

Rule 8. Amending the Rules

The rules may be added to, modified, amended, or suspended by vote of a majority of committee members at a business meeting if a quorum is present.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JEFFERY P. HOLLAND

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I wish to commend Dr. Jeffery P. Holland for 37 years of service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Dr. Holland will soon retire as the Director of the Research and Development and Director of the Corps Engineer Research Center, ERDC, headquartered in Vicksburg, MS. He is capping his career with a highly successful management term leading one of the most diverse research organizations in the world—an organization that includes seven laboratories in four States with more than 2,000 employees, including more than 1,200 Federal engineers and scientists.

As director of R&D and chief scientist for the Corps since 2010, Dr. Holland has effectively promoted its research missions, including warfighter support, military installations, the environment, water resources, and information technology. His work has enhanced our Nation's knowledge and sparked innovation related to military and civilian missions of the Department of Defense and other agencies.

His leadership in research and development led to numerous achievements, among them increased soldier survivability and improved unit protection in combat zones. He distinguished himself within the Senior Executive Service with his work to establish excellence in human capital benchmarks, to develop an enterprise knowledge management and technology transfer plan for the Corps, and to develop a science and technology initiative to improve Defense Department acquisition.

Over his long career, Dr. Holland earned a reputation as a strong leader and coalition builder, who empowered thousands of engineers and scientists to find new ways to solve problems. His career has resulted in significant and lasting contributions to the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, the Vicksburg community, and the Nation.

His distinguished tenure and outstanding accomplishments are in keeping with the highest standards of civilian service and reflect great credit upon him, the Department of the Army, and the Department of Defense.

I am pleased to commend Dr. Holland for his many years of service and to wish him well in the years ahead.

PERSPECTIVE OF RURAL AMERICA TOWARD THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there is a very good radio reporter in smalltown Iowa named Robert Leonard, or "Dr. Bob," as he is known, who

interviews me every month. I recently read an opinion piece he wrote in the New York Times where he gives his take on the perspective of rural America toward the role of government. This perspective is often lost in policy debates in our Nation's Capital. In this piece, Dr. Bob gives very thorough and intellectually honest commentary that more people should read.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the New York Times article entitled, "Why Rural America Voted for Trump" by Robert Leonard dated January 5, 2017.

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

[From the New York Times, Jan. 5, 2017]

WHY RURAL AMERICA VOTED FOR TRUMP

(By Robert Leonard)

KNOXVILLE, IA.—One recent morning, I sat near two young men at a coffee shop here whom I've known since they were little boys. Now about 18, they pushed away from the table, and one said: "Let's go to work. Let the liberals sleep in." The other nodded.

They're hard workers. As a kid, one washed dishes, took orders and swept the floor at a restaurant. Every summer, the other picked sweet corn by hand at dawn for a farm stand and for grocery stores, and then went to work all day on his parents' farm. Now one is a welder, and the other is in his first year at a state university on an academic scholarship. They are conservative, believe in hard work, family, the military and cops, and they know that abortion and socialism are evil, that Jesus Christ is our savior, and that Donald J. Trump will be good for America.

They are part of a growing movement in rural America that immerses many young people in a culture—not just conservative news outlets but also home and church environments—that emphasizes contemporary conservative values. It views liberals as loathsome, misinformed and weak, even dangerous.

Who are these rural, red-county people who brought Mr. Trump into power? I'm a native Iowan and reporter in rural Marion County, Iowa. I consider myself fairly liberal. My family has mostly voted Democratic since long before I was born. To be honest, for years, even I have struggled to understand how these conservative friends and neighbors I respect—and at times admire—can think so differently from me, not to mention how over 60 percent of voters in my county could have chosen Mr. Trump.

Political analysts have talked about how ignorance, racism, sexism, nationalism, Islamophobia, economic disenfranchisement and the decline of the middle class contributed to the popularity of Mr. Trump in rural America. But this misses the deeper cultural factors that shape the thinking of the conservatives who live here.

For me, it took a 2015 pre-caucus stop in Pella by J. C. Watts, a Baptist minister raised in the small town of Eufaula, Okla., who was a Republican congressman from 1995 to 2003, to begin to understand my neighbors—and most likely other rural Americans as well.

"The difference between Republicans and Democrats is that Republicans believe people are fundamentally bad, while Democrats see people as fundamentally good," said Mr. Watts, who was in the area to campaign for Senator Rand Paul. "We are born bad," he said and added that children did not need to be taught to behave badly—they are born knowing how to do that.

