

It is not too late for Democrats in Washington to work with Republicans to address the massive problem they created. If they truly care about the millions they have already hurt in this country with this law, it is time to do just that.

REMEMBERING HOWARD BAKER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senators from Tennessee and I had an opportunity 1 week ago today to attend the funeral of Senator Howard Baker, who led the Senate Republicans for 8 years and was a truly wonderful American.

Actually, it was just an honor to attend his funeral down in Huntsville, TN, a town of 1,248 souls that Senator Baker often referred to as the "center of the known universe." It was a wonderful tribute, and it carried a lot of lessons about the work we do.

Senator CORKER was there too, and I am sure he felt the same way. Just before the funeral, he noted that Senator Baker was the kind of person who seemed to evoke "wisdom in everything he did." I was glad to hear the two men got to spend some time together a few months before Senator Baker passed away.

Anyway, a real highlight of the funeral for me was a magnificent—absolutely magnificent—eulogy by Senator ALEXANDER. It captured not only the closeness of their friendship but also the qualities that made Senator Baker such an important figure. This morning I would like to take just a moment to thank Senator ALEXANDER for those thoughtful words and at this point insert his eulogy into the RECORD. I ask unanimous consent that be done.

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

[Eulogy of Senator Howard Baker, Jr., July 1, 2014]

"HOWARD BAKER, JR.: TENNESSEE'S FAVORITE SON AND ONE OF OUR COUNTRY'S FINEST LEADERS"

(By Lamar Alexander)

On behalf of the Baker family and all of us Tennesseans, let me welcome Vice President Biden, Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, and Senator Danforth, who married Howard and Nancy.

It was August, 1960. Republican Day at the Illinois State Fair. Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen was warming up the crowd of 30,000, explaining why Vice President Richard Nixon should be president of the United States instead of Senator John F. Kennedy.

Seated on the platform behind him were Dirksen's daughter Joy, and her husband Howard Henry Baker, Jr., a 34-year-old lawyer from Huntsville, Tennessee, who looked about 24.

"Jack Kennedy is a nice young man," Dirksen was saying. "But all they can say he has ever done was serve on a PT boat in World War II."

Turning toward his son-in-law with a flourish, Dirksen said, "Why, my own son-in-law, Howard Baker, Jr., was on a PT boat in World War II, and I've never heard anyone suggest that he was qualified to serve in any public office."

Four years later, instead of running for the safe congressional seat that his father and stepmother had held, Howard Baker, Jr., ran to become the first Tennessee Republican popularly elected to the United States Senate. He probably would have won if presidential candidate Barry Goldwater hadn't stopped at the Knoxville airport a few days before the election and promised to sell the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Howard ran again in 1966. I remember standing at that same airport being embarrassed by his prediction to the media that he would win by 100,000 votes, and then, a few days later, he did just that.

Behind Howard Baker's pleasant demeanor was a restless ambition that would propel him to the heights of American politics and government for forty years.

He learned quickly. His maiden address in the Senate lasted about an hour. Afterwards, he asked Senator Dirksen, the Senate Republican Leader, "How did I do?"

"Howard," Dirksen replied, "perhaps you should occasionally enjoy the luxury of an unexpressed thought."

In 1968, Howard and Congressman George Bush were runners-up to Governor Spiro Agnew when Nixon picked a vice president. In 1969, when Dirksen died, after only three years in the Senate, he ran for Republican Leader, only to be defeated by Senator Hugh Scott.

In 1971, President Nixon asked him to be on the Supreme Court. Howard declined, then called back and said he would accept if the president insisted, but Nixon had already appointed Bill Rehnquist.

In 1973 came the Watergate hearings. Eighty-five percent of Americans saw those hearings, broadcast most days by all of the only four television networks that then existed. And the most famous words were Howard Baker's: "What did the president know and when did he know it?"

Howard suspected that Senator Scott had made him Ranking Republican on the Watergate Committee to "get rid of me as a competitor." He had run against Scott a second time for Leader, and lost. But instead, the exposure made Baker a national hero and, once again, runner-up in the vice-presidential sweepstakes in 1976 when Gerald Ford picked Bob Dole instead of Howard.

Senator Scott retired, and a few months later, in January, 1977, Howard was elected Republican Leader by one vote. He served for eight years. When, in 1980, the Republican sweep made him majority leader, he visited the wily Democratic Leader Robert Byrd. First, Howard surprised Byrd by suggesting that Byrd keep his ornate office.

Having softened up Byrd, Baker then said, "Senator Byrd, I'll never learn the rules as well as you know them, so I'll make a deal with you: I won't surprise you if you won't surprise me."

Byrd replied, "Let me think about it." The next day he agreed. And they ran the Senate together for four more years.

