

Atchison is along the Missouri River, the Kansas River, and right on the border with the neighboring State. They have a long history in that community, and he and his family have had a long opportunity, which they have taken advantage of, to benefit the citizens of that community. He fought a courageous fight with a terrible, progressive neurodegenerative disease, and he was laid to rest last week.

As a stalwart figure of Northeast Kansas who worked at MGP Ingredients for 40 years, he will long be remembered for his character and his leadership. Most everything good in Atchison involved Ladd and his family.

Ladd was not born a Kansan. He was born in West Texas and graduated from Texas Tech University, where he met his wife Karen Cray during a national science fair put on by the U.S. Air Force. Naturally, they both won first place awards at the fair, and later moved to Karen's hometown of Atchison, where they made their life and raised their family.

With a degree in chemical engineering and the mind of a true engineer, he had a passion for understanding the way things work on a mechanical level. His love of tinkering led him to a long-time hobby as an avid amateur radio operator.

Upon moving to Atchison, he began working at MGP as a distillery production manager. During his first 11 years there, Ladd rose to become the company's president and later CEO and, then, chairman of the board. He had an integral role in bringing the company public, when it became listed on Nasdaq's exchange.

Ladd and his beloved wife Karen, who now serves as MGP's board chairwoman, were blessed with two daughters and six grandchildren, who still live in Kansas today.

Beyond his leadership at the company MGP, where his intelligence and encouraging management style will long be remembered, Ladd contributed on numerous boards and to even more organizations that improve the lives of those who live in the community and around the State. To name but just a few, he was a founding member of the International Wheat Gluten Association, separately represented the U.S. grain community at the World Trade Organization meetings, and was a board member of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He was also one of the original founders of the Atchison Area Economic Development Council, a longtime member of the Historical Society, and a former chairman of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce board.

Ladd's leadership was indispensable on the Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge committee to construct a new bridge in 2012 across the Missouri River named for a fellow pilot and fellow Kansan, Amelia Earhart, one of our State's proudest daughters.

He cared deeply about education in his community, as evidenced by the

recognition he and his wife received from Benedictine College, the Cross of the Order of St. Benedict, the institution's highest honor. His faith also played a significant role in his life, having served as an elder and deacon of the First Presbyterian Church of Atchison.

One can hardly overstate what he meant to northeast Kansas, as Ladd always sought opportunities to serve his fellow Kansans. He was a mentor to many and gave of himself to all who were fortunate enough to pass his way.

I appreciate his contributions to our State, and my prayers have been with his wife and family, father and grandfather. It is sad that Ladd was laid to rest, but may he rest in peace.

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. President, there is a lot going on in the Senate, and I am grateful for that. I hope we can resolve our differences and begin to work on policy. Personnel do matter. But what I want to highlight, as we look at the agenda for the Senate, when we look at an agenda for this Congress and the Federal Government, is the appropriations process.

One of my goals as a Member of the Senate—I didn't expect this when I was elected; I didn't expect there to be a problem—what I want to see is the Senate function. All 100 U.S. Senators, whether they are Republican or Democratic, ought to take a great deal of responsibility for seeing that this place, the U.S. Senate, gives each Senator the opportunity to present his or her ideas, to represent his or her constituents, and to make a difference on their behalf. One of the ways we can do this is in the way that we appropriate money.

The appropriations process is important. At the moment, we are operating under a continuing resolution that expires in a few months. We have had lots of conversations about the first 200 days of this Congress, the first 100 or 200 days of the administration. We have talked about the importance of confirming Executive nominations. We have talked about the importance of dealing with the consequences of the Affordable Care Act. We have talked about the need and the desire to repeal regulations that are onerous and damaging to our ability to create jobs. We certainly have talked about the need to do an overhaul in a comprehensive way of the U.S. Tax Code.

I want to raise to my colleagues' attention and hopefully generate awareness about one of the things that seem to be missing in that discussion about what our agenda is or should be, which is the necessity of doing appropriations bills.

