

voted to keep those reforms. As we continue this conversation about our fiscal future, I would love to hear from my colleagues across the aisle about how they would reform Medicare, how they would expand its life by 8 years while expanding or at least, at the very least, not cutting benefits. How would they do it? Because we extended its life for 8 years and increased benefits—very meaningful benefits.

I would ask my colleagues why, before the election—and this is the very point the Presiding Officer made a few days ago on this floor—why they were attacking us—incorrectly I might add, inaccurately—for making cuts in Medicare, but since the election they have been insisting we make cuts to Medicare.

Going forward, I think we need to move from talking points to taking a thoughtful look at policies and working together to tackle our Nation's fiscal challenges and do it based on a little bit deeper look at what we have done and what the health care reform was that we passed in the Senate and the House, now the law of the land, what that does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

KENT CONRAD

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, with the close of the 112th Congress, the Senate will lose its most determined champion of fiscal prudence and balance, Senator KENT CONRAD of North Dakota. Senator CONRAD is best known nationally for his leadership as chairman of the Committee on the Budget.

Again, that committee has limited legislative power, but that did not stop Senator CONRAD from using that committee relentlessly for fiscal restraint, for honest budgeting. As we all know, he has spent countless hours on the floor educating, exhorting Senators on budget issues, driving home his points by displaying a seemingly endless array of charts and graphs.

Indeed, I would note in 2001, the Committee on Rules and Administration assigned Senator CONRAD his own printing equipment because he was producing more charts than all his colleagues combined. The other day, we had this so-called Secret Santa that Senator FRANKEN had established, where we draw names out of a hat and we exchange these little gifts. You never know who is going to give you a gift. You know to whom you are giving, but you do not know who is giving you a gift. It turned out my gift giver was Senator CONRAD.

So I got a nice little book. But most importantly, I got three charts. They were charts from the 2008 farm bill we both worked on, and of which I was chairman at that time. I thought that was a great gift, both to get some of his charts but the charts pertaining to

a major piece of legislation on which both he and I had worked very closely. We have been long-time colleagues on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. He joined that committee as a freshman Senator in 1987, just 2 years after I got here in 1985. We were in the midst of the worst economic crisis in the farm sector since the Great Depression.

Senator CONRAD left a major imprint on the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, advocating strongly for measures to help farm families and rural communities persevere through circumstances beyond their control, to preserve a family farm system of agriculture as well as to preserve small towns, the fabric of rural America. Over the years Senator CONRAD has been a key advocate in enacting major drought relief bills and other disaster assistance.

He has consistently fought for effective programs to protect and enhance farm income through the farm commodity programs and crop insurance. For many years we have been allies in advancing farm bill initiatives to promote renewable energy production on farms and in rural communities.

Let no one doubt that Senator CONRAD has always been a relentless, fierce advocate for the interests of his constituents in North Dakota. I know KENT is very proud of a framed resolution presented to him by his State's Standing Rock Sioux tribe. It bears his honorary Sioux name, *Namni Sni*, which translates as "never turns back." I think that describes KENT CONRAD. He never turns back.

KENT CONRAD and I are proud of our shared roots in the upper Midwest. He has been an outstanding Senator, a good friend for more than two and one-half decades in this body.

I join with the entire Senate family in wishing KENT and Lucy all the best in the years ahead.

DICK LUGAR

In these closing weeks of the 112th Congress, the Senate is saying farewell to a number of retiring colleagues. One of our most poignant farewells is to a Member respected and esteemed on both sides of the aisle. I speak of Senator DICK LUGAR of Indiana.

He is a friend, a fellow Midwesterner. But to all of us, he is much more. DICK LUGAR is truly a Senator's Senator. He epitomizes the very best in this institution, and it is a sad commentary on the state of our Nation's politics that the main reason why Senator LUGAR is leaving the Senate is because his primary opponent attacked him for the very qualities we admire and need here: his readiness to forge fair and honorable compromises, his insistence on putting country ahead of party or ideology, his enormous decency and civility.

As we all know, Senator LUGAR has been the Senate's most passionate and effective advocate of arms control and nuclear nonproliferation. The program he created with former Senator Sam Nunn has assisted Russia and other

countries of the former Soviet Union to secure and dispose of their weapons of mass destruction. What an amazing accomplishment by Senator LUGAR. I also want to salute Senator LUGAR's record of principled, conscientious leadership on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, including as chairman from 1995 to 2001.

He is a key author of landmark measures strengthening Federal agricultural conservation policies and programs, particularly in the 1985 farm bill and succeeding farm bills.

