Australia. My heart is with his wife Dale, whom I spoke with, children Leslie and Tracy and, of course, my thoughts go to Mark, the son Bill lost in 2004, six grandchildren, and they have a great-grandchild.

I hope it is some small comfort to know that all of Nevada mourns the loss of this very effective and fine Nevada citizen.

He was a second-generation Nevadan born and raised in Reno, NV. Senator Randolph Townsend said, "Bill was part of the fabric of the city." That is true. He lived to serve.

In addition to his four decades of service in the State legislature, he volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces during World War II. He enlisted in the Navy at age 17, but the war ended before he graduated from officer training school.

When he finished his service, he attended the University of Nevada, and then went to law school in California. But he continued to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps as a United States Navy Reservist.

He was the district attorney of Washoe County, which is the Reno metropolitan area, for 18 years, including 3 terms before he became a State legislator. He was president of the National DAs Association.

He rooted out corruption wherever he served. There was nothing more corrupt, in his mind, and the minds of all Nevadans, than an illegal brothel. That illegal brothel went on by virtue of Joe Conforte being able to pass out money to people for a long time. Bill Raggio, as DA, picked a fight with him, and that fight is legend. Bill got the last word. Conforte spent 22 months in prison for trying to bribe Bill Raggio. And in 1965, Bill Raggio, to get the last word, had the local authorities declare that facility a nuisance and burn it

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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down. He was there watching the fire as it destroyed that place.

It wasn't until 1972 that Bill brought his integrity and dedication to the State House as a member of the Nevada State Senate. So for 38 years, there wasn't a piece of legislation that passed the Nevada legislature that didn't have his imprint on it in some way. He worked to help pass thousands of different pieces of legislation. He was an expert in the process. Nobody knew how to craft a budget better than Bill Raggio.

He was a Republican who believed government should be "lean but not mean." He was never afraid to work with Democratic members, even though he was Republican leader for several terms. Here is what he said recently: I think the present leadership of the Republican Party is a little too radical and has been taken over by what I think is a radical element.

He went on to say in an interview, after he decided to retire:

The party has to reshape itself, or it won't win general elections down the road.

That is Bill Raggio, speaking as we should all speak—not as a Republican but as a Nevadan and an American. So it is no surprise to see the outpouring of grief of Democrats and Republicans at his passing.

"No one has ever loved this state more or has had a more passionate desire to make things better for the people who live here," said Democratic Assembly Speaker John Ocegera.

If there was a Mount Rushmore of Nevada politics, Bill Raggio's image would forever be carved there. The Nevada family has lost a great patriarch.

That was what Republican Governor Brian Sandoval said.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD four pages of statements made by Nevada-elected and appointed officials, and citizens of Nevada about Bill Raggio.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Las Vegas Sun]

REACTION TO DEATH OF FORMER STATE SEN.
BILL RAGGIO
(Associated Press)

Reaction to the death of retired state Sen. BILL RAGGIO, R Reno, Nevada's longest-serving state senator:

If there was a Mount Rushmore of Nevada politics, Bill Raggio's image would forever be carved there. The Nevada family has lost a great patriarch; may God rest his soul as we remember all that he meant to our state.—Gov. Brian Sandoval, R Nevada.

I have known Bill for decades; he has been a mentor to me. He always fought for Nevada and his invaluable contributions and service to our state will live on. . . . His important voice will be missed.—U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D Nevada.

Clearly, he was one of the state's greatest and most accomplished public servants. He was also a helluva good guy who possessed a wonderful sense of humor. . . . (He) had an exceptional legal mind and was a knowledgeable, courageous and fair-minded DA who

helped root out organized crime in Northern Nevada.—Former U.S. Sen. Paul Laxalt, R Nevada.

Bill was a true public servant and his sole agenda was simply to make Nevada a better place. He has left an unmatched political footprint upon our state, and the citizens will reap the rewards of this gifted and decent gentleman for many years to come.—Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, R Nevada.

Sen. Raggio was an icon, a consummate statesman and one of the most knowledgeable and pragmatic legislators ever to serve the people of Nevada. His absence from the Legislature with his retirement was keenly felt. His passing on Thursday ends a chapter in Nevada history.—Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice Nancy Saitta.