"We teach them how to be good," he said. "We become good by being reborn—born again."

He continued. "Democrats believe that we are born good, that we create God, not that he created us. If we are our own God, as the Democrats say, then we need to look at something else to blame when things go wrong—not us."

Mr. Watts talked about the 2015 movie theater shooting in Lafayette, La., in which two people were killed. Mr. Watts said that Republicans knew that the gunman was a bad man, doing a bad thing. Democrats, he added, "would look for other causes—that the man was basically good, but that it was the guns, society or some other place where the blame lies and then they will want to control the guns, or something else—not the man." Republicans, he said, don't need to look anywhere else for the blame.

Hearing Mr. Watts was an epiphany for me. For the first time I had a glimpse of where many of my conservative friends and neighbors were coming from. I thought, no wonder Republicans and Democrats can't agree on things like gun control, regulations or the value of social programs. We live in different philosophical worlds, with different foundational principles.

Overlay this philosophical perspective on the American rural-urban divides of history, economy and geography, and the conservative individual responsibility narrative becomes even more powerful. In my experience, the urban-rural divide isn't really so much a red state versus blue state issue, it's red county versus blue county. Rural Iowans have more in common with the rural residents of Washington State and New Mexico—places I've also lived—than with the residents of Des Moines, Seattle and Albuquerque.

Look at a national map of which counties went for Democrats and which for Republicans: Overwhelmingly the blue counties are along waterways, where early river transportation encouraged the formation of cities, and surround state capitals. This is also where most investment in infrastructure and services is made. Rural Americans recognize that this is how it must be, as the cities are where most of the people are, yet it's a sore spot.

In state capitols across America, lawmakers spend billions of dollars to take a few seconds off a city dweller's commute to his office, while rural counties' farm-to-market roads fall into disrepair. Some of the paved roads in my region are no longer maintained and are reverting to gravel. For a couple of generations now, services that were once scattered across rural areas have increasingly been consolidated in urban areas, and rural towns die. It's all done in the name of efficiency.

In cities, firefighters and E.M.T.s are professionals whose departments are funded by local, state and federal tax dollars. Rural America relies on volunteers. If I have a serious heart attack at home, I'll be cold to the touch by the time the volunteer ambulance crew from a town 22 miles away gets here.

Urban police officers have the latest in computer equipment and vehicles, while small-town cops go begging.

In this view, blue counties are where most of our tax dollars are spent, and that's where all of our laws are written and passed. To rural Americans, sometimes it seems our taxes mostly go to making city residents live better. We recognize that the truth is more complex, particularly when it comes to social programs, but it's the perception that matters—certainly to the way most people vote.

To make matters worse, jobs are continuing to move to metropolitan areas.

Small-town chamber of commerce directors and mayors still have big dreams, and use their perkier grins and tax abatements to try to lure new businesses, only to see their hopes dashed, time and again. Many towns with a rich history and strong community pride are already dead; their citizens just don't know it yet.

Many moderate rural Republicans became supporters of Mr. Trump when he released his list of potential Supreme Court nominees who would allow the possibility of overturning *Roe v. Wade*. They also think the liberal worldview creates unnecessary rules and regulations that cripple the economy and take away good jobs that may belong to them or their neighbor. Public school systems and colleges are liberal tools of indoctrination that go after what we love and value most—our children.

Some of what liberals worry about they see as pure nonsense. When you are the son or daughter of a carpenter or mechanic and a housewife or secretary who lives paycheck to paycheck, who can't afford to send kids to college, as many rural residents are, white privilege is meaningless and abstract.

It's not just older people. The two young men at breakfast exemplify a younger generation with this view. When Ted Cruz campaigned in a neighboring town in 2015, I watched as a couple of dozen grade-school pupils sat at his feet, as if they were at a children's service at church. His campaign speech was nearly a sermon, and the children listened wide-eyed when he told them the world is a scary place, and it's godly men like him who are going to save them from the evils of President Obama, Hillary Clinton and their fellow Democrats.

While many blame poor decisions by Mrs. Clinton for her loss, in an environment like this, the Democratic candidate probably didn't matter. And the Democratic Party may not for generations to come. The Republican brand is strong in rural America—perhaps even strong enough to withstand a disastrous Trump presidency.

Rural conservatives feel that their world is under siege, and that Democrats are an enemy to be feared and loathed. Given the philosophical premises Mr. Watts presented as the difference between Democrats and Republicans, reconciliation seems a long way off.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN CONCANNON

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Kevin Concannon on his retirement and distinguished career. The fact that Kevin Concannon retired is not news—he has done that several times before, and each time, he moved onto more exciting and challenging positions.