The way this place is supposed to work is that by law, by April 15, we are to have passed a budget, and then 12 separate appropriations bills march their way through the Appropriations Committee and come to the Senate floor, where they are available for amendment, discussion, and debate by every Member of the Senate. We ulti-

mately pass each of those 12 appropriations bills and send them to the House or vice versa. Those 12 appropriations bills fill in the blanks.

Unfortunately, what has happened way too often is we have gotten in the habit of passing something we call a continuing resolution. Continuing resolution means that we are going to fund the Federal Government, its agencies and departments, at the same level of spending next year as we did this year. That suggests that there is no ability to prioritize how we should spend money. That is poor government. In fact, if you have had continuing resolutions year after year, the priorities of spending that were in place 2, 3, 4 years ago have become the priority of spending next year.

In my view, it would be a terrible mistake for us to reach the conclusion that we can do no better than a continuing resolution in the appropriations process this year that takes us to the end of the fiscal year. It is not just about priorities; we need to get spending under control. In fact, the appropriations process has generally done that. There is a reasonably flat line in the growth of government spending on the discretionary side, the things that the Appropriations Committee deals with, the things that we as Senators deal with on an annual basis.

In addition to determining priorities and levels of spending, another reason this is important is that it is our opportunity to influence decisions made by various agencies, departments, and bureaus of the Federal Government.

In my view, the Constitution of the United States created the Congress—the congressional branch, the legislative branch—for reasons of trying to restrain Executive power. When we do a continuing resolution, we leave so much discretion, so much power in the executive branch. It doesn't matter whether it is a Republican President or a Democratic President, Congress is here to protect the American people from an ever-encroaching desire on any administration to garner more power and to make more influence in the Nation. Congress has the ability, if we will use that ability, to restrain Executive action. We are going through a series of Congressional Review Act procedures in which we are rejecting regulations made in the final days of the past administration.

A more effective long-term approach to dealing with the expansive nature of the bureaus, departments, and agencies is to have an appropriations process in which the agency head, the Cabinet Secretary, or the bureau chief knows that his or her relationship with Congress may determine how much money he or she has to spend within that agency. If we do a continuing resolution, there is little reason for an agency head, a Cabinet Secretary, or a bureau chief to pay attention to Congress, and that is contrary to the constitutional provisions giving us the responsibility to appropriate money, and

it continues the practice of an administration expanding their role in the lives of Americans and its businesses.

We need an appropriations process different from just a continuing resolution. We need to have the opportunity for agency heads to know that the appropriations process is going to matter to them. It causes them to have conversations and discussions with us, gives us the ability to tell an executive branch official: This doesn't work in my State. This is very damaging. This rule or regulation you are proposing is harmful. Can you go back and do it in a different way? Do you understand what this means in this circumstance?

Again, our leverage to have those conversations is often whether or not we are going to appropriate money and what that level of spending will be for that agency.

The other aspect of this is that in the absence of that dialogue and change of heart by that agency head, we then have the ability to say as a Congress that no money can be spent to implement this idea, this regulation, this rule.

While we focused attention—rightfully so—on the Congressional Review Act and its ability to limit and in this case repeal and reject regulations, the long-term ability to rein in any administration that exceeds its authority and operates in a way that develops regulations that lack common sense or an appreciation of how they might affect everyday Americans is through the appropriations process, and a continuing resolution will once again take away the constitutionally mandated, the constitutional responsibility we have in doing our jobs to protect the freedoms and liberties of the American people.

We have had a lot of conversations about what we are going to try to accomplish. One of the things that I want to make sure is on the agenda is, when the time comes, which is now, the conversation is—I hope the conversation is not “Well, we have run out of time. We are just going to do another continuing resolution and fund the Federal Government for the next few months at the same level as we did last year.” We need to exert our authorities to make sure the American people are out of harm's way from what government can do. The Constitution was created to protect Americans from an ever-expansive government, and it only works when Congress works.

