

God bless all of you, and thank you for your support and your friendship. It means more to me than I can ever tell you. I will always be there for you, whether it is buying dinner, going to church, or just listening to one of your speeches when I don't have anything else to do. God bless all of you.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY ISAKSON

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, it is always a privilege to come before the U.S. Senate. I always feel humbled by that because I think of the people who have spoken on this floor since 1859. I am always measured in what I try to bring in terms of thought or whatever, but today there is a special sense of responsibility.

Senator COONS and I have been chosen to lead our colleagues in honoring JOHNNY ISAKSON today. What we just heard was historic, I believe. It is not the first time we have had a speech on this floor that addressed that topic, nor will it be the last, I will predict.

We just heard JOHNNY admonish us to judge with our conscience and our heart. With that, I feel somewhat unworthy to try to address what I feel, and what he also talked about is his heart.

Today is truly a bittersweet occasion. It is bitter because my friend, my mentor, and partner in the U.S. Senate, JOHNNY ISAKSON, is stepping down at the end of this month. For those of us who know this man, it is tough to come to grips with that. I will dearly miss him on many levels. I will miss having him come here in the U.S. Senate alongside me. I will miss his words of wisdom. I will miss his patience. Most of all, I think I will miss his example.

However, we can still find joy in this occasion, I believe. As JOHNNY and Dianne head into the next chapter of their lives with their family, all of us can take time to reflect on who JOHNNY is and what his public service has truly meant not only to us individually and not just to the constituents in our State but to America.

JOHNNY has actually meant the world to me and for longer than I have been in the U.S. Senate. When I got involved in the political process, I had never been personally elected to anything—maybe in the 8th grade. You know how that goes. But this was a radically different experience than I personally had ever had. JOHNNY helped me personally with that transition. He gave me advice. He befriended me. He introduced me to our colleagues here in the Senate. He has been the best partner anyone could ever ask for. I remember the best advice he ever gave me. I just shared this with our colleagues at lunch: DAVE, I only have one piece of advice for you. Keep your head down, your mouth shut, and don't ever vote against the farm bill.

That was his advice, and it was sage, and I listened to that.

Over the last 5 years—and, JOHNNY, it is hard to believe it has been 5 years. To Dianne, I am sure it feels like five lifetimes. In the last 5 years, JOHNNY's advice has stuck with me on many levels. A lot of people in this town know how to talk, stick around. JOHNNY has shown us how important it is to listen and learn from each other. He has shown us how to work together on behalf of, not just ourselves or our next reelection, but truly for the people who put us here. JOHNNY is a true public servant.

I say that next to the word "servant" in the Webster dictionary is a picture of JOHNNY ISAKSON. He is devoted to getting results, not just for the people of Georgia, but for everybody in the United States. Most importantly, he does it in a way that really is worthy of this august body.

I know this body has had controversy throughout the last 230 years. Part of what makes us great is that we have differing opinions, but somehow, in the last 230 years, we found a way to put those aside to find compromise. I made a living in business for 40 years finding ways to compromise with people who had different views than I did.

One example of JOHNNY's statesmanship was with his longtime friendship with another great Georgian, Zell Miller, who happened to be a Democrat. Zell was a former Governor of Georgia and a U.S. Senator. Last year, he, sadly, passed away. What most people forget is that early in his career, JOHNNY actually ran for Governor against the same Zell Miller who ended up being, as JOHNNY calls him, the best friend he has ever had.

When Zell Miller passed away, JOHNNY was asked to speak, and he spoke on this floor. In that speech, he said that Zell Miller was "an individual I met through politics, became one of my best friends through politics, and probably had more influence on my life than anybody else I know in public service." That is a Democrat JOHNNY ISAKSON is talking about. Saxby Chambliss and I get a little upset about that occasionally, but, JOHNNY, that is a big deal. Thank you.

It is almost hard to believe JOHNNY and Zell used to be political opponents. Despite their political differences, JOHNNY and Zell remained close friends up until Zell's death. In fact, Zell even appointed JOHNNY as chairman of the Georgia Board of Education 7 years after Zell had beaten him in that same Governor's race. We can have strong differences in rigorous debates, but we should always be civil and respectful to one another, JOHNNY says. And JOHNNY lives that out every day.

I have said before that JOHNNY ISAKSON is the Howard Baker of our time. Why do I say that; what do I mean? JOHNNY doesn't talk a lot, but when JOHNNY talks, people listen. What we just witnessed was, I think, historic. The paper that was on the podium in front of Senator ISAKSON just now was not a speech. I want everybody to un-

derstand this. It was a list of the 50 Senators who have asked to come to this floor over the next few hours to honor this man as he goes into retirement.

What we just saw was straight from the heart—better than anybody I have ever witnessed and in a way that I will always remember. Truly, when JOHNNY talks, people listen. It doesn't matter if you are a young child, a member of his staff, a colleague, or the President of the United States, not only do people listen to JOHNNY, but I will add one thing to what I have been saying for the last 5 years, when other people talk, JOHNNY ISAKSON listens. That is a rare commodity in this town; trust me.

If you need help, JOHNNY ISAKSON is always there. We all know now that JOHNNY will no longer be with us in this body every day, but we know he will still be around to help us in any way he can. I am hoping he will still call me and give those pieces of advice that have been so valuable over the last 5 years. I know he will answer my call when I call him and ask for that same advice.

But I want to leave the body with this thought today—and I think it echoes what he just said, and I prepared these remarks some time ago in thinking about today—in the new testament in the Bible, in Matthew 23, it says that the greatest among you will be the servant. And today, I want to remind everybody in this body that the greatest among us is JOHNNY ISAKSON.

