

in the Air Force's 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. He was 35 years old when he went missing on March 29, 1972.

Merlyn was one of nine children, six boys and three girls. Five of the boys served their country, three in World War II and two in Vietnam.

Merlyn's brother Bob remembers him as a wonderful boy who people couldn't help but love. Bob jokes that Merlyn had personality to burn.

Merlyn went missing when his plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. Fourteen years later, in 1986, his body was finally recovered. Years later, his family was finally able to lay him to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

These are just a few stories that, by sharing today with the Senate and sharing today on the floor of the Senate, I hope will remind us all of the tremendous sacrifice that not only these young men have provided for their country but the sacrifice also of their families, their children, and the wives they leave behind, the parents they leave behind, and that it is a constant reminder that we must never forget the duty to our country and we must never forget those among us who have paid the ultimate price.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE STATE OF THE SENATE AS AN INSTITUTION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in the last Congress, I came to the Senate floor to express my concern about the state of the Senate as an institution, how it had been beset by dysfunction, destructive partisanship, and corrosion of its vital characteristics.

Today, I wish to reflect on some of the progress we have made in the first few months of this Congress in restoring this great institution to its essential role in our constitutional system. While significant progress has been made, there still remains much more to be done.

Central to properly understanding our responsibilities as Senators is an appreciation of the Senate's role in our system of government. Consider the particularly distinct purposes of the two Houses of Congress. The House of Representatives is the organ of government designed to embody the will of the people. Its small constituencies and short terms allow its Members to be as closely in touch with the voters as possible. With 435 Members, robust participation by every Member in each debate is impossibly cumbersome. Thus, the House's work is defined by majority rule as logically befits a body that represents the popular will.

By contrast, the Framers designed the Senate to serve as what they called "a necessary fence" against the "fickleness and passion" that sometimes drives popular pressure for hasty and ill-considered lawmaking—or, as Edmund Randolph put it, "the turbulence and follies of democracy." Similarly, James Madison described its purpose as "protect[ing] the people against the transient impressions into which they themselves might be led."

Through its character and its institutional structure, the Senate not only checks transient and occasionally intemperate impulses but also refines the popular will with wisdom and sound judgment. Perhaps the most important characteristic that guarantees this key function is the Senate's relatively small size, which enables each and every Senator to contribute meaningfully in debate.

The primacy of individual Senators' rights has long guided the development of the Senate's rules and traditions, including the right to extend debate, open amendment consideration, and a committee system that gives all Members, from the most seasoned chairman to the newest freshman, a hand in drafting and improving legislation. Moreover, there is the reality that to function efficiently and effectively, the Senate frequently requires temporary modifications to the institution's oftentimes complex and cumbersome rules—agreements that require the unanimous consent of all Senators to take effect.

The expansive rights of Senators are a double-edged sword—at once both the great genius of the institution and the source of some of the greatest pitfalls that may befall it. By giving a minority of Senators—sometimes even a minority of one—great sway over the business of the whole body, each one of us is entrusted with enormous powers that can be used to grind the Senate to a halt. These powers can be used to do enormous good when used wisely and judiciously—from forcing a majority to reconsider misguided legislation to retracting important guarantees from the executive branch in exchange for allowing a nomination to go forward.

The former Senator from Oklahoma, Dr. Tom Coburn, was a leading exponent of these rights. During his time in the Senate, he was legendary for his use of the rules to stop wasteful spending and limit the expansion of the Federal Government. While we may not always have agreed on particular matters, it is beyond question that his willingness to stand up for what he believed in—even in the face of overwhelming opposition—did enormous good for our Nation. Dr. Coburn's service demonstrates exactly why the Senate allows a minority to hold such a sway over this body.

Nevertheless, while the whole Republic has benefited time and again from a Senate minority's judicious exercise of its rights, we know all too well how these rights can be abused. Today, the

Senate's procedures have become bywords for mindless obstruction. In the minds of many of our fellow citizens, what drives the exercise of minority rights is not the interests of thoughtful legislating or productive oversight but, rather, reflexive partisanship and political grandstanding.

From various quarters, including some within this very body, we often hear calls to eliminate the various rights of the minority. Although these calls may be instinctively appealing, we should decisively reject them. After all, without these minority rights, the Senate would lose its unique character, which has allowed it to serve the Republic so well for so many years. The Senate, stripped of its minority rights, would merely duplicate and needlessly frustrate the work of the House of Representatives.