Baker then commandeered an additional set of offices next to the Republican Leader's less-spacious quarters that are today called the "Howard Baker Rooms." He always said that the view from the Howard Baker rooms was the second best view in Washington. The best, of course, is from the White House, which he also occupied—but not in the way he had planned.

In late 1986, while the Bakers were vacationing in Miami, the phone rang. Joy answered. It was President Reagan.

"Where's Howard?" asked Reagan.

"At the zoo with the grandchildren," Joy said.

"Wait till he hears about the zoo I have planned for him," the president said.

Howard became White House chief of staff, helping to cleanse the Reagan presidency of its Iran-Contra troubles.

President Reagan and Howard Baker began each day telling each other a little story. "It got to be a lot of stories," Howard said. I always felt a little better about our country knowing we had two men at the top with such temperament.

Joy died in 1993. In 1996, Howard married Nancy. Those of us at the wedding were happy because we had never seen two people so happy.

In 1996, the two Senators Baker moved to Tokyo where Howard became U.S. Ambassador to Japan. When he returned, he headed the law firm that is a descendant of a law firm his grandfather founded in Huntsville.

What skills allowed Howard Baker to accomplish so much?

He was an eloquent listener. He said in 2011, "There is a difference between hearing and understanding what people say. You don't have to agree, but you have to hear what they've got to say. And if you do, the chances are much better you'll be able to translate that into a useful position and even useful leadership."

He was called "The Great Conciliator" for his habit of gathering disputing senators into one room, listening for a while, and then his summary of the discussion would become the senators' agreement.

He demonstrated courage. He supported civil rights when most southerners didn't. He and Senator Byrd found 68 votes to ratify the Panama Canal Treaty. Several Republican senators signed a letter asking Baker to resign as Leader because of that.

Roy Blount, Jr., says you start getting into trouble when you stop sounding like where you grew up. Howard Baker never stopped sounding like where he grew up. He always went home to Huntsville, which he called the "center of the known universe."

He had an eye for talent. In 1969, he told me, "You ought to meet that smart young legislative assistant who works for Senator Marlow Cook." That assistant was Mitch McConnell. Howard mentored another Tennessee majority leader, Bill Frist; Senators Thompson and Corker; and Governors Sundquist and Haslam; Ambassadors Ashe and Montgomery; Congressman Duncan—as well as many others in this congregation.

With Bill Brock and Winfield Dunn, he kept the door open to Republican primaries, attracting hundreds of thousands of "discerning Democrats" and independents and creating the majority status the Tennessee Republican Party enjoys today.

Howard Baker knew how to make the Senate work. He understood that the Senate's unique role is as a place for extended debate and amendment on important issues until there is a consensus. That is how he fixed Social Security with Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan, how he passed the Reagan tax cuts and the Clean Air and Water laws.

One thing he did not do well was fundraising. He left that to Ted Welch and Jim Haslam and Bill Swain. According to Jim, "Howard would not raise any money at all, until he started raising money for the Baker Center and then he made every call with me."

In the new version of Lamar Alexander's Little Plaid Book, there is this rule: "When invited to speak at a funeral, remember to mention the deceased at least as often as yourself."

I have done my best to follow that rule today, but I hope you understand how difficult that is for me, as it would be for many of you.

So let me just get it out all at once:

For the last half century, Howard Baker has had more influence on my life than anyone outside my own family. He inspired me to help him build a two-party system. I babysat for Darek and Cissy. I met Honey at

a softball game between the Baker staff and the John Tower staff. My favorite photograph of her is one Howard took at the Baker home when we were celebrating our marriage. Our daughter Leslee was flower girl at Darek and Karen's wedding. I occupy the same Senate office Howard once had in the Dirksen Senate office building. My desk on the Senate floor was once his desk.

As his legislative assistant, I wrote his speeches, prompting him to tell the story at least 100 times of how I once asked to see him privately to determine if there was some problem with our relationship because I had learned that he never said in his speeches any of the words that I had written.

"Lamar," he replied, "we have a perfect relationship. You write what you want to write—and I'll say what I want to say."

Occasionally a young person will ask me, "How can I become involved in politics?"

My answer always is, "Find someone you respect, volunteer to help him or her do anything legal, and learn all you can from them. That's what I did."

How fortunate we were to know, to be inspired by, and to learn from Tennessee's favorite son and one of our country's finest leaders, Howard Baker.

Dan Quayle, when he was a senator, summed it up: "There's Howard Baker," he said, "and then there's the rest of us senators."

Mr. McCONNELL. I would like to share some of Senator ALEXANDER's observations about Senator Baker because, as I said, I think they are important, timely lessons about the purpose and potential of our service.

One of the things that stands out in all the tributes to Senator Baker, including Senator ALEXANDER's, is the way in which he embodied the rare trait of taking himself lightly even as he took his duties seriously.

