

the most affected by the regulation, especially farmers, ranchers, and small businesses, not to mention the home-builders, manufacturers, mine operators, and utility providers that would be particularly impacted in my State. It should appropriately consult with the States. It should actually conduct the regulatory impact analyses required of it.

In short, what this bipartisan bill would do is require the administration to actually follow the balanced approach it should have followed in the first place. It is commonsense, bipartisan legislation that would protect our waterways while protecting the American people from a heavy-handed regulation that threatens their property rights and their very livelihoods. A similar bill has already passed the House with bipartisan support.

Americans in places like Eastern Kentucky have suffered enough from this administration's regulatory onslaught already. This latest regulation threatens to turn the screws even tighter for almost no benefit at all.

I call on every colleague to join me in standing up for the middle class instead of defending cynical, job-crushing regulations. I ask them to join me in supporting the bipartisan Federal Water Quality Protection Act this afternoon.

I thank my colleague from Iowa for her hard work on this issue. She has introduced a measure that would allow Congress to overturn this massive regulation in its entirety. It is another avenue the Senate can pursue as we seek to protect the middle class from this unfair regulatory attack.

I know the Senator from Iowa is actually with us on the floor right now. She is here for a different reason, which is the subject that I am turning to right now.

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**CONGRATULATING SENATOR GRASSLEY ON CASTING HIS 12,000TH VOTE**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week the Senate marked two milestones. First, our colleague from Vermont cast vote No. 15,000. We all noted it at the time. And then our colleague from Iowa cast vote No. 12,000, and that is what we would like to note now.

It is true that Senator GRASSLEY still has some catching up to do if he wants to overtake the Senator from Vermont, but there is more to this story than the top-line number. Out of those 12,000 votes our colleague has taken, the last 7,474 of them were taken consecutively. He hasn't missed a single vote since 1993. He has the second-longest consecutive voting record in Senate history, second place out of 1,963 Senators. That is pretty impressive.

Even so, we know our colleague never likes to settle for second. It is good for him, then, that he will soon grab gold in a different way. He is just a few months out from becoming the longest

serving Senator in Iowa history, and yet he is one of the most energetic guys around here—a runner in every sense of the term.

He has a lot of fans in Iowa too. I don't think it is any great mystery why the people of Iowa keep sending him here. This is a Senator with a deep love for his State and a simple philosophy. When he is here in Washington, he is voting. When he is back in Iowa, he is out meeting Iowans. He makes a point to hold townhall-type events in each of Iowa's 99 counties every single year. He hasn't missed a single county in over three decades. No wonder he began his ascent into Twitter legend with four simple words: "Attending events in Iowa." That tweet is hardly as infamous as "assume deer dead" or "staff has now informed me of what a Kardashian is, I'm only left with more questions." It captures our colleague perfectly in less than 140 characters.

Here is something that captures him in at least that many calories. At the end of every annual 99-county swing, Senator GRASSLEY has a ritual. He gets a Blizzard from Dairy Queen—sometimes chocolate, sometimes vanilla, but always, always swirled with Snickers. This year, he got to DQ so early he had to wait in the parking lot for it to open, and of course since this is the senior Senator from Iowa, he tweeted about it. Here is what he said: "I'm at the Jefferson Iowa DairyQueen," he wrote, doing "you know what!!!" That is some tweet. But in this Dairy Queen story, you have the perfect metaphor for our colleague from Iowa—early riser, driven, devoted to tradition, open to change, and never afraid to mix it up. For this lover of dairy and devotee of his home State, it makes perfect sense. The people of Iowa are lucky to have him here fighting on their behalf.

Here is to another 99 counties. Here is to the 12,000-vote milestone the Senator from Iowa crossed last week.

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**REMEMBERING FRED THOMPSON**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Finally, Mr. President, on an entirely different and sad matter, there was never any doubt when our colleague from Tennessee was nearby—6 feet 6 inches tall, deep, booming voice, and a magnetic personality that lit up any room he was in. Fred Thompson may have towered over the Senate in a very literal sense, but he was one of the most down-to-earth guys you will ever meet. He was a true gentleman with a kind heart.