JOHNNY, it has been a true blessing. God bless you and Dianne and your family. America will always be in your debt. Thank you for everything. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you, JOHNNY. God bless you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, it is an honor to rise and speak in tribute to my dear friend and trusted colleague, JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia.

To follow the junior Senator from the State of Georgia, something remarkable happened just before this session on the floor of the Senate. There was a bipartisan lunch in which virtually every currently serving Senator—nearly 100—gathered, not just because there was tasty barbecue, but because we were there to thank our friend and colleague JOHNNY ISAKSON for his decade of public service, for his dedication to this body, and for the ways in which he has been the glue that has helped hold so many of us together. You just heard it again here on the floor, his passion and his commitment to working across the aisle.

JOHNNY ISAKSON has been an effective, capable, and powerful Senator because he is never worried about who gets the credit for the work he does. He has kept his word. He has a great sense of humor. He is easy to be with. He is persuasive. He is persistent, and he is principled.

Let me just start by saying to Dianne, to John and Julie and Kevin and the grandkids: Thank you. Thank you for sharing JOHNNY with the State of Georgia and with our Nation for decades.

When I first got elected to the Senate back in 2010—which was a somewhat unexpected election, I got seated right after a special election—a respected senior realtor from my hometown, Dick Christopher, came and told me I should look up a guy named JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia. He was someone he knew from the real estate business. He said: He is a good husband and father, a principled man. You will enjoy working with him.

I never heard of him, so I looked him up online. If all you had to judge someone by was their right-left position—he succeeded Newt Gingrich—he and I, on the surface on a few positions, would have nothing in common. But as luck or providence would have it, when I got here, he was the trainer with Barbara Boxer for ethics for the new Senators. And to his misfortune, he got assigned to be my mentor. I began what has been an adventure that hasn't yet ended—and I hope never will—of a friendship and a companionship that has taken us to some pretty wild places.

Early in 2011, I was made the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and JOHNNY was the ranking member. I could not have asked for a better companion or partner. We did dozens of hearings on foreign aid policy, on security and trade interests, and on the growing role of China in Africa. But then we also went and visited places—widely—places both easy and hard. We went to Mali and Congo, to Senegal and Benin, to South Africa and to Ghana.

Over several trips, we visited AIDS orphanages and hospitals, water purification plants, and Millennium Challenge Corporation trips. On these trips, we saw the terrible impact of terrorism and grinding poverty in countries like Nigeria and Mali, but we enjoyed some pretty darn good times, too, like seeing the fruits of the best pineapple plantation I have ever been on and enjoying a beautiful vineyard in Cape Town, South Africa.

But JOHNNY didn't just go because it was an assignment. He went because it was his passion, even his calling. The first trip we took together was to Benin, a tiny little impoverished country in West Africa that hadn't had two Senators visit in 50 years. We went because Kate Puzey, a young woman who was a Peace Corps volunteer from Georgia, had been murdered. She was tragically and senselessly murdered because she tried to report child abuse back to the capital.

We had a remarkable and memorable series of meetings there that I won't go into. I will just say the thing about JOHNNY is not just that he persuaded me and others to join him in the quest for justice for Kate Puzey, but he

worked and worked until. Ultimately, the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act was law in 2011. That was followed by so many others. JOHNNY is the consummate legislator. On this one small subcommittee of one of the many committees of this Senate, he and many others of us worked and passed the Electrify Africa Act, the Global Food Security Act, the BUILD Act, the Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act, and, of course, AGOA reauthorization—something we worked very hard on.

The secret to JOHNNY's success is he doesn't focus on the two-dimensional ways that you are different. He focuses on what you have in common. In my home State, we have a county that raises more chickens than any county in America. The whole State of Georgia raises more chickens than any other State. So JOHNNY suggested, and I agreed, that we would form a Chicken Caucus. You may not know there is a Chicken Caucus. You may not know about the great ways in which it has made the world safe and free for America's chickens—a tasty, low-calorie, incredibly environmentally sustainable and affordable source of protein for a hungry world. That was brought to you by the National Chicken Council.

At one point, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee mockingly called me the "Senator from Chicken," but our work together on AGOA reauthorization and our travels together resulted in opening new markets to American exports. On this floor, in this august body, with all the things we deal with, that might seem like a small accomplishment, but I will tell you, the chicken farmers of Delaware and Georgia are grateful.

Each of us comes here to represent our State. In the travels I have undertaken with JOHNNY, I saw a remarkable passion and commitment to his home State, which has made him such a great legislator. There are so many other things we legislated on, but I know we have literally half the Senate waiting to speak. Let me move.

The other joy I have had with JOHNNY, which has been at the other end of our decade together—he is the chairman and I am the advocacy chairman of the Ethics Committee. It is a very tough committee. We handle difficult subjects. JOHNNY runs it well and will be deeply missed. We are joined here by many of the staff of the Ethics Committee, the folks who have seen his common sense, his humor, his decency, but also his focus on getting to a result. For me, it has been just another opportunity to see how JOHNNY ISAKSON lives his values.

We have joined together almost every Wednesday morning at a bipartisan prayer breakfast, and JOHNNY has taught Sunday school for three decades at Mount Zion United Methodist. Those of us who have gotten to know the blessing of his humor, decency, and his common sense and his attitude—everyone who is a friend or future friend

knows that it is rooted in his connection with the Eternal.