He has been instrumental in strengthening—and in fighting for at critical junctures—Federal nutrition assistance, including school lunch, breakfast, and other child nutrition programs through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and through support for food banks and other emergency food assistance. DICK LUGAR has also been an outstanding leader in enacting Federal initiatives to research, develop, and market farm and forest commodities by converting them to energy and bio-based products.

For me, it has been a great honor to be Senator LUGAR's friend and colleague for 36 years and to serve all of that time with him on the Agriculture Committee. Our friendship, of course, will continue, but I will miss, as we all will, Senator LUGAR's calm, positive, always constructive influence on this body. Across 36 years of distinguished service, this Senator and statesman has faithfully served the people of Indiana and the United States. There is no doubt that he will pursue new avenues of public service in retirement.

So I will miss his day-to-day friendship and his counsel in the Senate. I wish DICK and his wonderful wife Char all the best in the years ahead.

DANIEL AKAKA

Mr. President, we are bidding farewell to one of our most respected and beloved Members, Senator DANIEL AKAKA of Hawaii or, as we all know him, "DANNY."

With his retirement, our friend is bringing to a close a remarkable and distinguished career in public service spanning nearly seven decades. Having witnessed, as a 17-year-old boy, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he took a civilian job with the Army Corps of Engineers before joining the U.S. Army in 1945. We honor him, along with his senior colleague from Hawaii, Senator INOUE, and Senator LAUTENBERG, as the only veterans of World War II still serving in the Senate.

Not surprisingly, Senator AKAKA has been a leader on veterans issues. He served as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the 110th and 111th Congresses, and he remained active on that committee despite relinquishing his chairmanship in the current Congress in order to chair the Committee on Indian Affairs.

We will not soon forget Senator AKAKA's retort when another Senator was holding up a package of veterans benefits, demanding that the costs of the veterans benefits be offset.

Senator AKAKA calmly, very deliberately argued that the costs did not need to be offset, stating:

The price has already been paid, many times over, by the service of the brave men and women who wore our Nation's uniform.

Needless to say, Senator AKAKA carried the day.

Senator AKAKA has played a leading role in demanding improvements in the handling of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries sustained by service men and women. In 2009, he joined with Senator INOUE in securing compensation for Filipino veterans of World War II who fought for the United States.

Senator AKAKA is the only ethnic, Native Hawaiian to serve in this body. Throughout his congressional career, including 4 years in the House and 22 years in the Senate, he has been a determined and impassioned advocate for the people of his State of Hawaii. He has fought for legislation that would grant Federal recognition to ethnic Native Hawaiians, the same recognition we have granted to American Indians and Native Alaskans.

In 1993, President Clinton signed a resolution sponsored by Senator AKAKA officially apologizing on behalf of the U.S. Government for overthrowing Hawaii's last monarch a century earlier.

In so many ways, Senator AKAKA represents the Senate at its very best—the Senate the way it used to be in less partisan times. He works tirelessly behind the scenes, and he shuns the media limelight. He prides himself on reaching across the aisle and forging honorable compromises. He is the ultimate gentleman, and his word is his bond.

Across these many years DANNY AKAKA has been a wonderful friend and colleague. Of course, that friendship will continue, and I will miss him in the Senate.

I join with the entire Senate family in wishing DANNY and Millie all the best in the years ahead.

JEFF BINGAMAN

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my colleague from New Mexico, Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, who is retiring from the Senate at the end of this year. Senator BINGAMAN has been a strong voice for the people of New Mexico, first as their attorney general and then during 30 years of service in the Senate. He has brought a keen intellect and a commonsense perspective to the Senate that should make the people of New Mexico proud. He has worked to build consensus across party lines to help strengthen our Nation.

Senator BINGAMAN and I serve together on the Finance Committee, and we also worked together on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee during my first term in the Senate. I greatly admire the thoughtfulness he applies to every issue. Throughout his career, he has focused intently on finding solutions to the challenges facing our country.

For example, in 2009, I worked closely with him and other colleagues on the Finance Committee in crafting the health care reform bill that was signed into law as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. He was a key author of that legislation, which has already improved millions of people's lives.

Senator BINGAMAN has brought a tremendous breadth of knowledge to his chairmanship of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He has long understood the need to reduce our Nation's dependence on foreign energy and has worked diligently to push Congress to create a national energy policy suited to the 21st century. That includes the Energy Independence and Security Act, which helped put us on the right path by improving gas mileage in the vehicles Americans drive, increasing production of domestic biofuels, and boosting energy efficiency in homes and businesses across our country.

