

In his confirmation hearing before the Senate HELP Committee last February, Dr. Murthy stated that, if confirmed, he would prioritize his efforts on obesity and tobacco-related disease and “make prevention and health promotion the backbone of our communities.”

This is a priority I share with Dr. Murthy. For the past 30 years, serving in the House and Senate, I have worked on the issue of tobacco and public policy. I have worked to reduce youth smoking, implement programs to help people quit, and rein in the most insidious practices of the tobacco industry. Moreover, as a cochair of the Senate Hunger Caucus, I have become familiar with the complex and arguably unjust way food is distributed and consumed in America, leaving communities—including many in Illinois—simultaneously facing high levels of food insecurity and high rates of obesity.

Obesity and tobacco-related diseases are part of a growing trend of chronic disease that account for 7 out of the top 10 causes of death in America and make up 84 percent of America's health care costs. Dr. Murthy says these are his priorities. They should be. These statistics are unacceptable.

I believe Dr. Murthy understands the importance of the national crises before him. I feel confident that his experience, his training, and his tenacity have proved that he has the qualifications needed to tackle these issues.

Not only is Dr. Murthy an outstanding doctor and public health expert, he also remains closely connected to his community and family.

Dr. Murthy was born to parents who originally were from the southern part of India. He came to the United States at the age of 3 and grew up in Miami, FL. He did very well in school. He was valedictorian of his high school, graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in just 3 years, and then got a combined medical and business degree from Yale.

So Senators come to the floor and question this man's resume, his ability? For goodness sakes. He has an extraordinary background and that is why the President nominated him.

From a very early age, Dr. Murthy did not set out to make money, he set out to make a difference. In 1995 he co-founded Visions Worldwide, a nonprofit organization that conducts and supports HIV/AIDS education and empowerment programs in India. Until 2003, he served as the president of that organization and then board chair. He is a dedicated uncle and friend, consistently described by those who know him as humble, soft-spoken, and tireless. I know the Indian-American community across this Nation is so proud of Dr. Murthy's accomplishments, as all of us should be.

Many years ago I worked for a State Senator in Illinois named Cecil Partee. Cecil Partee used to say, For every political controversy, when you listen to the arguments, understand there is a good reason and a real reason.

What is the real reason for the opposition to Dr. Murthy? It may have come down to just one thing he said. It was alluded to by the Senator from Wyoming earlier. In an online post, he said he believed gun violence was a public health issue. Gun violence, a public health issue. For making that statement, he has been pilloried and excoriated by the gun lobby, and that may be a major reason why his nomination is controversial.

I am proud to represent the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois. Gun violence is a public health problem. Go into the emergency rooms—and I can give the names of the list of hospitals in Chicago to start with. Go to the emergency room on Friday or Saturday night and you tell me that gun violence isn't a public health issue. In those emergency rooms we see the victims of gun violence, many of them fighting for their lives. If we go to Mount Sinai Hospital in the Englewood section of Chicago, we can look across the street to a rehab institute. Those who have survived gun violence at Mount Sinai go across the street to the Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital and learn how to live a life as a paraplegic or a quadriplegic. Does that have anything to do with public health? It certainly does. Gun violence is a public health issue, no apology necessary.

I think Dr. Murthy, as has Dr. Koop, has made it clear they are not aspiring to be the leading doctor in America to engage in a political debate, but rather to engage in public health debates about obesity and tobacco and things that make a dramatic difference to the lives of so many people who live in this country.

I am supporting Dr. Murthy. I think he will be an extraordinary Surgeon General. I am sorry he and America have had to wait so long for this vote. I hope the majority of my colleagues will step up and support his nomination as well. At this time of challenge when it comes to public health issues, we need his leadership. We need his expertise. We need a person of this quality as Surgeon General of the United States.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO KAY HAGAN

Mr. REID. Madam President, North Carolina's official motto is a Latin phrase which means, simply translated, “To be, rather than to seem.” “To be, rather than to seem” means don't talk about being a hard worker—be a hard worker. Don't just pretend to be honest—be honest. If you talk about being sincere, be genuine about it. Senator KAY HAGAN, a native of Shelby, NC,

embodies her State's motto. She is as genuine and honest as anyone could be. It is no wonder that in 2008, when the country was seeking change, the people of North Carolina elected KAY HAGAN to the Senate. From the moment she arrived, she got to work. The very first piece of legislation she cosponsored was the Lilly Ledbetter Act. Having worked as a corporate executive, KAY is aware of the difficulties working women face. This legislation was personal to KAY, and she saw it through until completion. The daughter of a veteran, KAY spent her time in the Senate creating sound policies to protect and benefit members of the U.S. armed services and their families. She has done this by virtue of her position, not only as a Senator but on that important Armed Services Committee.

As a former executive of North Carolina National Bank, KAY knows all of the challenges facing businesses in her State and how women have a little different view of how difficult it is to work their way through the corporate world. She has fought tirelessly to create a better climate for small businesses to create jobs and grow. On any given issue, at any given time, KAY HAGAN has advocated her position and has done it well. She refused to give up until meaningful solutions were discovered.

While I am sure Senator HAGAN will take some well-deserved time off to think about her future, I am convinced that her service on behalf of the people of North Carolina and the American people is not going to end.

Senator HAGAN has a lovely family. We all like Chip very much. He is a Navy Vietnam veteran. She has three children—Tilden, Jeanette, and Carrie. I wish her family the very best as they transition into a new chapter of their lives.

On a personal basis, no one has impressed me more as being a hard worker. We are so disappointed that she is now going to have to find different public service. I have no inside information, but she could be back in this body. I have no doubt the people of North Carolina are going to miss her dearly.