JOHNNY said something important here just a few minutes ago: America, we have a problem. It is my hope that after today's good, brave, important speeches, that some of us will step forward and take up the best way to honor JOHNNY, which is to model and mimic his style, listening to each other, respecting each other, committing to practice a brand of politics that is a little less combative and a little more focused on results, and finding ways to trust each other and to work together.

In some ways, JOHNNY's best work has been his tireless, relentless work on behalf of our veterans. As I heard said: The best way to honor our veterans is to be the sort of Americans for whom they fought and served. This Senate, this body needs to step forward and be worthy of the service and sacrifice of JOHNNY ISAKSON.

JOHNNY, I can't thank you enough for all the ways you have been an amazing partner and colleague on issues large and small. Your kindness and friendship has meant the world to Annie and me. As you and Dianne go home to enjoy the blessings of family, know that I will always look forward to another visit to Georgia or Delaware, and I am always up for another trip to an obscure country that hasn't seen two American Senators in 50 years.

Thank you for your service, and God bless.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, today I am honored to congratulate my friend and colleague, Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON on his retirement from the U.S. Senate after 15 years of dedicated service. Senator ISAKSON served the State of Georgia and the entire Nation with integrity, inspiring future generations through his public service. He has led a remarkable career, and he will be truly missed in the Senate. I am proud to know JOHNNY, and I wish him and his wife, Dianne, all the best in his retirement.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for allowing me to participate in this colloquy and pay tribute to his remarkable career of public service.

I think you could ask anyone in this Chamber, Republican or Democrat, what they think of JOHNNY ISAKSON, and you probably get the same answer every time: He is a gentleman and a statesman, somebody who knows how to find common ground and understands why that is still important. Sometimes, it was the little things—a bipartisan barbecue to just get Senators in the same room for a few minutes. As a chairman he brought folks together on one of the few remaining pieces of bipartisan territory: caring for our veterans.

Even on issues that often divide us, JOHNNY has spent his career looking for ways to get to yes, and he has a track record to prove it, particularly on the issue of healthcare. This is an issue that JOHNNY approaches from a place of deep knowledge but also deep empathy.

One of my proudest moments in the Senate was working with Senator ISAKSON, along with Senator Hatch, Senator WYDEN, and others, on improving care for the millions of Americans with multiple chronic illnesses. As many of you know, this is pretty personal for me. My mom had Alzheimer's for 10 years before she passed away; 9 of those she couldn't speak.

Working with JOHNNY on that Chronic Care Working Group—you knew he wasn't just transacting business or playing politics; he was personally invested in making life better for folks with these conditions.

I can't think of a better testament to the JOHNNY ISAKSON way than the fact that just a couple months after one of the toughest fights to ever take place over healthcare, we passed the Chronic Care Act on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis.

A lot of people in politics can tell you what they are against, but not many people can show you what they have accomplished. And as JOHNNY ISAKSON heads home to Georgia, he leaves behind a legacy of bipartisan accomplishment that will live on for many years to come.

JOHNNY, I want to wish you, Dianne, and your family health and happiness.

In closing, I just want to say thank you for your years of service to our country and for your years of friendship.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I join my colleagues in recognizing Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON for a lifetime of service and achievement, from the Georgia Air National Guard, to the Georgia Legislature, and finally to Congress.

Georgians know JOHNNY as a trailblazer, a proud Republican in a State that was once solidly Democratic. Americans know him as a friend to veterans and taxpayers, a strong conservative who loves and fights for his country. Those of us in this body know JOHNNY as a leader, a man of great integrity, and a statesman whose legacy will last a very long time.

We are sad to see you go, but proud of what you built while you were here. Thanks, JOHNNY, for your work on behalf of our country and the State of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, one thing I am always going to remember about JOHNNY ISAKSON is that with every conversation with him, he always included some words of encouragement for the work that I am involved in or how we are working together. I think you saw that in his remarks today, that he wants to encourage all of us. In this town of Washington, DC, where a lot of people think that they are the most important person in the room, JOHNNY ISAKSON is known instead for his unassuming manner. He is unfailingly kind and considerate to Senators and staff alike, and I think I expressed that in my first

statement about his giving encouraging words in almost every conversation one has with him.

In fact, my staff told me a story wherein Senator ISAKSON came to the Senate Committee on Finance when I was previously the chairman, and he asked to speak to a member of my tax staff. The staff assistant didn't recognize Senator ISAKSON. When asked who he was, he simply said, "Senator ISAKSON." It was not until after my tax staff came out that he realized that it was Senator ISAKSON himself.

Throughout my Senate career, it is safe to say that when it comes to me, all roads lead to Iowa. For JOHNNY, it is no exception. JOHNNY has close friendships with the famous Knapp family of Des Moines, IA. In fact, the Knapp family is known all throughout Iowa. Now, you are probably thinking: How in the world does a southern boy from Georgia get acquainted with Iowans? Well, for JOHNNY, a common answer is the golf course. That is where he first became friends with the Knapp brothers, Paul and Bill. In fact, JOHNNY delivered the eulogy at Paul's funeral in 2008. Paul and Carol, his wife, were friends of the ISAKSONS for more than two decades. Bill, Paul's brother, is a senior statesman of the Democratic Party of Iowa. Partisan glasses will not fool commonsense Iowans, particularly when it comes to JOHNNY's charm and heart. JOHNNY reminds me that he was the first Republican who Bill Knapp ever supported.

I guess, JOHNNY, you beat me to the punch on that one.

JOHNNY said today that Iowa produces some of the finest people he knows, but I say today that Georgia produces very fine people as well. At the top of my list is JOHNNY ISAKSON.