I will give you an example. One of the time-honored traditions around here is for new Senators to labor over their maiden speeches as if Pericles himself were standing in judgment from the Presiding Officer's chair. Senator Baker was no exception. His maiden speech was long, thoughtful, and dense—so much so that when he asked his father-in-law, then-Senate Republican Leader Everett Dirksen, for his reaction, Dirksen is said to have remarked: "Howard, Howard, perhaps you should occasionally enjoy the luxury of an unexpressed thought."

It was the kind of comment that might have stung a lesser Senator, but as Senator ALEXANDER pointed out in mentioning that last week, Baker was a quick learner. About a week or so later, Howard rose again—this time to challenge one of his Democratic colleagues to a game of tennis. The Senator in question had just taken a swipe at the vigor of his Republican colleagues, particularly the new ones, and Senator Baker decided to rise to the challenge, tongue firmly in cheek.

It was a star performance. The Senator that Baker challenged even interrupted him at one point to suggest that it was "one of the best maiden speeches that has ever been delivered in this chamber." Evidently he had missed Baker's actual maiden speech. But Senator Baker's legendary ability to adapt

was now firmly established and it set the tone for a two-decade run in which he would be called upon to deploy his many other talents and skills to defuse tensions, resolve conflicts, repair trust, build consensus, and, frankly, just to put people at ease—because sometimes in this business there is nothing more important than just that: to just keep the bearings oiled.

We have all been recently reminded of how Senator Baker put his own ambitions aside to help rebuild the Reagan White House after Iran-Contra. It was a great testament to his values and to his feel for priorities. What Senator ALEXANDER reminded us last week was that these former political rivals—Baker and Reagan—started every day in the White House together telling each other a little story. They had no problem putting their past disputes behind them and building a close working friendship based on mutual respect, common purpose, love of country, and of course good humor. They were adults, busy about serious business, and they conducted that business with dignity and with grace.

The larger point is that while people talk a lot about the importance of having political skill in Washington these days, the importance of temperament cannot be overstated. The way Senator Baker conducted himself here and in the White House is eloquent testimony of that.

It is not that he was laid back. As Senator ALEXANDER put it, behind Baker's pleasant demeanor was a restless ambition that would propel him to the heights of American politics and government for 40 years, but he could subordinate that ambition when he felt the moment or the country needed him to. He was persistent about achieving a result but never insisted that his way was the only way to do it. It is a quality that required an ability to listen. In Baker's case that meant being an eloquent listener, a trait Senator ALEXANDER put above all the others in Baker's formidable arsenal.

Here is how Senator Baker himself once put it:

There is a difference between hearing and understanding what people say. You don't have to agree, but you have to hear what they've got to say. And if you do, the chances are much better you'll be able to translate that into a useful position and even useful leadership.

Senator ALEXANDER pointed out Howard Baker had courage. He helped round up the votes to ratify the Panama Canal Treaty even though he must have known it would not help him much in a Republican primary for President, to put it mildly. When the integrity of our politics was at stake, he did not hesitate to take on a President of his own party in a very public way—an impulse that one hopes lawmakers in both parties could muster today if the integrity of our system called for it again.

But perhaps most important of all, Howard Baker was grounded. He had an

important job to do, and he did it well, but he also kept a healthy distance from his work. His photograph of President Reagan's inaugural in January 1981 illustrates the point. Just behind the new President we can spot the Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill and the new Vice President George Bush. Then right there between them is a man holding up a camera to capture the moment. It is the new Senate majority leader standing there like an ordinary spectator with a very good seat. It was Howard Baker.

Senator ALEXANDER summed up Baker's groundedness this way: "Howard Baker never stopped sounding like where he grew up."

Senator Baker was a fixture here for decades, but Huntsville was always home. Perhaps that is also why Senator Baker took his stewardship of the Senate so very seriously. He knew he was not going to be around forever and that meant he had a duty to make the Senate work and to preserve it as a place where disputes and disagreements are sifted and sorted out and where stable, durable solutions are slowly but surely achieved. It is how he earned the nickname "the great conciliator."

When Dan Quayle was a Senator here, he used to say: "There's Howard Baker, and then there's the rest of us."

Over the past week, we have been reminded of why that was, and I thank Senator ALEXANDER for helping us remember why his friend and mentor meant so much to this country and this institution.

May the memory of Howard Henry Baker inspire us to be our best selves and even better Senators.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President. I believe it is correct that Senator CORKER and I, before morning business begins, have a few minutes to reflect on Senator Baker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That understanding is correct.

Mr. ALEXANDER. That is correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is under morning business right now, but the Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask consent that before morning business begin that Senator CORKER and I be permitted to reflect on Senator Baker.