Those of us in the present day should recall that we are not the first in our Nation's history to confront the potential for great dysfunction. In particular, we should recall the example of the late Senator from Montana, Mike Mansfield. Senator Mansfield served as majority leader from 1961 until 1977, holding that position longer than any other Senate leader. These were turbulent times for the Nation and the Senate alike, when the issues of the day could hardly have been more divisive and problematic.

Near the beginning of his tenure, when a determined minority stalled President Kennedy's legislative priorities, Senator Mansfield faced great pressure from within his own party to exert the majority's power more assertively. In an act of great courage, Mansfield resisted these calls to bend the Senate's rules. Although tempted by the prospect of important policy and political victories, he instead counseled that the remedy to gridlock "lies not in the seeking of shortcuts, not in the cracking of nonexistent whips, not in wheeling and dealing, but in an honest facing of the situation and a resolution of it by the Senate itself, by accommodation, by respect for one another, [and] by mutual restraint."

Senator Mansfield was absolutely right, and his wisdom is perhaps more relevant now than ever. For the Senate to function effectively, Senators of all stripes must practice mutual restraint—Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal, majority and minority alike.

In practice, restraint requires different sacrifices of different Senators, depending on their position. For the majority leadership, it is measured in part by what sort of measures are brought before the Senate for consideration. Do they tend to be divisive and partisan messaging bills, or do they tend to be measures that can gather bipartisan support—those that may offer less prospects of a messaging victory but greater prospects for actually becoming law? Have the measures typically been considered by the committee of jurisdiction, allowing for a

thorough vetting and best chance for bipartisan consensus?

Restraint is also measured in how the majority conducts its consideration of a particular measure. Is there an open amendment process that allows all Senators to contribute to the Chamber's work and seek means of mutual accommodation, or does the majority leader fill up the so-called amendment tree, thereby freezing legislation in the exact form that he demands? Is the full Senate allowed sufficient time for full and free debate on a measure important enough for consideration on the floor, or does the majority leader move to end debate as soon as it begins?

The need for mutual restraint also creates correlative obligations for the minority. From filibusters, to poison-pill amendments, to objections, to routine unanimous consent requests—an often underappreciated but incredibly important tool to chew up this body's valuable time—Senators in the minority have numerous ways in which they can grind this body to a halt and derail a measure. Senators on both sides of the aisle—myself included—have relied on these means before. Their use can be quite legitimate when employed judiciously and motivated by serious policy disagreement; however, when employed indiscriminately for the purpose of frustrating the operation of the Senate for partisan gain, the use of such tactics is deeply improper.

The appropriateness of the minority's behavior hinges in large part on the actions of the majority. With the power to decide the Senate's business, including what the Senate considers as well as how it considers it, the majority's behavior rightfully shapes the minority's response. Majority restraint invites minority restraint, begetting productive legislating, whereas majority overreach invites minority intransigence, causing only dysfunction.

The Senate's dysfunction over the past few years resulted from exactly that—repeated instances of overreach by the majority in direct contradiction to the restraint counseled by Senator Mansfield. This overreach occurred along a wide variety of fronts, many of which my colleagues and I spoke out against in great detail.

In the last Congress, many bills that received floor consideration had completely bypassed the committee process. In fact, each of the past four Congresses set a new record for the use of this extraordinary procedure. The unfortunate but predictable result was the waste of the Senate's valuable floor time on partisan messaging bills that no one seriously expected to become law.

Instead of allowing an open amendment process, the previous majority used the procedural maneuver known as filling the tree to deny Senators the right to offer an amendment. By refusing to allow amendments out of a desire to prevent a vote on commonsense bipartisan ideas, such as building the

Keystone XL Pipeline and rolling back bureaucratic red tape, the previous majority invited minority opposition to the underlying measures, killing important bipartisan legislation such as the energy efficiency bill and the sportsman's bill.

In the last Congress, almost a year went by during which the majority allowed votes on only 11 minority amendments. During that period, all 45 Senators in the minority together got fewer votes on amendments than, for example, one House Democrat, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE. In fact, the Congressional Research Service confirms that the previous majority leader used his position to block the consideration of amendments more than twice as often as the previous six majority leaders combined.