I applaud KAY HAGAN for serving the American people with conviction, and I look forward to the great things she will accomplish for North Carolina and our country in the future.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM
COMMISSION ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, last week the Senate passed the National Women's History Museum Commission Act, a bill that I authored with the dean of the Democratic women Senators, Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland. It passed finally as part of the National Defense Authorization Act.

Our legislation will create a commission to evaluate and plan the establishment of a museum dedicated to women's history right here in our Nation's Capital. I know the Presiding Officer shares my view that this is long overdue.

I am in fact pleased to have had all of the women Senators as cosponsors of this bill, and I am thankful for the support of many of our other colleagues as well. Senator MIKULSKI has been a terrific co-leader, and I thank her for her leadership.

A women's history museum is long overdue in Washington, DC. Think of it. We actually have a museum dedicated to honoring buildings. We have museums along the mall that commemorate various aspects of our history. We have the Air and Space Museum. There is a privately run Spy Museum. There is the Newseum, which honors journalism. There is a museum that honors Native Americans. Americans from all over this country can come to Washington and learn about our history and the contributions of the people who have made our Nation the greatest country in the world. Despite the plethora of museums, however, there has been no museum dedicated to the women who have helped to shape our Nation's history.

The legislation that was finally approved last week calls for a commission to fund its own costs, and it would be paid for entirely with private funds at no cost to American taxpayers.

This commission would put forth a plan for establishing a museum on women's history so that people who are coming to Washington can learn about the enormous contributions of women to our Nation's history.

Indeed, American women have made invaluable contributions to our country across such diverse fields as government, business, medicine, law, literature, sports, entertainment, the arts, and the military. A museum dedicated to women's history will help ensure that future generations understand what it is we owe to the many American women who have helped to build, sustain, and advance our society.

Such a museum will share the stories of pioneering women such as abolitionist Harriet Tubman, the founder of the Girl Scouts, Juliette Gordon Low, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, astronaut Sally Ride, and my personal inspiration, Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith.

I first introduced legislation to establish a museum for women's history in 2003. Early the following year, the Senate unanimously approved my bill.

Unfortunately, that legislation was not taken up by the House and died.

In 2005, the Senate again approved the legislation, but it too stalled in the House. With the passage finally of this commission bill, the effort to establish a museum for women's history in our Nation's Capital takes a positive step forward.

This bill will convene a talented, diverse, and skilled panel of historians, educators, museum administrators, and other experts with experience in women's history to make recommendations for the creation and the sustainment of such a museum.

It is important to emphasize that this museum will portray all aspects of women's contributions to our history, without partisanship or bias. The only political statement we will be making is to correct the longstanding omission of the role of women in America's history.

I also recognize and thank Chairwoman LANDRIEU and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for their careful consideration of our bill by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which unanimously approved it last month.

Telling the history of the contributions of American women matters, and this bill takes a long overdue first step toward recognizing and honoring those who have shaped our shared American heritage. I look forward to the day when young girls and young boys visiting Washington will be able to visit a women's history museum to learn more about the remarkable contributions of American women to our Nation.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SAXBY CHAMBLISS

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, it is a great pleasure but a bittersweet moment for me to rise on the Senate floor to pay tribute to a dear friend and an esteemed colleague, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS.

After 20 years in Congress—8 in the House and 12 here in the Senate—Senator CHAMBLISS retires from this phase of service to Georgia and to our Nation with a well-deserved reputation as a true statesman.

At a time when the coarsening political discourse across our Nation and here in Congress is a growing concern, Senator CHAMBLISS is a shining example of expertise and ability combined with civility and respect. He leaves Congress not only with many friends on both sides of the aisle, but also with many accomplishments to his credit.

His leadership in national security and intelligence in both Chambers has been a great asset to our Nation. From agriculture to armed services, Senator CHAMBLISS has been an informed and effective advocate for his constituents and for the American people.

The golfers here might consider the hole-in-one he famously scored in a foursome with President Obama last year to be worthy of mention. Personally, as the founder and cochair of the Senate Diabetes Caucus, I would consider his dedication to the cause of juvenile diabetes to be a true highlight.

I have also had the great pleasure of serving with Senator CHAMBLISS both on the Intelligence Committee, where he is the vice chairman, and previously on the Senate Armed Services Committee. I saw firsthand his extraordinary grasp of complicated issues that are so critical to the security of our Nation. I also witnessed how he would listen carefully to the views of others, whether on the Republican side of the aisle or from the Democratic Members on both committees.

But if there is one shining moment that stands out for me, it would be Senator CHAMBLISS's leadership in the Gang of 6 during the 2011 debt ceiling crisis. At a time when it was far easier to stand back, point fingers, and fix blame, Senator CHAMBLISS, along with Senator MARK WARNER, led the way in producing a framework to provide a bipartisan, comprehensive, and balanced way to put our Nation on a stable fiscal path. The fact that our national debt has grown from \$16 trillion to \$18 trillion since then makes it all the more imperative that we continue the effort, with the leadership that was shown by Senator CHAMBLISS and that he so courageously helped to start.

The fact that this dedicated and wise leader cited Washington gridlock and partisan posturing as the driving force in his decision to retire from the Senate should give us all cause to reflect.

Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS has always been a voice of reason. No matter how bitter the debate, he has always engaged in thoughtful discussions that result in solutions. As he returns to private life, his advice will continue to be sought after and I hope heeded. His knowledge and insight will still be valued, and the example of decency and civility he has set should guide us all. I know his beloved wife, his children, and his grandchildren will be happy to have more of Senator CHAMBLISS's time, but for those of us who have been privileged to serve with him in the Senate, his decision to retire is a great loss.

The people of Georgia, the people of America, and those of us who have been privileged to serve as SAXBY CHAMBLISS's colleagues are grateful for his service. I wish him all the best in the years to come, both on and off the golf course.

Thank you, Madam President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.