

others." His dedication to peace and justice was forged in the fire of adversity—27 years in prison, among other things.

But while he endured great hardship for the cause of universal suffrage, his capacity for forgiveness was as boundless as his dedication to democracy, freedom, and equality.

He leaves a legacy that is so significant. It will inspire current and future leaders for generations to come.

SCHEDULE

Mr. President, now as to our schedule. This week, as South Africa mourns the founder of its democracy, the Senate must continue its work in our democracy.

I suggest to my colleagues that the Senate, as I have indicated, will work long nights—I think we are going to come in earlier than we normally do—and possibly weekends to complete the workload we have before the holidays.

During this next work period—the one we are now engaged in—we must complete work on the National Defense Authorization Act. It is my understanding that the two bodies, the two committees, have come up with something. I hope we get a message from the House soon, and I hope we can dispose of this very quickly.

We must address the issue of additional sanctions against Iran. We must pass an agriculture jobs conference report. We must ensure seniors on Medicare can keep their doctors by adjusting physician payments. We must consider a large number of nominations. And we must complete a budget agreement that protects our economy and ensures our government can continue the work of the people.

I am not going to talk about each of these individually other than that I think it is so shortsighted what the Republicans are doing regarding the famous SGR or physician payments for Medicare. There is money to take care of this problem—a number of different sources—not the least of which are the overseas contingency funds. We had money set aside for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are being phased out. There is still almost \$1 trillion left. I cannot understand why the Republicans refuse to use that money. No one except the Republicans opposes closing these tax loopholes—and not Republicans around the country. It is only the Republicans in Congress who oppose them, not Republicans around the country. These loopholes are so big you could drive the biggest vehicle in the world through them. But we are where we are.

Despite the costly Republican government shutdown this fall, last week's jobs report proved that the American economy continues to gain steam. Private sector businesses have added more than 8 million jobs over the last 45 consecutive months.

If Republicans had not insisted on shortsighted, draconian cuts that forced layoffs of tens of thousands of teachers, firefighters, and police offi-

cers, the economy would be growing even faster than it is today. The Acting President pro tempore knows—we all know—that we need an infrastructure program. For every \$1 billion we spend as a government on infrastructure—roads, bridges, dams, highways, water and sewer systems—we create almost 50,000 high-paying jobs.

Despite last week's good economic news, Congress can and must do even more to create jobs for the millions of Americans who are still looking for work.

As to unemployment compensation, we need these extended benefits. There are 1.5 million people in America who have been out of work for more than 26 weeks. We must replace the meat-ax cuts that have happened with the sequestration with smart savings, reducing the deficit by closing wasteful tax loopholes, and making job-creating investments that spur economic growth.

As we close out this year, I hope Republicans and Democrats can put aside our differences and work together to produce results for the middle class.

The Acting President pro tempore served in the House. I served in the House. I am fortunate to serve here in the Senate. When I first came to this body, Democrats had to focus on what they thought the foundation of democracy was. Republicans did the same. They thought they knew the right thing to do. But, you know, we could never get what we wanted. Each side could not get what it thought was the way it should be. So what did we do? We worked together and came up with compromises to move legislation forward. Let's get back to where we were. That is what this body needs. So I hope we can put aside our differences and work together like we used to.

It is also time for Republicans to work with us—instead of against us—to make the landmark health reform law more workable.

I remind my Republican colleagues that the Affordable Care Act is the law and has been the law of the land for 4 years, and it was upheld by the Supreme Court.

As Democrats have predicted for months, enrollment in Affordable Care Act exchanges is picking up speed as we approach the New Year. As Americans learn more about the benefits of this law, more and more of them are logging on to shop for affordable, quality insurance through the State and national exchanges. The rollout of the national Affordable Care Act Web site was rocky, to say the least, when it came out.

Congress had to make crucial improvements to other landmark programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, when they were first enacted as well. These big legislative deals can have some wrinkles in them. It does not mean Social Security is bad. It does not mean Medicare is bad. It means they are hard to get started. It is just the same for ObamaCare.

But now, I repeat, many of the major problems with the health care site have

been fixed, hundreds of thousands of Americans are logging on every day to research plans they think could work for them and sign up for insurance they know they need.