This Senator, who lived life to the very fullest, the first in his family to ever attend college, never forgot where he came from.

Now, in a weird twist of fate, it turns out that Fred and I actually came from the same place. We were both born in what was then known as the Colbert County Hospital in Sheffield, AL. But getting back to Fred's humility, how many successful actors can you say that about? You see, Senator Thompson hardly fit the Hollywood stereo-

type. Senator Thompson didn't fit the political stereotype either. He was just Fred. He had one of the most interesting careers you could ever imagine—Senate colleague, Watergate lawyer, Presidential candidate, and radio personality. And he was an icon of the silver and small screen alike, one who didn't just take on criminals as an actor but as a real-life prosecutor as well. That was Fred Thompson. That was the man many of us had the pleasure to serve with.

I am reminded of some words shared recently by Fred's friend of 50 years, a friend who succeeded him here in the Senate. "Very few people could light up a room the way that Fred Thompson did," he said. "I will miss him greatly."

I join the senior Senator from Tennessee in the same sentiment. I know the entire Senate does as well, just as the Senate joins together in sending condolences to Fred's loved ones, Jeri and his children, in particular, in this very difficult time.

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**RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER**

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

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**PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for many decades the American people have heard that their elected officials and political hopefuls taught family values, but right now we need more than talk. We need Members of Congress to step up to the plate to help working families.

Our country has fallen well behind the rest of the world when it comes to paid family leave. We are the only developed country in the world that does not mandate paid medical leave for workers. Think about that. The most industrialized and successful country in the history of the world mandates less paid and protected family leave than Malta, Slovakia, and Estonia. What does this mean for working American families? It means parents can't stay home and take care of their sick children. It means mothers need to rush back to work after giving birth to a child. It means working Americans have to choose between a paycheck and their family responsibilities.

Right now the United States provides paid family leave for only 12 percent of its private sector workforce. We are one of three nations without paid maternity leave: Papua New Guinea, Oman, and the United States. Those are the three nations without paid maternity leave: America, Oman, and New Guinea. That is really unfair, and it doesn't qualify as family values.

I was pleased recently to learn that the new Speaker, PAUL RYAN, told House Republicans his family is off-limits. I don't know if that means Friday afternoons or just Saturday and

Sunday. He wants to spend more time with his family, and I applaud him for that. There were some people who mocked Congressman RYAN for that, and they are wrong. All parents should work to protect that time with their families.

Here is the problem. For millions of Americans, the concept of work-family life balance is nothing more than a fantasy. For far too many Americans, more time at work and less time with family is the only way to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. Still, these hard-working families are falling behind. An unpaid day off is out of the question.

Contrast that with the Senate. The Republican-controlled Senate doesn't work 5-day weeks. Yet millions of Americans can't get a day off when a loved one dies or a child is confined to a hospital bed. If you play baseball, the average salary is more than \$2 million a year. If your wife has a baby, you take off. But they make millions of dollars a year. Middle-class Americans don't make that.

While Speaker RYAN insists on a family-friendly work schedule for himself, he is blocking legislation that would give the bare minimum in paid leave for hard-working Americans. Before we worry about ourselves, we should worry about the millions of Americans who can't get a day off work to care for a sick child—can't get a half day off work. That would be real family values.

#### DRINKING WATER PROTECTIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week the Senate will vote on two pieces of legislation that will nullify drinking water protections for 117 million Americans.

The Obama administration's clean water rule will restore important safeguards to protect American water sources from pollution and contamination. This landmark rule from the Obama administration will finally resolve years of confusion and provide regulatory certainty for businesses, farmers, local governments, and communities without creating any new permitting requirements and maintaining all previous exemptions and exclusions.