JOHNNY brings a smile to each person he encounters when he walks the halls of the Senate. As a result, he will be greatly missed by everyone. That includes me and our fellow colleagues. It also includes a lot of people who don't get much attention around the Senate, the young staffers who answer the phones and the support staff who do things like cleaning the bathrooms. JOHNNY is always interested in how you are doing and has a word of encouragement to share, the same sort of encouragement he gives me in every conversation.

We have heard it before, but I haven't said it; he is a workhorse, not a show horse. No one can doubt JOHNNY ISAKSON's dedication to the people of Georgia and the United States, not to mention our country's veterans, where he has worked very hard as a member of that committee and as the chairman of that committee to bring justice to our veterans and to keep our promises to those veterans.

JOHNNY ISAKSON is a true public servant. I am proud to have served with him, and I am proud of the work he has done on the Committee on Finance, which I chair.

Now, JOHNNY, I am sorry to see you go, but I wish you and Dianne, your

wife, the best as you step back from public life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I am so glad to have the chance to be here today to recognize Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON. He is a dedicated public servant to the people of Georgia and is a dear friend of mine here in the Senate. I am pretty sure every single person here in the U.S. Senate building would say the same.

I have had the good fortune to have been office neighbors with Senator ISAKSON for several years now, and like any good neighbor, Senator ISAKSON has made it very clear that his door is always open whenever I need someone to help work out a problem, to swap stories, or to just share a laugh. Over the years, in working together and in walking together to the Senate floor, we have managed to take a lot of steps to help the families and the veterans back in our States and across the country.

I remember back when Senator ALEXANDER and I were working to replace No Child Left Behind, and I kept telling him that early childhood education just had to be a part of this. After I pushed and pushed and pushed, Senator ALEXANDER finally said to me: OK. Go talk with JOHNNY. If you two can work something out, I will accept it in the committee.

I knew right then and there that we were in business because I knew Senator ISAKSON was someone who really cared about early childhood education and who also knew how to work with people across the aisle. He understands not everyone is going to have the same ideas, but he listens to other people. He respects their views, and he works so hard to find common ground so as to pass something that can actually help our families, and that is exactly what happened there. When the Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law, it included a strong focus on early childhood education, thanks to the efforts of JOHNNY ISAKSON, and I so appreciate that.

It is also exactly what happened when I worked with Senator ISAKSON to pass support for military caregivers. Throughout that process, every time there was something that tried to derail it, Senator ISAKSON was right there, working with me to get things back on track, because he understood it was not about politics; it was about people. It was about the spouses and the family members who stepped up to make sure our servicemembers had the support they needed no matter what.

That is something that has been clear on every issue Senator ISAKSON has worked on. He has always known the people behind the words of legislation. He has always understood how personal the work is that we do here for our families back home.

That has possibly never been clearer than it was last year when we worked

on legislation in the HELP Committee to respond to the opioid epidemic. Senator ISAKSON spoke up throughout that process about the loss of his own grandson, a victim of the opioid crisis. He shared his family's story in the hope it would help other families who struggle with the disease of addiction so that they would seek and find help.

I have no doubt that, because of your work, they did.

As usual, the bill that we passed was stronger thanks to Senator ISAKSON's efforts and thanks to the perspective he brought that always kept families top of mind.

Now, of course, Senator ISAKSON hasn't just brought an important perspective to the Senate but a distinctive voice. A few years ago, we worked together to update our country's workforce training programs. The bill that we passed represented years—and I mean years—of bipartisan effort and was an important step forward for workers in our country.

I remember heading back to our offices after the bill passed. I said how excited I was to finally get this done, and Senator ISAKSON said:

Me, too. I was grinning like a mule eating Breyers.

Well, we don't have charming phrases like that in the State of Washington, so I am certainly going to miss those. Yet colorful sayings aren't the only reason Senator ISAKSON's words have always been so notable.

The real reason is, when JOHNNY ISAKSON gives you his word, you know he is going to keep it. Some people will say something to you just to get you out of the way or it is said without their really meaning it. Senator ISAKSON never did that. When he said, "I am going to get this done," you knew it would get done. Just as he kept his word to me so many times, I think it is safe to say, as he leaves the Senate, that he kept his word to the people of Georgia.

His No. 1 priority has never been to get the most coverage on Sunday talk shows or to start political fights. Instead, his legacy will be that when he came into these halls every day, he came in with the people of Georgia in his head and in his heart and that he did the absolute best he could do, each day, to make their lives better.

I am so grateful I have been able to work with him throughout our time together here in the Senate, and I know so many families are grateful, as well, for the tremendous work he has accomplished. I am going to miss having a friend like JOHNNY ISAKSON across the aisle and down the hall from me.

JOHNNY, as you head home to Dianne and your family and the State that you love so much and the State that you have done so much for, I hope, when you think back on all of the work you have done, you will still grin like a mule eating Breyers. Thank you so much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I am honored to pay tribute to JOHNNY ISAKSON. I don't know how I could top anything that has been mentioned by Senator PERDUE and, especially, Senator COONS—Senator CHRIS COONS has given us a charge to follow JOHNNY's example—and Senator GRASSLEY and now Senator MURRAY and everybody who will follow me.

I have a problem. I did all of this on Veterans Day. I tried to point out that his committee has passed 57 bills. I don't know of any other committee that has done that on behalf of the people who wear the uniform of the United States—who do so much on our behalf—and, more especially, for the VA and what that is all about. There has never been a better chairman than JOHNNY ISAKSON. I said all of that. I also said, in this body, there are those who choose ideology and partisan issues while JOHNNY is someone who works with his colleagues to pass legislation that benefits not only our Nation's veterans but every American's pocketbook and daily life.