States that embraced the Affordable Care Act—such as Kentucky and Washington—have also reported successes with their exchanges. And thanks to the health care law, in a few short weeks no one can ever again be denied insurance just because they have a pre-existing condition—because they are a cancer survivor, because they live with diabetes, because they had acne growing up or because they are a woman.

Because of this landmark law, insurance companies can no longer cancel your policy when you get sick, charge you more, I repeat, because you are a woman, or set an arbitrary limit on the care you receive.

Millions of seniors have saved billions of dollars on medicine because of the Affordable Care Act. Why? Because it closed the gap in prescription drug coverage, the so-called doughnut hole.

Millions of young people have stayed on their parents' health plans. And 17 million Americans will qualify for tax credits to purchase the coverage they need and the coverage they deserve.

There are still problems with the Affordable Care Act and ways we can make it better if we work together. But we cannot improve the law without help from some reasonable Republicans. It time for my Republican colleagues to give up their fantasy of repealing a law that is already benefiting tens of millions of Americans and start working with us to make the Affordable Care Act succeed instead.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Chair announce the business of the day.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4 o'clock p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 75 years ago President Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act written, in

part, by Senator Hugo Black of Alabama. He actually sat at this desk as he was writing the minimum wage law and some of the Fair Labor Standards Act legislation in the 1930s.

This legislation ensured that American workers would receive a minimum wage and work reasonable hours. We know what that has done for families in this country. We also know that the minimum wage hasn't even been close to keeping up with the cost of living and with inflation. We also know a number of other facts about the minimum wage.

The minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. Many minimum wage workers are working and making \$7.25, \$8 or \$9—less than what we want to raise the minimum wage to so all would get a raise. We know that many of those workers work in the fast food industry.

The CEO of a fast food corporation makes about \$8.7 million or \$8 million a year, while his employees average something around \$19,000 a year.

I am not one of those who says they have to work a million hours to get to the \$8 million a year. To put into perspective what has happened with wages, as wages for CEOs and top management have gone up, we have seen the productivity of workers go up. We know that wages for those workers have simply not kept up, not only for minimum-wage workers but for workers overall.

Since the 1970s, and especially since 2000, profits have gone up, productivity has gone up, executive salaries have gone up dramatically, yet workers wages have been stagnant. There is no better example of that than the minimum wage. The minimum wage was raised my first year in the Senate.

My first speech on the Senate floor was with Senator Barack Obama sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair. Senator Kennedy and Senator Byrd were on the floor that day talking about and debating increasing the minimum wage.

We did that in a bipartisan way in 2007. The bill was signed by President Bush. That is good news.

The bad news is there was no cost-of-living adjustment. There was no escalation so that the wage would keep up with inflation. There has not been a minimum wage increase since then.

Here is another fact about the minimum wage. For tipped workers, those who work in diners—in many cases those who work pushing wheelchairs at airports don't work for the airlines. They work for a subcontracting company that pays subminimum wage.

Valets and people who are in positions in hotels where they might get tipped, their minimum wage is only \$2.13 an hour. A woman working the floors of a diner, a man who is pushing a wheelchair or driving a cart in an airport, their minimum wage is only \$2.13 an hour. Some are paid more than that, but some of them are paid as little as \$2, \$3 or \$4 an hour, supposedly expecting that tips will make up the dif-

ference and get them to the minimum wage or above.

The assistant majority leader, who has joined me on the floor, has been working with Senator HARKIN and several others of us on legislation for the new minimum wage increase. We want to increase the minimum wage \$2.10 an hour, 90 cents at the President's signature, then another 90 cents, and another 90 cents. We also want to increase the tipped minimum wage—not increased for 22 years—to lock it in at 70 percent of the real minimum wage.

As the real minimum wage increases by the year 2016 under our legislation, and a worker's minimum wage would then be \$10.10 an hour, a subminimum wage of a tipped employee in an airport or restaurant would then be \$7 and a few cents an hour. Both of those wages, the tipped minimum wage and a minimum wage, will have a cost-of-living adjustment so we don't have to come back every 6 years and have a big political fight to raise the minimum wage. It shouldn't be a big political fight because clearly people in this country overwhelmingly—Democrats, independents, and Republicans—think the minimum wage should be increased.

It will not only be the tipped employee or the minimum wage worker at a fast-food restaurant who gets a raise from what is now \$7.50 or \$8 an hour or even \$9 an hour. As the minimum wage goes up, so will the wages for many of low-income, slightly above minimum wage workers.

