

to ensure that our final product was truly bipartisan.

This is a good bill. It is not perfect, by any means. But once again, it provides what I think are strong outcomes on many key policy priorities.

Both the House and the Senate came into the conference with their own set of demands, which required some compromise. However, throughout our negotiations, I worked extremely hard to preserve the Finance Committee's contributions to the Customs bill and to advance the Senate's priorities on this legislation. And in that regard, I think we can all be pleased with the overall outcome, even if some compromises had to be made.

I know that some of our members have specific objections to some of the individual compromises we had to make in order to get the deal done. I certainly don't want to minimize anyone's concerns. Instead, I will just say that this comes with the territory of passing legislation that tries to reconcile differences.

As a whole, I believe this legislation provides a path on the Customs bill that members of both parties can get behind. I am hoping we can get past tomorrow's cloture vote and final passage and send the bill to the President's desk in short order.

I urge all of my colleagues to work with us to make sure that happens.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE TOM JENSEN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the long career in public service of a good friend of mine and a friend to the Commonwealth of Kentucky, circuit court Judge Tom Jensen. After a lifetime of service in both elected office and on the bench, Judge Jensen has announced his retirement from the bench of the 27th Judicial Circuit Court, effective this February 16. Kentucky is going to miss his wisdom, his judgment, and the benefit of his many years of experience.

Judge Jensen has served for 3-plus years on the bench and, prior to that, had a lengthy career in the Kentucky General Assembly. He served in the Kentucky House of Representatives in the 1980s and 1990s. During his tenure there, he was elected as minority floor leader, the highest Republican position in the House of Representatives.

In 1996, Tom chose to not seek reelection to the house and instead was elected chairman of the Republican Party of Kentucky. During his leadership, the Kentucky GOP made some significant gains, adding an additional Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives delegation and sending another Republican to the U.S. Senate. Republicans also gained control of the Kentucky State Senate for the first time in history under his watch.

Judge Jensen was next elected to the Kentucky State Senate in 2005, representing the 21st District, which included Estill, Laurel, Powell, Jackson,

and Menifee Counties. As a senator, he chaired the senate judiciary committee and the senate budget review subcommittee on justice and judiciary. He also served as the vice chairman of the senate natural resources and energy committee.

Judge Jensen has been honored many times in the Commonwealth for his achievements. He won recognition as Senator of the Year 2011 by the Kentucky Narcotics Officer Association. He received the highest award from the Kentucky Department of Corrections. He received the 2011 Public Advocate Award for advancing justice through criminal justice reforms. His alma mater, the University of the Cumberland, also presented him an award for his leadership.

After 18 years in the legislature, Judge Jensen has dispensed his wisdom from the bench for the last 3-plus years, where he presides over many cases involving drugs and drug offenses. He has won acclaim for his wisdom and judicial temperament, but even though he has more than 6 years left in his current term, he has chosen to retire and re-enter private law practice. Tom has practiced law in London since 1978, is licensed to practice in all courts of the Commonwealth, and has been admitted to practice before the sixth circuit of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

It seems advocacy is Judge Jensen's first love, and after a long and successful career, he wants to return to the role of advocacy in the courtroom. While he will certainly be missed on the bench, I know he will be an outstanding attorney and advocate for his clients, who will be very lucky to benefit from his experience.

I know my colleagues join me in extending congratulations and best wishes to Judge Jensen and to his family: his wife, Nannette Curry Jensen; their two daughters, Natalie Jensen and Laura Jensen Hays; his son-in-law, Henry Hays; and grandchildren, Elle and Spencer.

As Judge Jensen begins this new chapter in his career, I want to thank him for his career in public service and contributions to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We will miss him on the bench or in the general assembly halls, but look forward to still seeing him in the courtroom.

A local area newspaper in Kentucky published an article extolling Judge Jensen's life of service. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Times-Tribune, Feb. 7, 2016]
TRI-COUNTY PROFILES: JUDGE, LEGISLATOR RETURNS TO PRIVATE PRACTICE AFTER DECADES OF SERVICE

(By Christina Bentley, Feature Writer)

"Life's too short not to do things you enjoy," said Circuit Court Judge Tom Jensen, who recently announced his retirement from the bench of the 27th Judicial Circuit Court, effective Feb. 16.

For Jensen, the thing he will be enjoying for the foreseeable future will be his London private law practice, although he said he has enjoyed every phase of his career, from his 18½ years of service in the Kentucky State Legislature to his three-plus years on the bench. But his heart right now is in returning to private practice.

"I made a commitment that I would go back to my law office . . . When I left, I said, look, I'm just going to go stay three years, maybe four years, and then come back and practice law and finish up that way," he said. "I may take off a couple of weeks, but I am going back. My staff stayed in place, and I always promised them I'd come back, so I'm going to live up to my promise. And it's time. I've thought about not going back. I've got six-and-a-half more years or so in this term, and I considered it. At my age, maybe that's the smart thing to do. It's not overwhelming work to me. A lot of people have asked me why I'm going back to practice law, and the thing about it is I enjoyed that. I enjoyed that more than anything that I've ever done, I think."