The previous majority also frequently moved to end debate on a measure at the very same time it was brought up for consideration, employing this tactic far more often than previous majorities. Its effect is not to end debate on legislation but to prevent it all together. Whenever those of us then in the minority resisted this demand that we end debate as soon as we began consideration, the majority wrongfully labeled it a "filibuster." Worst of all, the majority used this supposedly unprecedented level of obstruction to take the drastic step of abolishing extended debate all together on most nominations using the so-called nuclear option.

With the new leadership of the Senate under the senior Senator from Kentucky, we have made enormous progress toward restoring this sense of mutual restraint. Consider the sort of legislation the current majority leader has brought up for floor consideration so far this Congress: the bipartisan Hoeven-Manchin bill to authorize the Keystone XL Pipeline; the permanent solution for Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate and reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which passed 92 to 8; and the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill to fight the scourge of modern-day slavery known as human trafficking.

These are not Republican messaging bills. The majority leader has admirably avoided the temptation to fill our agenda with partisan bills just to score cheap political points. Instead, we have focused on bills that command broad bipartisan support. Moreover, consider the bills that the majority leader has indicated are next up for floor consideration: the Corker-Menendez Iran nuclear agreement legislation that passed the Foreign Relations Committee with unexpected and impressive unanimity; the bipartisan Alexander-Murray rewrite of No Child Left Behind; and our bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, which passed out of the Finance Committee last night with the support of 13 Republicans and 7 Democrats. By identifying these priorities, the majority leader has indicated that his focus on bipar-

tisan committee-vetted legislation is not a fleeting illusion but a long-term commitment to responsible leadership.

The way in which the majority leader has conducted our consideration of these bills also demonstrates this commitment to restraint. We have seen committee consideration of legislation restored as the norm. We have also seen a renewed commitment to an open amendment process. In January, for example, the Senate voted on more amendments in 1 week than in all of last year. By my count, we have voted on 114 individual amendments in less than 4 months, the majority of which were offered by the minority. Many of these were tough votes, but the need to govern responsibly far outweighed any political cost. Instead of cutting off debate before it even begins, we have moved at a deliberate pace to allow the amendment process to flourish, tempering our own desire to move legislation faster in order to legislate according to the best traditions of this body.

This is not to say that the past 4 months have been perfect. There have been times when the sailing has been a bit rocky. While the current minority has repeatedly displayed admirable cooperation—the sort of mutual restraint that Senator Mansfield wisely lauded so many years ago—there have been times when some of my colleagues have fallen prey to the temptation of partisan obstruction.

In particular, I was extremely disappointed by the logjam that developed over the Hyde amendment and impeded progress on the bipartisan human trafficking bill. The gridlock over what should have been an uncontroversial provision indicated a troubling willingness on the part of some to derail our efforts to legislate responsibly and instead resort to tired and discredited war-on-women rhetoric to win cheap political votes.

I was so encouraged by this week's resolution of that impasse. The willingness on the part of leaders on both sides of the aisle to break the gridlock reflected the best of the Senate's great tradition of statesmanship. I want to extend my sincere thanks and respect to the senior Senators from Washington, Minnesota, and Texas, Senators MURRAY, KLOBUCHAR and CORNYN, as well as everyone else who helped craft the compromise.

By putting partisanship aside, they have not only benefitted the victims of human trafficking; they have also helped reinvigorate the ethos of accommodation and mutual restraint that is at the heart of this institution. We should all look to this example as a model of leadership worthy of the world's greatest deliberative body.

It is incumbent on all of us to get the Senate back to work for the American people. By returning to the spirit of comity that served this body so well for so long, we have already made real and meaningful progress. I urge all of my colleagues to continue in this noble pursuit. It is undoubtedly worth the cost.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the millions of Armenians who were deported during the Armenian genocide in 1915, and the 1.5 million men, women, and children who were killed. April 24, 2015, marks the Centennial Remembrance Day of the Armenian genocide, and my thoughts go out to the descendants of the victims and all of the Armenian people as the world commemorates this tragedy.

As we reflect upon this horrific period in history, we are reminded of the importance of promoting tolerance and standing firm against hatred and discrimination. That is why I have always recognized the terrible atrocities that took place in Armenia as genocide and why I consistently support resolutions in the Senate to remember the anniversaries of the Armenian genocide. I will continue to support these resolutions and speak about this issue so we never forget the families who were torn apart and destroyed due to brutal intolerance.