In a fast food restaurant where perhaps the night manager may make a couple of dollars more an hour than the line workers who are at the counter—although the night manager does plenty of that too—the night manager might make a couple of dollars above or \$3 above minimum wage. There we raise the minimum wage, thus raising everybody's wage. Then the night manager's wage will increase too.

The opponents to the minimum wage—and it is amazing to me that people can sit in this institution, with the good salaries that we make as Members of the Senate and Members of the House in both parties, with good benefits, good health insurance, decent pensions paid for by taxpayers, and oppose the minimum wage. It equally amazes me that they can oppose extending unemployment benefits. In my State alone—and I know in the assistant majority leader's State of Illinois and in the Presiding Officer's State, for a significant number of people, over 120,000, in my State alone, their Christmas present will be that unemployment benefits have stopped for them, have been eliminated, unless Congress acts. That is why it is so important, not only to enact a minimum wage in the weeks ahead but that we extend unemployment benefits for those workers who are looking for jobs.

These aren't people who don't want to work. These are people looking for jobs. They have to look for jobs in order to qualify. It is not a lot of

money. It is 40 or 50 percent typically of their wage, of what they used to make.

There aren't enough jobs in this country. There aren't enough jobs in Connecticut, Illinois, and Ohio that they can find jobs, and then we take the unemployment benefits away.

No. 1, think of what it means to that family and, No. 2, as the assistant majority leader knows, this helps our economy. When people are receiving unemployment benefits, they are spending it. They are spending it in Toledo at the grocery store. They are spending it in Cleveland at the hardware store. They are spending it in Dayton at the auto repair shop to fix their car, so they can go out, get a job, and go to work. All of those are reasons why extending the minimum wage and extending unemployment insurance is so important.

One further point before yielding to the assistant majority leader from Illinois, unemployment is not called welfare, it is unemployment insurance. People pay in when they are working. They hope they are going to pay in for a long time and that they are not going to lose their jobs. But if they lose their jobs, they collect their insurance. They paid in. That is what insurance is. If things aren't working right, one gets unemployment benefits, unemployment insurance, social insurance. This is why this is so important.

I yield to the Senator from Illinois.
Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator from Ohio yield for a question through the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask of the Senator from Ohio if he recalls that it was not that long ago the issues that we are discussing were marginally bipartisan issues. When it came to raising the minimum wage periodically, Senator Ted Kennedy, who used to sit back at that desk, led the effort. It would turn out to be a bipartisan vote to increase the minimum wage.

Over the years, that reflected a bipartisan consensus that if one is working for a living in America, they ought to be able to get by or at least have a little bit put away for their future.

We are finding more and more that people working for a minimum wage cannot get by. I listened to public radio over the break. There was a lady on there who works in the hospitality industry, I believe, and explained she was on food stamps. She said she had a small family and made \$7.25 an hour. With her children she still qualified for SNAP, the food stamp program.

I did a quick calculation in my mind—I believe this is correct—and she was making somewhere in the range of \$14,000 to \$15,000 a year at \$7.25 an hour, the minimum wage in many parts of the United States. She still qualified for a helping hand to feed her children.

This is not a lazy person. This is a person who gets up and goes to work. My guess is it is not an easy job. She is

making \$7.25 but still needs a helping hand.

I find it interesting that issues that used to be bipartisan to help people such as her, working people, have now become too partisan. We should have a bipartisan consensus that regularly we increase the minimum wage in America to keep up with the cost of living. I hope we all agree that if we have a working mom, who is doing her best, and needs a helping hand to feed her children, food stamps should be available to her.

Of the 47 million Americans receiving food stamps, 22 million of the 47 million are children, 1 million are veterans, and 9 million are elderly and disabled. Three-fourths of the recipients of food stamps fall into those categories: children, veterans, the elderly, and the disabled. Yet we are up against a battle on the farm bill about whether we are going to make deep cuts in food stamps. It seems to me this is counter-productive. We should be helping working families—those who struggle paycheck to paycheck—to get by, to at least feed their children.

Going back to the point made by the Senator from Ohio, when we look across the board at the vulnerability of working families, it is wages, food on the table, and many times it turns out to be health insurance. The number one reason for bankruptcy in America today is the failure of people to be able to pay their medical bills.