The passing of Bill Raggio is a tragic loss for Nevadans. For those of us in the law enforcement community, we fondly recall and continue to tell stories about Bill standing up to perpetrators to ensure a safe community. Bill will always be remembered for his impassioned service and dedication.—Nevada state Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto.

Bill Raggio was the type of elected official I strive to become. In an era of intense partisanship, he upheld a statesman's voice of reason.—Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller, via Twitter.

There are no words to describe his dedication to the state of Nevada and I wish to express my deepest condolences and prayers for his wife Dale, and his family. Bill was a true statesman who dedicated his life to making Nevada a better place to live. His legacy will be remembered for generations to come.—U.S. Sen. Dean Heller, R Nevada.

He was nothing short of a giant in Nevada politics and a fierce advocate for the state he loved, especially the north. His dedicated public service has improved the lives of thousands of Nevada families and his tireless work on higher education has left a permanent mark on this state.—Rep. Shelley Berkley, D Las Vegas.

Bill Raggio was the consummate statesman and a dedicated public servant. He was a mentor of mine and it was an honor to work under him in the state senate while he was Majority Leader. He will truly be missed.—U.S. Rep. Joe Heck, R Henderson.

This is the end of an era in Nevada. Bill was an icon of legislative public service and it was a privilege to serve with him in the state senate. My condolences go out to his wife Dale and his two daughters.—U.S. Rep. Mark Amodei, R Carson City.

Last year, I was honored to induct Senator Raggio into the Senate Hall of Fame for his unwavering commitment to our state. From his service as a District Attorney to becoming one of the longest serving legislators in Nevada history, Senator Raggio always put the people of Nevada first. . . . Nevada has truly lost one of its finest statesmen.—Nevada Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford, D Las Vegas.

Senator Raggio epitomized the term "public servant." . . . He was a tireless advocate for higher education, believing that it was the gateway to a better life for any Nevadan. With so many accomplishments and such universal respect, it's impossible to do justice and honor to the life of such a man.—Nevada Senate Republican Caucus.

Saddened by the passing of Senator Bill Raggio. A true statesman. My thoughts & prayers are with his family.—Nevada Sen. Ruben Kihuen, D Las Vegas, via Twitter.

Feels odd to tweet about Bill Raggio but odd not to. He was my friend and a mentor. A great loss 4 Nev but, oh what a life he lived!—Nevada Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, D Reno, via Twitter.

For those of us in higher education, indeed the whole education community, we pause to thank this man who came from humble immigrant roots and rose to great power, in part by public education. He never forgot the contribution of education to his life. We have lost a member of our family today—indeed, our patriarch and champion.—Board of Regents, Nevada System of Higher Education.

Raggio was a champion for our Airport Authority and he had the vision to create a transportation entity that plays a vital role in the economy of our region. He was also a wonderful mentor to me and I will miss his sage advice and wise counsel. The legacy of his forward thinking will be felt in our community for years to come.—Krys Bart, president and CEO of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority.

He championed our state's heritage and he made our values a priority. He ensured that protecting our environment was a non-partisan position in Carson City as he worked across the aisle to support conservation funding and wildlife. Regardless of your politics, Bill Raggio was a great leader and he will be missed.—Nevada Conservation League.

Those who have followed NPRI's work over the years know that we have both agreed and disagreed with Mr. Raggio's views on various policy issues. But there was never any doubt as to his love for Nevada and his commitment to making it a better place to live. For that, he will always have our respect and our admiration.—Andy Matthews, president of Nevada Policy Research Institute.

He was every bit as good and as genuine and as committed to public service as what's described. That's the real person. It's a huge loss.—Nevada Sen. Greg Brower, R Reno.

No one has ever loved this state more or had a more passionate desire to make things better for the people who live here. His ability to bring people together to get things done was legendary. . . . At times, he may have been an adversary on a particular issue, but he was always a true leader, a teacher and a friend.—Nevada Speaker of the Assembly John Oceguera, D Las Vegas.

He was one of the greatest friends and a true mentor to me. Our great state is better because of his leadership and service. He will be sorely missed.—Reno Mayor Bob Cashell.

The thing that was great about Senator Raggio and the time that I spent with him in the Legislature was his ability to bring the two sides together and get things done. He was a master at doing that.—Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger.

He understood that politics is really filled with compromise. The public still owns this process and they send people of all stripes, different backgrounds, different sections of the state. He knew in order to move things forward, you had to compromise.—Former Nevada Sen. Randolph Townsend, R Reno.