Senator BINGAMAN also understands the importance of education as a source of opportunity to our people and a key investment in the ongoing prosperity of our country. As a member of the Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Senator BINGAMAN has worked to advance teacher training, student technological literacy, and boosting graduation rates at underperforming schools. He also helped pass legislation that increases student aid and caps Federal student loan payments to assist students struggling with excessive debt.

Senator BINGAMAN has been an outstanding public servant for the people of New Mexico and our Nation. I will miss having him as a colleague in the Senate, but I also know that his wife Anne will be excited to have him back home. I wish him happiness and success in whatever he chooses to do in the next chapter of his life.

OLYMPIA SNOWE

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I also pay tribute to my friend and colleague, Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, who is retiring from the Senate after 18 years of exemplary service representing the people of Maine.

Though thousands of miles apart, Maine and North Dakota face similar challenges. In particular, we share very similar climates. Our States' residents must endure long winters, and, for the most vulnerable, keeping their homes warm is sometimes a challenge. Senator SNOWE has always understood how difficult it can be for some families to pay their utility bills and keep their heat on through harsh winters and has been a tireless supporter of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides struggling families in our States with the certainty of a warm home.

Senator SNOWE's constant attention to constituent concerns have made her one of the most popular Senators in the Nation, and her dedication to her State and country has not gone unrec-

ognized. Throughout her 37 years of public service, Senator SNOWE has earned many honors and distinctions. In 2005, *Forbes* rated her as the 54th most powerful woman in the world. Later, in 2006, *Time* magazine recognized her as one of America's Best Senators. She was also recognized as one of eight female politicians that could run and be elected President of the United States.

Senator SNOWE is a true statesman and public servant, never hesitating to put people over politics and fiercely representing the values and needs of her constituents. Throughout all her years of service, her steady resolve, moderate voice, and willingness to work across the aisle have been a force in Washington. It has truly been an honor working with her to find practical solutions to our Nation's most pressing issues. In a time of partisan excess, Senator SNOWE's ability to reach compromises with Members on both sides of the aisle was extremely valuable to this venerable institution. She will be sorely missed.

I thank Senator SNOWE for her service to her country in the U.S. Senate and wish her the very best in the future.

HERB KOHL

Mr. President, today I honor my colleague, Senator HERB KOHL, who will be leaving the Senate at the end of this term. Senator KOHL has served the people of Wisconsin for 24 years since first being elected to the Senate in 1988. Throughout his time in Congress, Senator KOHL has stayed above political partisanship, while remaining true to his Midwest roots. He has represented the people of Wisconsin well and answered to no one but the citizens of his State. When he announced his retirement from the Senate, he said "The office doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the people of Wisconsin, and there is something to be said for not staying in office too long." These words describe a humble man who truly believes that it is his duty to represent the ideals of his constituents, even in an era of political polarization.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Senator KOHL is known throughout the Senate as a philanthropist. He had a successful career in business, eventually purchasing the Milwaukee Bucks. Throughout his time in Congress, Senator KOHL has proven that he is as openminded as he is honest, while continually holding on to his core principles. From expanding the coverage of health care to promoting education advancements, Senator KOHL's legislative history is truly impressive.

Wisconsin and North Dakota have a lot in common. We share a similar culture and geography as well as an agriculture industry that is a crucial component of both our States' economies. In 2011, the National Farmers Union recognized Senator KOHL as a champion of dairy and competition issues. But that is only part of the story concerning Senator KOHL's support for

family farmers. Senator KOHL has served as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. In that capacity, he has been instrumental in ensuring that the partnership between the Federal Government and rural communities contributes to economic development throughout rural America. He has enhanced the conservation of our natural resources and ensured the United States remains at the forefront in agricultural research and innovation. In addition, Senator KOHL has been a stalwart supporter of food assistance programs for those who are the least fortunate among us.

On a personal note, Senator KOHL recommended my wife Lucy for a position with Major League Baseball. It has been my wife's dream job, so I am personally indebted to him for that.

Senator KOHL's commitment to the people of Wisconsin has been unwavering. The Senate will miss his honesty and hard work. I thank Senator KOHL for his service in the Senate and wish him the best in his future endeavors. Wisconsin should be proud of Senator KOHL, he remained true to his 1988 Senate campaign slogan, serving as "Nobody's Senator But Yours."

JIM WEBB

Mr. CONRAD. Finally, Mr. President, I am proud today to honor my colleague from Virginia, JIM WEBB. In just 6 years in the Senate, he has proven himself to be an agile and independent thinker on both military matters and issues of economic fairness, as well as a tireless advocate for veterans. His candid and moderate voice in the Senate will be sorely missed.