What we are trying to do with the Affordable Care Act is to say to everyone in my State, the 1.8 million uninsured people in Illinois, we will give them a chance—possibly for the first time in their lives—to have health insurance so they won't go broke when they get sick. To me, when we start putting it together, it is the paycheck, the food, the health care, and the housing.

In a country such as ours that wants to build the next middle class, to me this is the bedrock of what we need to provide to working families. It seems we have fallen far away from that goal of trying to provide for working families. It has become too partisan.

I was on a talk show with the Senator from Ohio who shares the State with Senator BROWN, and he gave the classic argument against raising the minimum wage: It is a job killer. He said: If we raise the wage 50 cents, \$1 an hour, whatever it is, there will be fewer jobs.

It turns out that history and the economic analyses prove him wrong. That is the argument that has been made against increasing the minimum wage since Franklin Roosevelt first increased it back in the 1930s.

I ask the Senator from Ohio, when we take a look at the vulnerability of working families in America and those who have lost their jobs trying to find another, the basics that we are talking about give them a fighting chance to survive, to help raise their families, and maybe to send their kids to school for a better education and for a better

future. Failing to do that does just the opposite.

Last week fast food workers across the country led a 1-day strike to bring attention to low-wage workers who can't make a living on their current wages. In Chicago, some 200 workers took to the street in protest.

This is only one part of a much larger discussion in recent days about growing economic disparities in this country and the plight of low-wage workers. In November, Pope Francis stated, "While earnings of a minority are growing, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few."

Only last week President Obama echoed these concerns in his address focused specifically on income inequality. In a speech at the Center for American Progress, the President noted that more than half of all Americans at some point in their lives will experience poverty.

The week before Thanksgiving, a Walmart in Ohio was running a food drive to help the hungry have a happy Thanksgiving. That kind of generosity and empathy is commendable. What is noteworthy, though, is that the food drive was specifically to support Walmart associates—their own employees—in need.

It reminded me of an effort McDonalds launched earlier this year to help their employees create a budget.

According to that budget, the only way to make ends meet for someone making the minimum wage and working 40 hours a week at McDonalds would be to work a second job.

Washington Post's Wonkblog analyzed the chart and found that a worker making the minimum wage would have to work 75 hours a week to have the after-tax income in the McDonalds sample budget.

But low wages are not a problem just in the fast food industry or other historically low-wage fields; it is catching up to other traditional jobs that used to be able to support a family.

There may be fewer better examples of this than in the banking sector.

The banking industry last year posted \$141.3 billion in profits.

The median executive pay—\$552,000.

And yet a recent report found that 39 percent of bank tellers in New York are enrolled in some form of public assistance.

Low wage work is just not enough to get by.

Working 40 hours per week at \$7.25 per hour translates to \$15,080 per year.

That's about \$400 less than the Federal poverty level guidelines for a family of two.

If we accept the McDonald's sample budget, a worker making the minimum wage would have to work 75 hours a week to have the after-tax income necessary to make ends meet. Working 75 hours a week at minimum wage—with no vacation days and limited benefits, if any—one can make \$24,720 a year, after tax.

I want to say that it is not possible, but the reality is that many people do it. Yet how do people raise a family working that many hours?

One way people get by is they are forced to turn to government assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance, LIHEAP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, the Emergency Food Assistance program, TEFAP, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, TANF, Section 8 housing assistance, and, yes, the Affordable Care Act.

According to a recent UC Berkeley study, undertaken in partnership with the University of Illinois, 52 percent of families of fast-food workers are enrolled in one or more public assistance programs. Subsidizing low wage employment through these programs costs the Federal Government \$3.9 billion annually.

Instead of trying to find solutions to ensure full time work is adequate to support a family, many of my colleagues are attacking the very public assistance programs that allow working families at minimum wage jobs to get by.

For many of these working families, SNAP is the first place to turn.

At a time when almost 15 percent of households have trouble keeping food on the table, SNAP has helped 47 million Americans buy groceries. In Illinois, more than 2 million people—that is in one in seven residents—rely on SNAP benefits to buy the food they need.

In my lifetime, Walmart transitioned to also selling food. Walmart now accounts for nearly 30 percent of all groceries sold in the United States. Yet after working at a grocery store all day, imagine having to turn to your SNAP benefits to be able to take your own groceries home with you or after working at the grocery store all day, a person must turn to their local food bank.