Jensen said that while he has also enjoyed serving on the bench, he just doesn't get the same sort of satisfaction from it as he does from the process of problem solving with clients.

"It just turned out that I would rather advocate for somebody than be the mediator or make the decision," he said. "I think I miss the give and take, the camaraderie you develop by talking to a client, meeting with people, trying to solve a problem, not deciding the issue or the problem, but trying to solve it. I don't want to sound corny, but I think I'm a people person, and I don't think that's the role of a judge. I don't think I'll ever run for anything again, and I think I'd like to finish up practicing law."

Jensen's passion for advocacy is also evident when he discusses the years that he spent working in the Kentucky State Legislature, a political career that resulted in his recognition as Kentucky State Senator of the Year for 2011.

"I enjoyed (the legislature)," Jensen said, "trying to make a difference. I think it was seeing if you could make things better. It sounds crazy, but it wasn't the pay. Actually, it probably cost me money, practicing law, being in the legislature, being gone those periods of time. But it was a good feeling if you got something accomplished. It was a good feeling that you thought you could make things better. Sometimes we were right, sometimes we weren't. I think, you know, Kentucky's my home, and I wanted to make it as good as I possibly could. Of course, I wasn't a dictator, and I wasn't governor or anything like that, but I did, as Floor Leader in the House, have some impact on some things. We were able to put in some legislation that I think has made a difference in the state. It moved at a snail's pace; sometimes you'd get frustrated. Sometimes you would argue that there was a better of doing it and you couldn't get your way about it, but that's democracy, and the one thing that I saw in the legislature: for the most part, people were up there for the right reasons. They were up there to make Kentucky better."

Jensen is proud of much of what he accomplished in the legislature, but he said his signature accomplishment was House Bill 463, designed to cut down on prison overcrowding in the state.

"In about 2009 and 2010, we started looking at it," he said. "We were actually using private prisons to house state prisoners, and it was costing the state a considerable amount of money. It was to the point that we were either going to have to build a new prison or we had to do something. So that's when we

came up with (House Bill) 463 to put a lot of people on probation, more than we had in the past, mainly drug offenses, and it has done what we said it would do . . . Now some people might say we're being too easy on them. The thing about drug addiction, the way I see it, in the courtroom, your criminal days are just filled up with drug cases. Most of them are pleading out, a lot of probation, some diversions. And then about 50 percent of them end up going to prison or jail anyway because they can't comply with the terms. But still, if you look at it that way, it's 50 percent, which is not a good rate, but actually there are 50 percent that aren't going back, which is a good rate, and it has saved us a considerable amount of money."

Jensen said that while he won't be running for office again, he enjoyed the political process and may involve himself in it in other ways, advocating for causes he believes in, primarily those that help his adopted hometown.

"This will be the last political position that I have," he said. "I'm not saying I won't help out somebody politically or maybe get involved in somebody's campaign, but I don't think I'll ever run for anything again. I think I'm done running. But I always liked politics . . . I intend to go back and practice law, but I might even lobby some. I've still got some real good friends in the legislature, so I might do that and lobby for some projects, mainly things that I think would help Laurel County."

For example, Jensen cites the ongoing efforts of Cumberland River Comprehensive Care to build a juvenile drug rehab in Laurel County as a project he would like to have more involvement in.

"One of the things that I even worked on as judge was to try to help Cumberland River Comp Care get the old juvenile detention facility," he said. "I did help by going to Frankfort to talk to the governor and some others . . . What they want to do is have a juvenile rehab center in there, and I can tell you, looking at my court system, these people that are adults on drugs in my court, they didn't start when they became 18. They started at 12, 13. It's actually alarming when you talk to some of them, the age they began this stuff. So I felt like that was a really good endeavor to get into. I'd like to even help them maybe get some more money to fix up more of that building . . . it's going to take considerable money to get it up and operating, and Comp Care has made the commitment to do it, but I thought I'd try to maybe help them, see if I could get them a little more money to help the renovation along a little quicker. That's one of the projects I've developed for myself in retirement."

Jensen is not a Laurel County native, but he has spent his entire career here, after following a basketball scholarship from his hometown of Cincinnati to Sue Bennett Junior College nearly 50 years ago.