JIM WEBB has spent an impressive career working in public service and on behalf of our veterans and active troops overseas. The importance of discipline and service to country was instilled in him as a young boy, as he moved with his father, a career Air Force officer, to various Air Force Bases across the country. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Senator WEBB served as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs under President Reagan, as well as the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, before coming to the Senate in 2007.

Senator WEBB demonstrated his unwavering commitment to our troops and veterans on his very first day in the Senate when he introduced the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill of Rights. He won passage for this important piece of legislation, the most comprehensive G.I. bill since World War II, in only his second year as a Senator—a remarkable feat. Since its passage, more than 1 million post-9/11 veterans have applied to use their G.I. bill benefits. The G.I. bill has been instrumental in providing a great opportunity and a demonstration of gratitude for our troops as they separate from service.

I personally had the privilege of working closely with Senator WEBB on a bill that aims to preserve the valor of our decorated military heroes. I was proud to join him in introducing the Military Service Integrity Act, which

creates criminal penalties for individuals who lie about receiving military medals for personal gain. On behalf of the nearly 60,000 veterans in North Dakota and all of our active troops, it was an honor to work with him on this legislation in ensuring that the integrity of our Nation's military awards are not belittled by those attempting to seek a profit.

But apart from his dedication to our military heroes, I also respect Senator WEBB for his commitment to fiscal responsibility. Together with Senator MCCASKILL, he formed the US Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan to analyze the efficacy and expenditures of Federal contractors abroad. When the findings of the Commission were published, he subsequently introduced comprehensive reform legislation to address the failures and mismanagement of overseas contractors. As chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, I deeply respect his initiative and commitment to eliminating any waste, fraud, or abuse in our national security operations.

It is a deep loss for the Senate to be losing such a candid and independent voice. Senator WEBB has set an extraordinary example of discipline, initiative, and candor in his work on behalf of working-class Americans and military families. I thank Senator WEBB for his career of service in the Senate and the armed services and wish him all the best.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING DR. JAMES "JIM" JONES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to recognize and honor one of Nevada's great sons and my friend, Jim Jones, on the important milestone of his 80th birthday. I appreciate the longtime friendship Jim and his son, Jimmy, have afforded me. Jimmy worked for me and has remained a good friend ever since.

Jim Jones hails from one of Las Vegas' railroad families. In 1921, after Jim's father proudly served our Nation in World War I, he pioneered West in a boxcar and not much else. Jim's father arrived in Las Vegas, walked into a railroad shop and stayed for 21 years. It

was on South Third Street that Jim remembers his early childhood, as he watched the trains go by in his small railroad town of Las Vegas.

Jim has spent a lifetime working hard and giving back to his patients and community. His commitment to service began at the age of 12 as a Boy Scout in Troop 63. Jim grew interested in dentistry while a student at Las Vegas High School. But he knew he was unable to afford college, so he joined his father to work the railroad at 15. Jim tirelessly worked nights, weekends and summers; after graduating from Las Vegas High School, he attended East Los Angeles Junior College. During his second semester of college, he served in a Naval Reserve Unit when he was called into active duty during the Korean War. Although he could have applied to be exempted, he chose to serve as a dental technician and proudly worked on a Marine base in San Diego fixing recruits' teeth before they would head overseas. He later attended BYU's pre-dental/medicine program and graduated with honors from dental school in Seattle.

He returned to Las Vegas to work for the Nevada State Department of Health's Dental Division, which led him all across Indian country in Nevada. He traveled with a fold up chair in a station wagon across the most rural parts of Nevada providing dental care and services to Native American children in Schurz, Gabbs, Tonopah, Overton and Mesquite. The time he spent in Native American communities across Nevada taught him much about our State, and its first people, and because of this formed longtime friendships.

In 1961, Jim opened his private dental practice, thus beginning a long career of providing dental care to many in Southern Nevada. He retired from his full-time practice in 2002, though he still works weekly caring for patients including Landra and me. He's lived a life of service as a longtime member of service organizations like Kiwanis Club and Rotary. He served in the leadership of Rotary as director, vice president, and president. He is passionate about Las Vegas, and he has remained involved in these service organizations, as well as in local commissions.

Mr. President, I share only but a glance at Jim's life as we reflect upon his many contributions on the momentous occasion of his 80th birthday. My friend, Jim, embodies the story of Nevada, that the son of a working class man can build a good life for his family and still have legacy of that small railroad town, Las Vegas.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, a week ago, I came to the Senate floor and said it was time for the Senate and the