The time is short. We hear that the administration is going to offer supplementals or amended requests for additional spending, especially in the defense arena. We need to get our appropriations work completed so that they have an opportunity to supplement, to make suggestions to Congress about what that appropriations bill should finally look like. We are close to failing in our responsibility to do that. Congress needs to do its work.

All 100 Members of the U.S. Senate can have their opportunity to have

input in how money is spent. We can defend and protect the taxpayer; we can defend and protect the consumer; we can defend and protect the job creator; we can defend and protect the employee—but not if we don't do our work, not if we don't do appropriations bills and we rely once again on this technique of shrugging our shoulders, throwing our hands in the air, and saying that the best we can do is tell an agency that their spending authorities will be the same next year as they were last year.

We need to do our work. We need attention. The appropriations process should begin. And I ask my colleagues to give serious thought to helping accomplish that.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COTTON).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier today the Senate moved forward with the President's nominee to head up the Office of Management and Budget, Congressman MULVANEY. Congressman MULVANEY spent years representing the people of South Carolina and has been thoroughly engaged on budget issues during his time in the House of Representatives.

He has highlighted the fact that the Federal Government is on an unsustainable fiscal path if nothing changes in Washington, DC, and that it is reckless to keep running up the Nation's credit card with trillions in more debt and unfunded liabilities, not to mention the immorality of passing down to the next generation the obligation of actually paying that money back.

So Congressman MULVANEY is actually, I think, a very good choice for this critical role, and I look forward to voting on his confirmation soon.

TRADE

Mr. President, I want to weigh in briefly on the issue of trade. During the Presidential campaign and since then, there has been a lot of talk about international trade. It has led to a healthy debate about lopsided trade deals—whether bilateral trade deals or multinational trade deals actually are better—and how best to leverage trade to help American workers and consumers.

In my State of Texas, there is no question trade delivers in two ways. One, it helps Texas families stretch their paychecks by providing greater access to more affordable goods. That

is a good thing. And two, it helps our farmers, our ranchers, our small businesses, and other manufacturers access more customers around the world.

Texas continues to lead the Nation as the top exporting State, and it has done so for about a decade now. It is one reason our economy has done better than the national economy in recent years. And it is estimated that Texas trade supports more than 1 million jobs currently.

But it is important to understand that our economic partnership with Mexico has been a key part of that success, and that is thanks, in part, to the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, the trade deal between the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Our southern neighbor is our largest export market, with more than one-third of all Texas goods—including ag products and manufactured goods, to the tune of close to \$92 billion a year—heading south of our border because of NAFTA and trade. Well, this may not be universally true around the country, but suffice it to say that in Texas, NAFTA has been a big success for our economy. And because Texas has been leading the Nation in terms of economic growth and job creation, I think it is fair to say that it has helped the Nation as a whole not recede into a recession with the anemic growth rates that we have seen since 2008.

It is not just that my State benefits from the deal. The agriculture industry across the country benefits greatly. Mexico is one of the biggest buyers of crops grown in the United States, like corn. In fact, Mexico is the third biggest export market for American agriculture.

NAFTA is not just critical to my State, but for those far away from the southern border, as well, like Ohio and Michigan, which export a majority of their goods to NAFTA partners. I think it is important to acknowledge the fact that roughly 6 million jobs in the United States depend on bilateral trade with Mexico.

But here is the truth: The world looks a lot different today than it did 20 years ago when NAFTA was negotiated, and there is ample opportunity to work with our partners to craft a better deal for the United States. We can update it to be even more constructive and an even bigger driver of the U.S. economy.

Trade is essential to our economy, and I believe the administration agrees with me on that. In my conversations with Mr. Ross, who will head up the Department of Commerce, and others—the trade negotiator and the like—they all tell me that this administration is pro-trade, although they are skeptical of large multinational trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We have also recently heard the President himself talk about the importance of our relationships with countries like Canada and Japan. During the visits of the Prime Ministers of