This is the reality for working people. I wish to stress—working people.

The House Republican solution for this is in its farm bill, where it cut \$40 billion from SNAP. The House bill gets its "savings" by kicking 3.8 million people out of the program. That includes children, single mothers, unemployed veterans, and Americans who get temporary help from SNAP to make ends meet while they look for work.

This is unacceptable. If a farm bill conference agreement were to reach the floor including the House language, I would vote against it without a second thought.

But it doesn't stop with SNAP.

One of biggest challenges for low-income workers is that they are living paycheck-to-paycheck, making sacrifices simply to keep the heat on—with no savings for emergencies, and most low-income workers have no healthcare coverage. With no savings

and no health care. When someone in the family is too sick to ignore it, the emergency room is the only real option.

With the Affordable Care Act, many of these workers and their families can now afford health care, either through the expansion of Medicaid or, in the very near future through a private plan in the exchanges, using Federal subsidies. According to the CBO, 12 million people in America are newly eligible for Medicaid. Another 23 million people will be able to buy private health insurance.

How are Republicans proposing to help these working families? They want to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Go back to no coverage. Apparently, these families don't work hard enough to deserve it.

We have to protect these programs, but we need to do more than that.

More and more working families are being forced to rely on government assistance programs because their work does not support a living wage.

If working should be a requirement for receiving public assistance, I would take it a step further and propose that if someone is working full time, they shouldn't need public assistance.

Since 1967, the Federal minimum wage has increased from \$1.40 to \$7.25. While at first glance this seems like significant progress, when adjusted to current dollars the value of the minimum wage has actually declined by 12.1 percent.

Had the minimum wage kept pace with inflation, it would be \$10.74 an hour today. If the minimum wage were increased to \$10.10, more than 30 million workers would receive a raise, and 88 percent of those workers are adults.

If the minimum wage were \$10.10, a full-time worker being paid minimum wage would go from making \$15,080 a year to \$21,000. That can be the difference between getting by and living in poverty.

Workers in America, full-time workers, are falling behind.

Attacking or cutting programs that working poor or needy rely on will not solve the problem. It only ignores it.

In the coming weeks I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting policies that provide all Americans with the opportunity to improve their lives. Full-time, low-wage workers should not have to live in poverty.

I would ask the Senator from Ohio if he would include in this the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. BROWN. That is right. First, the points that the assistant majority leader was making about the bipartisanship has been exactly right. What is most—not discouraging but perhaps the most disappointing part of this is even as recently as 2007, when President Bush signed this bill—it was my first month or two in the Senate when we passed it. It was a big bipartisan vote in the House. I don't remember exactly the numbers in the Senate. Many Republicans joined. I believe almost

every Democrat or maybe every Democrat—but it was gladly signed by the Republican President of the United States.

From the time of the minimum wage, when Senator Hugo Black sat at this desk and helped to write the minimum wage law and President Roosevelt signed the bill, for all of these decades the minimum wage in fits and starts has kept up with inflation—most of the time—until the 1980s. It has been signed on by people from both parties; the same with the extension of unemployment benefits that we discussed, this extension of unemployment benefits, social insurance. They pay in when they don't need it. When they need it, they can take money out of the social insurance fund and receive unemployment benefits if they can't find a job.

These are very tough times. Some of my colleagues, I don't think, understand sometimes how tough a time it is for so many families.

The President of the United States, the last President from Illinois before this one, Abraham Lincoln, used to talk about getting out of the White House and going out and getting his public opinion bath that he needed to hear from the public.

I know Senator DURBIN does that throughout his State of Illinois. I know Senator MURPHY of Connecticut, the Presiding Officer, does the same.

We go out and listen to people. We are talking to somebody making \$8 or \$9 an hour, and this minimum increase will increase their pay. They probably don't have insurance because they can't afford it. They are probably eligible for the SNAP program because of their low income, and so it is the least we can do.

These are people who work as hard as we do. We have jobs we get a lot out of. We are well paid, we have good benefits, and we also have wonderful opportunities to serve the public. So many people in these jobs are barely making it. They work jobs where they are on their feet all day. The woman in the diner is making \$3 or \$4 an hour and hoping people will tip her to get her up to \$7 or \$8 or \$9 an hour. She is working every bit as hard as my colleagues and I work. Yet she has so little to show for it.