The Republicans in Congress are intent on undermining these important protections. The Republican leader and his colleagues unfortunately are forcing the Senate to vote on legislation to roll back President Obama's clean water rule. This legislation will fail, of course, and Republicans know it will fail.

Last week, the junior Senator from Texas said this:

[N]ext week we will have a show vote on the waters of the United States. Leadership is very happy. We will have a show vote. We will get to vote, and it will fail.

Perhaps the junior Senator is right; this is another Republican charade. I hope not. If these bills were to pass,

President Obama will veto them. Yet Republicans are content to waste the Senate's time just so they can launch another attack on the environment. This is the first of a series of environmental attacks we expect this month from Republicans. They are also preparing to nullify the President's rules to address climate change. They have no solutions and no plan to keep our water clean or address climate change. They are wasting valuable Senate time on these show votes.

#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR GRASSLEY ON CASTING HIS 12,000TH VOTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, every year in the Senate we are sent to this distinguished body for one reason: to represent the people of our State and the people of this country. Our constituents expect us to legislate. They expect us to be here on the Senate floor voting and representing their interests. In the Senate, there is no one better at upholding that responsibility than the senior Senator from Iowa.

Last Thursday, CHARLES GRASSLEY cast his 12,000th vote as a U.S. Senator. As remarkable as that is, as my friend the senior Senator from Kentucky said, it is even more impressive that he has cast almost 7,500 consecutive votes on the Senate floor. He hasn't missed a vote since July 14, 1993. He holds the second longest consecutive vote streak in Senate history, behind our colleague Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin. That is a lot of votes.

Senator GRASSLEY's constancy and unwavering work ethic comes as no surprise to those of us who have known him and are acquainted with his background. CHUCK GRASSLEY is a farmer. He is proud of that. He got started in politics when he was elected to the Iowa House in 1959. He served for 15 years. In 1974, he ran for Congress and served three terms in the House of Representatives.

He was elected to the Senate in 1980. Thirty-six years, 12,000 votes—that is remarkable, as is 7,474 consecutive votes. So I say congratulations to my friend CHUCK GRASSLEY on those incredible milestones.

#### REMEMBERING FRED THOMPSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, over the weekend, the people of Tennessee lost a member of their family. Senator Fred Thompson, whom my friend the Republican leader has talked about, died after a recurring battle with lymphoma.

Those of us who served with him remember that wonderful voice. His voice was so good that many people said he should be an actor. Well, he was. He was an actor. He had a beautiful voice that projected so very well, but he was good wherever he was—the floor of the Senate, movie studio, the town square of his home.

He was a statesman in every sense of the word. His dedication to responsible

public service fueled his commitment to bipartisanship and compromise. Fred Thompson was known for his courageous heart and straightforward approach to public service.

I will miss him a great deal. He was always very kind and thoughtful and friendly to me, and the Senate is a better place for having had him here.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### FEDERAL WATER QUALITY PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1140, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 153, S. 1140, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to propose a regulation revising the definition of the term "waters of the United States," and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO SENATOR CHARLES GRASSLEY'S 12,000TH VOTE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving with several hundred Senators in this body over the years I have been here, and Senator GRASSLEY has been a very special friend during that time. He has represented the voices of Iowans for nearly three and a half decades. I think we have been friends for that three and a half decades.

When I think of Senator GRASSLEY—12,000 votes, hundreds of hearings, countless tweets, and probably four dozen sweater vests later—he is the same down to earth Iowa farmer who visits every one of the State's 99 counties every year. He is also the Iowa farmer who, when Vermont was hit with terrible flooding a few years back, was the first person to contact me to say, "Vermont stood with Iowa when we were hit with a natural disaster. Iowa now stands with Vermont."

He and I have worked together, and we have had a productive relationship that spans those decades. On the Judiciary Committee, we take our leadership responsibilities seriously. We have both made sure that, both as chairman and ranking members, that every Senator has a chance to be heard. We have found ways to come together on meaningful legislation. We enjoy each other's company. We are able to kid each