The reason I just sort of read through that is that we have just had lunch wherein nearly every Senator was in attendance with the exception of those who are running for President, and they would have liked to have been there. By my count, there were seven standing ovations—seven. Each Member, both of the leaders, and the people who have served with JOHNNY either as a minority member or as a chairman gave their amazing tributes to this wonderful man.

Isn't it amazing that in this very difficult time in the Senate, when the bar of civility is about forehead high—you don't want to run into it here—that here is a man who has given us a way out? I have never seen that before.

JOHNNY has had, I think, 50 years of public service. I have him beat if you add in staff time and 40 years of public service—by the way, of being elected 24 to 0. I have never seen such an outpouring of affection and genuine admiration for an individual, be he a Member of the House or the Senate, as was experienced at this lunch.

It was CHRIS COONS who, during his tribute, said: Why don't we use this as a wonderful way to see if we can get past all of the trials and tribulations that we have gone through in the Senate and work together for a change? People talked about, when they had come to the Senate, that it wasn't this way. Actually, it was. Yet we look very fondly upon the past. So I hope that people can take CHRIS's challenge to heart.

It is a pretty easy deal. JOHNNY knows it by heart, for that is who he is; yet, if a person or a group of people or Senators in this body love to come down here and make speech after speech—in many cases, they are very partisan, and many of the younger Members do this—I give them that. I mean, that is their right. I remember, in the early days when I was in the

House, that I did that a couple of times and then was talked to by some of the senior Members who said: We don't do that here in order to get along, especially in the all-powerful House Agriculture Committee and now the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. We always work together because we are nonpartisan on that committee.

So you ignore that. Then, if you really do take the time to know that individual, as opposed to the individual you have seen on the floor, you will find out this is a person who is very interesting. You will find out this is a person worth knowing. You will find out that you have common ground. You will find out that you can get a vote for them in order for them to vote for the farm bill or for a veterans' program or for any other thing.

So I think that is the example that JOHNNY has set. I don't know if there is anything more I can add after seven standing ovations and obviously many, many people actually telling the truth about you. I know, JOHNNY, it must be a little much for you. Frankly, I am getting a little tired of it.

I would just like to say what I said back then when I was speaking of your tremendous success as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee when I said: "JOHNNY, thank you for your service; now thank you for your message; now thank you for being simply who you are." And I said: "Senators eventually come and Senators go."

I do not think we will see the likes of Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON for years to come. We love you. I love you. I will miss you greatly. Thank you for your fortitude and courage in fighting Parkinson's as an example to so many.

Semper fi, my dear friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, it really is a privilege to join with so many of my Senate friends in honoring the service of Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON.

I would also say to Senator ISAKSON: Isn't it nice to hear all of these wonderful things while you are alive and can be enjoying it?

I have had the privilege of serving with 391 U.S. Senators. I respect the office they hold, but some of those 391 I respect not just for the office but for who they are.

JOHNNY ISAKSON stands out among the 391 because of who he is: a lifelong Georgian through and through, born and raised in Atlanta. As we have heard from others, he went on to serve in the Georgia Air National Guard and had a wildly successful career in real estate in his home State.

It was a call to service that led him to seek opportunities to represent his fellow Georgians in the State legislature, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and, to the benefit of every single Senator in both parties, ultimately, here in the U.S. Senate.

I have seen him, as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, fight for

our Nation's servicemembers. He tried to make our system of care for our veterans more efficient, higher quality, and most importantly widely accessible.

The VA MISSION Act was a wonderful signature accomplishment of Senator ISAKSON's tenure on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. But his commitment to our nation's veterans extends far beyond healthcare. He was a key leader of the Forever GI Bill, which made GI bill benefits available to veterans at any time in their career, without expiration.

As I said, I hold in my mind a very special group of the 391 Senators I have served with. JOHNNY, you know you are in that very, very special group. I remember when I first came to the Senate in the wake of Watergate, I spent time cultivating bipartisan relationships that might help my advocacy for Vermonters and for the Nation.

I forged relationships with Senators with whom I had strong differences of opinion, but with whom I could find common ground. I valued the partnership of Members who, when they gave their word, they kept it. That is why I value Senator ISAKSON. He is a Senator in that mold whom I looked up to the most when I first came here. He reflects the best of those Senators of both parties, who, over the decades, have shaped my knowledge of this body.

He is a public servant devoted to his constituents, devoted to his country, devoted to this Chamber. The Senate needs more people like JOHNNY ISAKSON.

I know that he and Dianne will welcome the calmer days that lie ahead of them, but the Senate is going to miss him and his efforts to promote bipartisanship. I have even learned to like Georgian barbecue, which I never had before I met JOHNNY ISAKSON. I also like the good spirit he brought with him and the fact that he had Republicans and Democrats across the political spectrum sitting and enjoying each other's company, enjoying the example of JOHNNY ISAKSON.

JOHNNY, as I have told you privately, I am sad to see you leave, but I so value our friendship.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, the State motto of Georgia is "Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation." Those three words aptly describe Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON's more than four decades of service to the people of Georgia and to our Nation.

He has indeed served with wisdom, justice, and moderation, setting an example for all of us.

I would add to that description that JOHNNY is extraordinarily effective and beloved on both sides of the aisle. His life of public service is characterized not only by his extraordinary integrity, intelligence, and statesmanship but also by his kindness to everyone.

As was mentioned several times at our luncheon honoring JOHNNY today, if ever there were a poll held in the Senate to determine the most popular Senator, he would win, hands down.