"My high school coach was a guy named Ralph Rush, and he was from Bush, and of course I never heard of Bush, growing up in Cincinnati, but he brought me down here," Jensen said. "My grades were not real good in school. I was not a particularly good student. I went to school mainly to play sports probably . . . But that's what brought me down here, and I just kind of fell in love with it here in London and the surrounding area. I think I like the small town more than I ever did a big city. Even though London's not a particularly small town anymore, I wouldn't live anywhere else. This is it. When I left Sue Bennett, I had a lot of scholarship offers, and I went to Eastern Illinois University. I went up there and just didn't like it, and I quit. And this is 1969, I guess, and my dad was furious with me. Vietnam was going

on, and he said, 'Here you are going to school for free. What are you going to do?' And I said, 'Well, I'll just join the Army.' But my dad threw such a fit . . . So I came back down to London and talked to Ernie Wiggins, who was my coach at Sue Bennett . . . and it just so happened that night they were going to play at Cumberland College, and he asked me if I wanted to go down . . . I went to Cumberland and finished up there. I met my wife there. Got married. Came to London—that's where her family's from—and decided to go to law school about two years later."

Jensen married Nannette Curry and the couple have two daughters, Natalie Jensen and Laura Jensen Hays, who were growing up during Jensen's time in the legislature.

"I enjoyed . . . all those years doing that, looking back on them, other than the time I was away from my family," Jensen said. "You know when you're away from your kids and then they grow up, and if anything goes wrong, you start blaming yourself: should have been there more," but my wife did a really good job, she covered all the bases. She was a good mother, she was real involved with the kids."

These days, Jensen says he's looking forward to having time to watch his grandchildren swim—they are both on the swim team at Corbin High School—but he doesn't really have any other hobbies. He said he wants to keep serving Laurel County, just in different ways.

"How many years can you do this? I don't know. I just know that I want to work until I can't work anymore," he said.

He would like to continue to combat the drug problem in the area, something he has seen first-hand as a judge.

"The biggest problem I see facing us today is drugs, and if you come and watch a criminal day, it's nearly all drugs, everybody that's convicted. Now, they might have a theft with it, but they were stealing money to buy drugs . . . It's really sad. I see that as a major problem, not only in Kentucky but across the nation," Jensen said.

All told, though, Jensen said he is proud of his life's work and feels fortunate to have been able to accomplish what he has for the people of the region.

"I'm glad I left Cincinnati to come down here. It's just been a good life for me here," Jensen said. "I've made a lot of good friends . . . I've been very fortunate. And the people of this community . . . have been really, really good to me. When I was in the Senate, I was representing five counties: Laurel, Jackson, Estill, Powell and Menifee counties. They were always good to me. This (Laurel County) courthouse here, I put the money in the budget for this and the one in Jackson County, too. Those kind of things, when you look back on it, things you were able to accomplish, it kind of makes you feel good about some of it. Some of the things you couldn't accomplish, you know, it's frustrating that you thought you knew the right way to go and couldn't get there, but the things that you have gotten right . . . that makes you feel good. And I know what I accomplished. I don't need my name on a building or anything to know what I did, and I'm pretty proud of the things I did accomplish. It's up to the next generation now to accomplish even more and do things even better."

NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS AND POLICY ENHANCEMENT BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I was necessarily absent from today's vote, vote No. 20, on the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act due to events in Illinois. Had I

been present, I would have voted "yea" in support of H.R. 757, to advance sanctions against North Korea, and was glad to see it adopted.

Today marks the ninth anniversary of President Obama's announcement of his intention to run for President. He made the announcement from the steps of the old State capitol, the reconstructed building where Abraham Lincoln delivered his "House Divided" speech in my hometown of Springfield, IL. Today, the President and I returned to Illinois to commemorate his historic announcement and his service in the Illinois State Senate. I try to never miss votes, but this was a very special occasion in my home State.

I have been deeply concerned about nuclear weapons programs in countries such as Iran and North Korea. Almost 10 years ago, I joined with then-Senator Gordon Smith in introducing the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act, which became the basis for eventual petroleum sanctions against Iran that helped compel a negotiated nuclear agreement. I also cosponsored and voted for the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act, which became law in 2012.

And I was pleased to be one of the three cosponsors of the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2015 led by Senator MENENDEZ, key parts of which are included in the bill being voted on today.

North Korea has bedeviled administrations, both Republican and Democratic alike, and as such, this legislation is a step in the right direction.

I have some concerns with the final bill in areas where I think more flexibility for the executive branch would have been appropriate, but such is the nature of compromise.

North Korea's recent actions testing nuclear weapons, launching missiles that could carry a nuclear warhead, and apparently restarting its plutonium production are all deeply troubling. North Korea's leadership does this while many of its own people are starving or locked away in political prison camps. This is unconscionable.

One often wonders how such an isolated and repressive regime is able to continue such dangerous antics.

How does it pay for such endeavors and how does it pay off the sycophants and enablers needed to maintain such a police state?

After all, a nuclear-armed, erratic North Korea is not only a threat to the United States and its allies in the region, but to China as well. Such actions clearly are not in China's security interests.

Yet, frustratingly, too often, China seems unwilling to take necessary steps to isolate and pressure the North Korean regime. I understand China doesn't want a collapsed state on its border. I also understand it doesn't want a unified, Western-leaning Korea on its border.

But I ask our Chinese friends, is what we have today really serving Chinese security interests?