In 2016 Kevin Concannon retired from the USDA as the Undersecretary of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services after 8 years of service.

Kevin is a tireless advocate of people—all people. His work to assure that every effort was made to address hunger in this country is an indicator of his compassion, understanding of both the issues and solutions, and his unwavering faith in the ability of this great country to care for those who are struggling—whether it is food insecurity or earlier in his career on mental health issues, long-term care, and child welfare.

At USDA, Kevin worked tirelessly to increase options for SNAP bene-

ficiaries to access fresh local foods at Farmers Markets; he was determined that children should have more access to nutritious foods in WIC, schools, and childcare. While Kevin and I agree on that goal, I must add that, as a native Mainer, Kevin may have missed the mark on where white potatoes fit into those meal plans.

Kevin Concannon came to USDA with an amazingly broad spectrum of experience. From 1987 to 1995, he served as the director of Oregon Department of Human Resources; after having served commissioner of Maine Department of Mental Health and Corrections. In 1995, I was fortunate to be able to bring him back to his home State of Maine to serve as the commissioner of Maine's Department of Human Services. At the time, I commented that he was the Dan Marino of commissioners and welcomed him back. I would point out that Dan Marino is now serving as the VP of the Dolphins, and I expect that, in the same way, Kevin Concannon will find ways to continue his public service—and that will benefit us all.

Kevin led efforts throughout his career to improve child welfare, expand Medicaid and child health insurance, integrate programs of public health and medical care, and improve systems for long-term care for elders and people with disabilities. Many of those efforts were national in scope, and he was selected by his peers to serve as the president of the American Public Welfare Association from 1994 to 1995.

In every role, in every effort, Kevin Concannon has been an exemplary public servant and leader.

Margaret Chase Smith said it best: "Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation." Kevin Concannon is the personification of total dedication, honesty, and determination to make the world a better place; that has been the hallmark of his work each and every day.

Congratulations and best wishes to Kevin Concannon, and welcome home.

REMEMBERING ROBERT JUSTIN STEVENS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise today in fond memory of Robert Justin Stevens, a former staffer of mine who recently passed away—entirely too young—after a long, arduous fight with cancer.

Justin was exemplary in his desire to serve and his love for public policy and politics. He was a dedicated public servant who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Americans. Over the last few years, Justin managed Federal policy and advocacy for homeland security, public safety, and military-related issues as legislative director with the National Governors Association.

Before that, Justin worked with me, and later with Senator Scott Brown, as a professional staff member at the Senate Homeland Security and Govern-

mental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security. There, he helped us to identify and address waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending and financial improvement, audit readiness, and business transformation at our Federal agencies. During my 2008 Presidential campaign, Justin served as a senior advance team lead. It was in that context that I was first introduced to Justin's boundless love of life and energy.

Justin also served as the director for candidate operations and advance for the Scott Brown for Senate 2012 campaign; a financial systems analyst with the EMCOR Group; and a Navy/NASA university faculty fellowship program manager with the American Society for Engineering Education, ASEE.

Justin never took his young life for granted. An avid runner and adventurous soul, Justin sought to improve himself by taking courses in furtherance of a master's in national security and strategic studies at the U.S. Naval War College, after having received a B.S. in business administration from the University of Florida and graduated East Lake High School. Also, unbowed by his continuing struggle with cancer and always filled with hope, Justin married the love of his life, Elizabeth.

Justin will be forever remembered for the joy he brought to the lives of his family, friends, and colleagues with his humor, energy, and selflessness. Throughout his young life, Justin always made sure that those closest to him knew how important they were to him.

Cindy and I extend our warmest condolences to Justin's wife, Elizabeth; his mother Jean Nowakowski; his stepmother Karen Stevens, with whom Justin was exceptionally close; his siblings Bryan and Damon; his niece Magdalena and nephew Jackson. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL ILITCH

• Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a champion for Detroit and for Michigan, Mike Ilitch. Everyone from Michigan knows his life story: the son of Macedonian immigrants, he founded Little Caesars Pizza, one of the largest pizza chains in the world, and rebuilt both the Detroit Tigers and the Detroit Red Wings into world class, winning franchises. He led the Red Wings to four Stanley Cups and brought the Tigers to the World Series twice.

The story of Mike Ilitch is the story of never doing anything halfway. He embodies the American dream: he served as a marine, built a business empire, and had an eye for perfection that led him to incredible success.

For him though, it wasn't enough to be satisfied with success in business or