Nevada is home to a vibrant community of thousands of Armenian Americans. Through churches and other organizations, Armenians in Nevada have demonstrated a commitment to working to improve their communities and serve others. For instance, the Armenian Relief Association in Las Vegas has dedicated years to serving the Las Vegas community and providing Saturday school for children to learn Armenian history. Kirk Kerkorian, an immensely successful Armenian American businessman and philanthropist, has shaped Nevada's booming tourism industry and created jobs with his investments on the Las Vegas Strip. Kirk has also generously donated to organizations across the Nation and in Armenia through his charitable foundation, the Lincy Foundation, to support important causes such as public education, health care, and infrastructure development. Another well-known Armenian American, the late Jerry Tarkanian, will long be remembered in Nevada not only for his success leading the University of Nevada, Las Vegas basketball team, but also for his dedication to teaching young college athletes to be better people and proudly represent their city.

I am proud that, for years, Nevada has officially recognized the Armenian genocide, and that Nevada continues to find ways to honor this strong community and Armenian history. I am grate-

ful for the efforts of the Armenian American Cultural Society of Las Vegas, which raised thousands of dollars for an Armenian Genocide Monument at Sunset Park in Las Vegas, Nevada. The monument will represent the 12 provinces where Armenians were slaughtered during the genocide, and will provide Nevadans with a place for reflection for years to come.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire carried out genocide against the Armenian people. Over the course of 8 years, more than 1.5 million Armenians were marched to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East, murdered in concentration camps, drowned at sea, and forced to endure unimaginable acts of brutality.

Over the years, this deliberate massacre of the Armenians has been well-documented and confirmed by scholars and experts. And there are countless testimonies from victims who lived to tell of their harrowing experiences.

In his memoirs, Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1916, wrote: "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact."

Despite an irrefutable body of evidence, the U.S. Government has refused to call the deliberate massacre of the Armenians by its rightful name. Mr. President, 100 years have passed since the beginning of the Armenian genocide. It is long past time for our government to finally acknowledge one of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century for what it was—genocide.

This year, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of a Senate resolution calling on the President to "ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide."

But each day that goes by without full acknowledgement by the United States prolongs the pain felt by the descendants of the victims of the Armenian genocide, as well as the entire Armenian community.

By affirming the Armenian genocide, the United States would join countries across the globe—including Argentina, Canada, France, Italy, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and Venezuela—as well as the Holy See and 43 U.S. States in standing on the right side of history.

For years, I have urged both Democratic and Republican administrations to finally acknowledge the truth of the Armenian genocide. Today, I reiterate my call and I hope that this year the United States will finally correct this century-old injustice.

During a recent mass commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, Pope Francis said:

It is necessary, and indeed a duty, to honour their memory, for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!

On this April 24, as we take time to remember and honor the victims of the Armenian genocide, I hope the United States will heed the eloquent words of Pope Francis by formally and unequivocally affirming the incontestable fact of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I wish to solemnly observe the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

One hundred years ago, one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th Century began when the young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire executed more than 200 Armenian leaders and intellectuals. What followed was an 8-year systematic campaign of oppression, which by 1923, left an estimated 1.5 million Armenians dead and over a half a million survivors exiled.

These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, across the globe, and many called for the United States to take action. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during this dark time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., unsuccessfully pleaded with President Wilson to take action, and later remembered the events of the genocide, saying:

I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt also called for an American response, saying, "Until we put honor and duty first, and are willing to risk something in order to achieve righteousness both for ourselves and for others, we shall accomplish nothing; and we shall earn and deserve the contempt of the strong nations of mankind."

Unfortunately, the United States and the world did not intervene. It is a testament to the unbreakable spirit of the survivors of the Armenian genocide that they persevered and went on to enrich their countries of emigration, including the United States. That is why today we not only commemorate this grave tragedy, but we celebrate the traditions, the contributions, as well as the bright future of the Armenian people. Indeed, my home State of Rhode Island continues to be enriched by our strong and vibrant Armenian-American community.

Denial of this history is inconsistent with our country's values and as we mark this centennial, I once again join with my colleagues on a resolution that encourages the United States to recognize the Armenian genocide. We must continue to guard against hatred and oppression so that we can prevent such crimes against humanity. I would