Today Nevada Republicans across the state mourn the loss of a great leader and the loss

of an even greater friend. While it is a sad day for all Nevadans, it is only appropriate to remember the legacy and leadership he left behind for us to follow. A loss of a true icon in Nevada politics will not be forgotten. . . . We will miss you.—Nevada Republican Party Chairman James Smack.

Shocked to hear of Sen Raggio's passing—last time we spoke, he ranted about legislators needing to put aside politics & work together.—Nevada Sen. Sheila Leslie, D Reno, via Twitter.

Rest in peace Senator Raggio. You will be missed, but never forgotten.—Nevada Sen. Michael Roberson, R Henderson, via Twitter.

But Raggio also saw his Republican Party transform around him. In 2003, when a group of Assembly Republicans refused to vote for a tax plan, Raggio didn't hesitate to excavate a pejorative from earlier in his storied career: He called them "John Birchers." By 2008, he was battling ex-Assemblywoman Sharron Angle in a primary fight for the district he'd held comfortably since 1972.

When Raggio exercised his legendary independence—and a good deal of personal pique—and endorsed Democrat Harry Reid over Angle in the 2010 U.S. Senate race, his party finally left him. He was ousted from his leadership position by Fallon Republican Mike McGinness, and he tendered his resignation from the Legislature for good.

"I think the present leadership of the Republican Party is a little too radical and has been taken over by what I think is a radical element," Raggio said in an interview after he quit, using a true conservative's worst pejorative. "The party has to reshape itself or it won't win general elections down the road."

Mark his words for November.

Back in January 2011, Raggio told me in an interview that the state would go on without him. "Nobody is irreplaceable. You will find that out," he said.

I hope Raggio will forgive me one last time if I simply don't agree.

Mr. REID. He believed in doing what was right for Nevada, even when it wasn't right for his political party. I admired him and respected him. I respected him even when he and I disagreed, and that happened. But we agreed far more than we disagreed.

I can remember the first time I met him. The person I worked for had worked as a deputy district attorney for Bill Raggio. He came to visit me in our law office, and he was always very funny, very articulate, and somebody I admired and, as I indicated, was my mentor. But I can remember him being in that office as if it were 10 minutes ago.

Upon his retirement last year, Bill told a local reporter, "Nobody is irreplaceable. You will see." It seems, once again, though, Bill and I disagreed. No one can replace Bill Raggio. The mark he left on Nevada politics could never be erased, but his powerful political voice and his true personal friendship will be missed.

Senator Raggio was an effective legislator and leader in part because of his willingness to cooperate with those with whom he disagreed. It would serve this Chamber well to emulate his bipartisan approach.

WORKING TOGETHER

We have a great deal to accomplish this work period. We need to consider

postal reform legislation. It is mandatory that we do that. We have a pressing cyber-security piece of legislation that the Pentagon says is the most important thing we can do for our country. We have to clear a backlog of judicial nominees that threatens the effectiveness of our court system. But first, we must complete one of the most important tasks facing this Congress: strengthening our economy by rebuilding our Nation's crumbling infrastructure.

Today we will resume progress on the Transportation bill that will put 2 million Americans back to work rebuilding roads, bridges, trains, and their tracks.

The House is also considering transportation legislation. I was glad to see that House Republicans have moved away from that extreme proposal they were considering a few weeks ago. They are going to now try to pass something similar to our bipartisan legislation. This is bipartisan legislation.

Too much rests on our success to let this jobs measure be bogged down by partisanship. President Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican, was the original champion of national infrastructure investment a half century ago. He once said:

Only strength can cooperate. Weakness can only beg.

He was right that it takes strength to work together. But working together also makes us strong. I look forward to working together with my colleagues on both sides as we complete transportation legislation that will make our economy strong.

We have 5 weeks during this work period. We have a lot to do. I hope we can work together to get it done.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, as amended by the order of February 14, 2012, the Senator from New Hampshire, Mrs. SHAHEEN, will now read Washington's Farewell Address.

Mrs. SHAHEEN, at the rostrum, read the Farewell Address, as follows:

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Friends and Fellow-Citizens: The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you at the same time to do me the justice to be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country—and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness, but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself, and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me, still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise and as an instructive example in our annals that, under circumstances in which the passions agitated in every direction were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me