This is an opportunity for us, as people who care about this country and care about the people who live in this country—people who are doing such hard work cleaning hotel rooms, cleaning our schools, making sure our schools are clean and the trash is taken out, people who are serving our food—for the people in these kinds of jobs—home care workers who are barely making it—the least we can do is make sure the minimum wage gets them somewhat close to a decent lifestyle and standard of living and that we do better, if they are laid off, with unemployment insurance and that they get a chance with the Affordable Care Act so they can buy affordable health

insurance because they will get some help and they can draw on food stamps if they are eligible, if they need them on these low wages.

There is no reason we can't, in the Christmas spirit, if you will, do what has been done on a bipartisan basis during my lifetime and that of my colleague Senator DURBIN, where both parties would step up and do it.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if my colleague will yield, through the Chair, for one last point, he raised something that brought to my mind a recent story I read about the new Pope, Pope Francis. What an extraordinary man, this Catholic. I am amazed at this man, his humility and his popularity with Catholics and non-Catholics alike, those of different faiths and those of no faith. They say that of an evening he will take off his papal garb and put a simple suit on and go out into the streets of Rome with a friend and meet with poor people and talk to them. I can't even envision in my mind what that must be like, but it sure tells me a lot about him, and I think it is a reminder to all of us of two things: When he gives a message to the world about income inequality, it is not a political message to the United States or one country; it is a more basic message about the values in life whatever your religious beliefs or whether you have a religious belief.

When he takes off the papal garb and goes out as an ordinary person, I hope it is a reminder to all of us that we need to keep in touch with the very people we represent, some of whom are not wealthy enough to have a lobbyist or to be politically articulate during a campaign but deserve our representation just as much.

Mr. BROWN. I thank my colleague. Pope Francis I, as he integrated these kinds of things into his life, he exhorted his parish priests—similar to Lincoln saying “I need my public opinion bath”—to smell like the flock and to get among people and talk to them and learn from them, to smell like the flock, to be one of them. I am not Catholic. I know my friend from Illinois is Roman Catholic. But this Pope has really brought us to a different level. He has called upon our better angels, if you will.

Before yielding to Senator DURBIN for his remarks, I have one more point to make about the minimum wage. The belief among many is that the minimum wage is for a bunch of teenagers. That is simply not true. Most minimum wage earners in this country are not teenagers; most of them are supporting themselves and in many cases supporting a spouse or a family or someone in their family who is disabled or a close friend. This is a wage people really depend on to get along. It is not just spending money for a high school kid; families depend on this.

That is why it is so important that in the next few weeks we raise the minimum wage; tie this subminimum wage, tipped wage, to that increase and

index it for inflation so we don't have to do this every 3 or 4 years just to keep up with inflation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

REMEMBERING PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleagues and people all around the world in expressing my condolences to the people of South Africa on the passing of their great leader Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela ended his extraordinary autobiography, entitled "Long Walk to Freedom," with these words:

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

Sadly, President Nelson Mandela's long walk and his noble life are indeed now ended, but his influence on the world will endure for a long time to come. As the editorial cartoonist for the Washington Post put it, Nelson Mandela was "larger than life—and death."

Through enormous strength of character and a determination unlike many people in this world, Nelson Mandela helped his beloved South Africa to end the vicious system of apartheid and begin a new walk toward multiracial democracy. His dream, he often said, was that South Africa would become "a rainbow nation at peace with itself and with the world."

Nelson Mandela astonished the world with his capacity to forgive—even to forgive those who jailed him and persecuted his family. There was an interview on television I saw yesterday morning on ABC in which Nelson Mandela spoke about his imprisonment shortly after he had been released. He had spent 27 years in prison, part of it on Robben Island, which I have had the opportunity to visit, to actually stand in Nelson Mandela's tiny cell. It is an island off of Capetown. The waters around it are shark infested so the prisoners won't try to escape from that island. They can just barely make out the land mass away from that island, but they are separated—separated on this piece of land in the middle of this ocean. There Nelson Mandela lived for almost 25 years. He lived in this cell, many times in isolation. He labored in a quarry nearby, which we visited. The sunlight bouncing off of the rocks in that quarry virtually blinded him for the rest of his life. He wore sunglasses and begged photographers not to use flashbulbs the rest of his life because of the damage that had been done to his eyes.