It has been such a pleasure and honor to serve with this remarkable leader on issues ranging from supporting research and cures for rare pediatric diseases to improving education. JOHNNY is always thoughtful, informed, and determined to achieve a result to make a difference.

As a veteran himself, and as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, JOHNNY has led the way in reforming veterans' healthcare to make the VA more responsive to those who have served. What a wonderful legacy to leave, to know that you have been responsible for improving healthcare for those who have worn the uniform of our country.

JOHNNY, as we have heard today, has always sought common ground rather than partisan advantage. I thought it was so telling, as I listened to his farewell remarks today, that JOHNNY did not take the time to list his own legislative accomplishments, even though they are so impressive and so numerous.

Instead, he posed a challenge to us. He called on us to put aside the petty bickering that has prevented progress in America. He called upon us to work together. He reminded us that we achieve the best legislation when we sit down and negotiate with one another, when we listen with respect to each other. Those were his final words to us as a U.S. Senator.

I have had so many wonderful experiences with JOHNNY, whether it was working on legislation or having an informal dinner, but perhaps the most memorable experience occurred this past June on a bipartisan codel that JOHNNY led to France to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-day.

It was a privilege to join him in honoring the American heroes who began the liberation of Europe from Nazi tyranny.

JOHNNY, I thank you for your service but, most of all, for your friendship. You have indeed set an example of civility and bipartisanship that everyone who serves in this great institution should emulate.

I wish you and your wonderful wife Dianne, whom I enjoy so much, all the best, and I want to tell you that I will always miss your friendly greeting, your big smile, and your even bigger heart.

Thank you for all you have done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am honored to stand and join tributes to JOHNNY ISAKSON. A lawyer from Springfield once gave a pretty famous speech, and it was only 275 words long. This speech may be a little longer, but I don't believe a speech has to be eternal to be immortal. So I will try, in just a few words, to say what I feel in

my heart this moment as you are preparing to leave the U.S. Senate.

Your heart is good, and I know that because I saw something on the floor of the Senate today. Your relationship and your comments about your friend JOHN LEWIS were so genuine and so heartfelt, and the fact that you would point to a photograph taken of the two of you embracing one another as one of the signature photographs of your career in public service tells me a lot about you, JOHNNY ISAKSON.

Our lives have been led along the same path. We know how many changes there have been in America during the course of our lives and how many more we need to be even better in the future. JOHN LEWIS was one of the real leaders in our Nation who led us all to look very closely at the issue of race and the issue of civil rights. It was painful, many times unpopular. For his heroic work, he was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and he deserved it more than anyone I can think of. The fact that he counts you as a friend and comes over here for your farewell address and that you would embrace him and announce that to the United States and the world, tells me your heart is good, JOHNNY ISAKSON. That simple experience tells me that.

The other thing I know is that your word is good. It was 2 years ago when we had a debate on the floor of the Senate about a measure that means quite a bit to me, the Dream Act—the idea that young immigrants brought to this country would have a chance to become part of America's future. I worked on that legislation for 19 years, so I remember when people voted with me on the Dream Act, and you voted with me. It wasn't easy 2 years ago. Immigration was not a popular thing, but you stood up, and when I went to you afterward and thanked you, you said it was the right thing to do. I will never forget that. It told me that your word is good, and your heart is good.

And, finally, let me tell you, you have struggled with affliction, illness, and you have done most of it very openly so that people with similar challenges in life can watch as you live through this challenging experience.

All of us can remember moments here when you were willing yourself to come to this floor, to that chair, to cast your vote. I have never seen courage like that. Your determination will stick with me forever.

Now you are going to have some time for yourself with your family, Dianne, and others and have some relaxing time together, but I am going to miss you. I am going to miss you as a special colleague whose heart was right, whose word is good, and his courage was there for all of us to see.

Thanks, JOHNNY. I wish you the best.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I have had the pleasure of serving in the Senate alongside JOHNNY ISAKSON for close

to 15 years, and it has been a privilege to work and join with him on a number of legislative efforts, but, more importantly, JOHNNY is the big brother I never had, whom I aspired to be like. I will never have the speaking ability he does, but he is a brother because although we grew up across the country from each other, we shared many experiences that shaped our formative years and continue to influence our work in the Senate. We both served in the Air National Guard; we both were in business before entering politics; and we both were Sunday school teachers. Even our spouses, Dianne and Diana, have similar names. We both served in the State legislature before we came here.

Besides his speaking ability, there are many things I will never match. JOHNNY served in the Georgia legislature for 17 years, beginning in 1974. After serving as the chairman of the Georgia Board of Education for 2 years, he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1999 and then to the U.S. Senate in 2004.

Throughout his time in both the State and Federal legislatures, JOHNNY was nothing short of a pioneer in the State of Georgia. He was the first Georgian ever to be elected to both Houses of the Georgia State legislature and both Houses of Congress. He is the first Republican in Georgia to be elected to a third term in the U.S. Senate, and he is the only Republican Senator currently serving as the chair of two committees at the same time.

Now, despite these tremendous achievements, JOHNNY never lost sight of what was important and remains committed to legislation that is important to the folks in Georgia and across the country.

I remember when I was chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, there was a mine accident in West Virginia. Senator KENNEDY, who was the ranking member, and I decided to go down there to take a look, and Senator ISAKSON asked if he could come along. We went down, and we talked to the safety inspectors; we talked to the mine owners; and, most importantly, we talked to the families of the men who had been trapped in this mine. We learned the story of how coal mining had been decreasing over the years, so the people who sell the safety equipment quit inventing the safety equipment because they never had the market for it. Consequently, when coal mining started coming back up again, the equipment wasn't in place for it. We found out what was needed, but JOHNNY was the real salesman for it. He has a picture of one of the family members. He carried that picture with him everywhere, and anytime the subject of mine safety came up, he brought that picture out so everybody could see a real person—there it is—a real person whom we were trying to provide for the future and see that accidents didn't happen.

I also had the pleasure of working with JOHNNY on the Senate Finance

Committee. We passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which reformed America's Tax Code for the first time in 30 years, and gave hard-working families more choices about how their hard-earned money should be used. We were both businessowners in the private sector before entering politics and understand the burden that heavy taxes and Federal regulations can place on families and businesses. His expertise and insight was invaluable when the Committee was considering this historic piece of legislation, and instrumental in helping it become law.

Throughout his time in the Senate, JOHNNY remained committed to ending reckless Federal spending and reining in out-of-control national debt. This is an issue we cannot ignore anymore. It is a focus of mine as chairman of the Budget Committee. Senator ISAKSON has repeatedly introduced the biennial Budgeting Appropriations Act, which would take concrete, serious steps toward fixing our appropriations process. It has been a pleasure to work with a friend who understands how dire our situation is and has a commitment to finding lasting solutions that will not only secure a better future for today but also for generations to come.

JOHNNY understood that the United States owes all its servicemembers, veterans, and families a great debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice they have made. He knew our country would not be the Nation it is today without those who are willing to give so much of themselves. JOHNNY took those values to heart as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and enacted policies that significantly improved the lives of our most vulnerable veterans.

He was instrumental in the passage of the MISSION Act, which took significant steps toward reforming veterans' healthcare through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Senator ISAKSON truly understood that military service requires sacrifices not only for the servicemember but of the entire family. He ensured that those who gave so much for their country received not only the benefits they deserve but knowledge that those efforts in protecting their homeland did not go unappreciated.

Probably most important, though, is that JOHNNY is a man of faith. Despite the tremendous achievements, he never lost sight of what truly matters and never wavered in his commitment to God and to do what is right. My mother used to tell me: Do what is right, do what is best, and treat others as they wish to be treated. JOHNNY lives by these words and never forgets why he is here, which is to represent and serve the people of Georgia and the United States to the best of his ability.

I am deeply saddened that JOHNNY will be leaving us soon. His experience, knowledge, and friendship will surely be missed as you can tell from the speeches here so far today.

Diana and I send our best wishes and appreciation to JOHNNY and Dianne. We

wish them all the best as they take time to spend with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Together they have been great examples of the importance of public service. We wish them the best in whatever adventure they choose to pursue next. God bless you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I join my colleagues honoring Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON of Georgia who is retiring from this body. He is a dear friend and a great example of a great Senator.

JOHNNY and I have worked together on a number of public health priorities. I had the privilege of serving with JOHNNY on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. We forged a shared commitment to improving public health, from cancer prevention to better surveillance of neurological diseases, from strengthening regulations of indoor tanning devices to improving trauma care. JOHNNY has the privilege of representing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC headquarters in Atlanta, GA, made up of some of the greatest professionals in the healthcare field across the globe. He has always been a fearless advocate for the CDC and its staff, and the critical work being done by the CDC. He has always been a fierce advocate for all of his constituents in Georgia.

During our time on the HELP Committee, we developed a partnership while working on skin cancer prevention. We spent many years advancing legislation to require improved labeling on indoor tanning beds to better reflect their dangers. We also worked hard to make sure there was disclosure of the ingredients in sunscreens, and we were proud to see signed into law in 2014 the Sunscreen Innovation Act. It was a work JOHNNY led with such distinction.

Building on that skin cancer prevention and other preventive health measures, JOHNNY is, again, a fierce advocate for improving the health of children, particularly children with cancer. I was so proud to work with JOHNNY on the Conquer Childhood Cancer Act and later the Childhood Cancer Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research Act, the STAR Act, tremendously benefiting children who have cancer. That goes, I think, to JOHNNY keeping his commitment to doing the right thing, doing it well, and helping the most vulnerable in this country.

As mentioned, JOHNNY has been on the veterans' committee and has chaired that committee since 2015. He is a veteran himself, a veteran of the Georgia Air National Guard from 1966 to 1972. He has done significant work for veterans and, as a veteran, I thank Senator ISAKSON.

He was instrumental in passing the VA MISSION Act, critical legislation that enhances the ability of comprehensive caregivers to assist veterans. Further, after the VA MISSION

Act, he has been working so hard, and he was also able to pass—and I was proud to work with him—the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act. This is known as the Forever GI Bill because it made critical improvements to the GI bill, but most important is the law ends the 15-year limit on the use of GI bill benefits, allowing the use of those benefits throughout the lifetime of the recipient. He has been an extraordinary leader, doing so much.

I wish Senator ISAKSON, his wife Dianne, and his entire family well. Finally, what I want to say is, the true measure of an individual is not the sum of their legislative achievements, JOHNNY has had many of those; not political victories, JOHNNY has had many of those; not success in any one realm of any endeavor, public or private; the true test of an individual is the sum of their kindnesses, of what they have done for and with other people. By that measure, no one surpasses the gentleman from Georgia, and I thank him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I will bet Senator ISAKSON is a little bit surprised that his farewell address would produce such an eruption of bipartisan speeches, both in the luncheon we just had for nearly 100 Senators—almost everybody was there, Democrats and Republicans—and then the 50 or so Senators who are going to speak on the floor.