The prisoners on Robben Island—many of them sharing his political philosophy and opposing apartheid—tried to create a university atmosphere where they taught one another all they could remember and all they knew. They devoured information from the outside world in an effort to try to keep in touch with what was going on.

In this interview, as he was released from his imprisonment, Nelson Mandela was asked by the interviewer about his warden and his guards at the prison. He talked about the deep emotional ties they developed, how this guard he came to know—I believe his name was Gregory—was a real gentleman, in the words of Nelson Mandela, and how, when Mandela was finally released, there was a moment of emotion as they knew they would part after all these years of such a close relationship. I recall that story because so many times when I have given commencement addresses I have used as an example Nelson Mandela's decision, when elected President of South Africa, to invite that guard from his prison to be there as one of his honored guests at his inauguration as President of South Africa. That, to me, speaks volumes.

Nelson Mandela taught us powerful lessons about justice, tolerance, and reconciliation. As the first democratically elected President of South Africa, Mandela was the father of a new nation. Like George Washington, the father of our Nation, he chose consciously, deliberately, to walk away from power. In doing so, he reminded us that the peaceful, orderly transition of power is one of the hallmarks of a real democracy.

The prestigious Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership was created in 2007 to recognize African leaders who served their people by voluntarily stepping down from power, as President Mandela did. Sadly, this year, for the second year in a row, the award committee couldn't identify one African leader who met that standard. Leaders in neighboring Zimbabwe, as well as Syria, Egypt, Venezuela, Cuba, and so many other nations torn by conflict and manipulated divisions, would do well to ponder this measure of Nelson Mandela's greatness.

One of the great honors of my life was meeting President Mandela when he came to Washington in September 1998, near the end of his Presidency, to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor this Congress can bestow on a civilian. President Mandela noted that he was humbled to be the first African to ever receive it.

In his brief remarks at the Gold Medal ceremony, President Mandela thanked the American people and Congress for our help in bringing an end to the odious system of apartheid through congressionally imposed economic sanctions and other measures. These are Nelson Mandela's words:

If today the people of South Africa are free at last to address their basic needs; if the

countries of southern Africa have the opportunity to realize the potential for development through cooperation; if Africa can devote all her energies and resources to her reconstruction; then it is not least because the American people identified with and lent their support to the struggle to end apartheid, including critically through action by this Congress.

I remember that battle. I remember that debate. I was brand new to the U.S. House of Representatives, just a few years in service, and the debate came up as to whether the United States would continue to impose sanctions on the apartheid racist Government of South Africa. I sat on the floor, convinced that we should do so, and listened to the critics of that policy. Many of them came to the floor and said things I couldn't believe. They characterized Nelson Mandela as nothing more than a Communist who should never be trusted to lead that country. I thought to myself, he might have had a flirtation with communism at some point in his life, but this man is speaking to the basic principles that are consistent with America's values and principles.

I found it interesting last week, after Nelson Mandela died, to read the editorial in the Wall Street Journal about Nelson Mandela. I commend it to people to understand where that thinking came from, that belief that the United States should not be involved in trying to strike down the apartheid form of government. If you will read that editorial about Nelson Mandela's death, you will find the following names mentioned: Carl Marx, Lenin—I am trying to recall who else. I think Che Guevara was mentioned, as well as communism. Stalin was mentioned in there. In just a few sentences about Nelson Mandela, the Wall Street Journal editors decided to put all those names in there as touchstones and reference points to his life. It is an indication of how people can get it just plain wrong even at the highest levels of journalism in the United States, as they did in the debate in Congress.

We passed the sanctions legislation in—I believe the year was 1985 or 1986. We sent it to President Reagan, and he vetoed it. We overrode President Reagan's veto so that the sanctions went forward to condemn apartheid and do what we could to change it in South Africa 30 years ago.

I can recall that because a Congressman at the time, Howard Wolpe of Michigan, was the chairman of the Africa subcommittee. He came to me one day as a new Member of the House and said: I want to do a congressional delegation trip to Africa. Would you like to go?

I said: I would be honored. I have never been there, and I would like to go.

We put our itinerary together, included South Africa, and then, when we applied for visas, that apartheid government denied visas to all the Members of Congress who had voted for sanctions, which included Chairman