As I listened carefully to Senator ISAKSON's own remarks about bipartisanship, it kind of reminded me of the preacher on Sunday talking to the congregation saying: I am not so worried about what you do during this 1 hour during church. It is what you do between now and the next Sunday during the 1 hour in church.

I think what JOHNNY Isakson is saying is that the speeches about bipartisanship are honorable and good, but what he would like to suggest to us is that what we need to do is have a little bit better behavior, follow those speeches a little bit better between now and the next time we have a group of speeches.

JOHNNY learned a long time ago that if all you want to do is take a position or make a speech, you don't need to go to all the trouble to come to the U.S. Senate. You can get a radio program or get a street corner. If you want to come to the U.S. Senate, you are supposed to get something done.

I like to say to our constituents in Tennessee that I encourage them to look at Washington, DC, as if it were a split-screen television set. On the one side, you see where most people are watching. You see impeachment, tweets, and Supreme Court controversies. On the other side, where very few probably watch, you see Senators like JOHNNY ISAKSON working to pass an opioids bill or Senators working to pay songwriters a fair amount for what

they do or Appropriations members working to set a record, as Senator BLUNT and Senator MURRAY have, for example, in terms of funding for biomedical research. All of that is on the side of the television screen where JOHNNY ISAKSON has spent most of his 15 years.

Senator MURRAY of Washington, during her remarks, talked very accurately about what happened in 2015 when we were working on fixing No Child Left Behind. That was not easy to do. Working on legislation to try to set rules for elementary and secondary education is like being at a University of Tennessee football game, where you have 100,000 people in the stands, all of whom know what the next play ought to be, and when the coach doesn't call it, they have an opinion about that.

Well, everybody has had a little education, and so they had a lot to say about how we would fix No Child Left Behind. Finally, we just ground to a halt over preschool education and what the Federal role ought to be. Senator MURRAY felt very strongly about it. As she said, she is a former kindergarten teacher. So I stepped back and said: Why don't you and Senator ISAKSON sit down and see if you can come up with a solution, and if you do, we will take that.

They did. They presented it to us. We took it. It went in the bill, and President Obama signed the law called No Child Left Behind and called it a Christmas miracle.

The same thing happened on the Workforce Investment Act. Again, Senator MURRAY and Senator ISAKSON sat down and worked together to solve a problem that the rest of us couldn't solve.

Senator REED, who just spoke, worked with JOHNNY on sunscreen; Senator TESTER worked with JOHNNY to make it easier for veterans to get care nearer their home; Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania—all these Democrats—working with Senator ISAKSON on the most important piece of legislation to govern the sale of over-the-counter drugs, which I hope the Senate will adopt either this week or next week.

All of that was done not because these Senators gave up their principles or not because they were not good negotiators. I think JOHNNY would say Senator MURRAY is as tough a negotiator you will find in the U.S. Senate. But the difference is they also understood that we are here to get results—not just to take a position, not just to make a speech, but to see if we can get a result.

That is why Senator ISAKSON has had so many Senators praise him today, because he understands that it is hard to get here, it is hard to stay here, and while you are here, you might as well try to accomplish something for the country. JOHNNY ISAKSON knows it is hard to get here. He started in 1974. He lost his first race. Then he was on the ballot 20 times. He won 18 of those

times. He knows it is hard to stay here. A year before he ran for reelection this last time, he announced that he has Parkinson's disease.

JOHNNY ISAKSON has legislated, as has been mentioned, with his heart. When we worked on skin cancer, he talked about his skin cancer. When we worked on the Opioids Response Act, he talked about his family's loss because of an opioid overdose. And he has not been afraid to stick his neck out. There was a time during the Atlanta Olympics when one of the county commissions passed a bill saying: Gays are not welcome at the Olympics. Senator ISAKSON said—he was not a Senator then—“The Bill of Rights does not have an asterisk in it. The Bill of Rights is for everyone.”

And as his comments about JOHN LEWIS would reflect, JOHNNY ISAKSON was willing to speak out for civil rights in the South when not everybody was.

I often think that members of the U.S. Senate are generally men and women who once sat in the front row of their first grade class with their hand up, hoping that the teacher would call on them. These are not a reticent bunch of men and women, and I am sure JOHNNY ISAKSON sat on the front row of his first grade class. But I am also sure that he raised his hand and he conducted himself and caused all of his classmates to like him and admire him and elect him as their leader, because that has happened all throughout his life.

The luncheon we had today was an extraordinary event, a bipartisan occasion. I do not remember anything like it in my time here, just to honor a retiring member of the Senate. And as someone said, listening to the speeches by the handful of Democrats and Republicans who spoke, you would not have known which party JOHNNY ISAKSON came from.

Our love for JOHNNY is great, but his greater legacy is something else. What is more important is that he, by his example, has reminded us why we are here, reminded us that if you are a U.S. Senator, it is hard to get here, it is hard to stay here, and while you are here, you might as well try to accomplish something good for the country.

That is JOHNNY ISAKSON's legacy, and that is something we should be grateful for and remember.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I join my colleagues in expressing our genuine affection for JOHNNY ISAKSON. This is surely a sad day as Senator ISAKSON is leaving us as a member of the U.S. Senate.

But frankly, his retirement from the Senate has given us an opportunity to recognize how fortunate each one of us is to be a Member of the U.S. Senate and that we can get things done if we follow Senator ISAKSON's recommendations and model to work together to find common ground.

One other thing that I will always remember about Senator ISAKSON is that he has taught us that the Senate family really is family and you can form genuine friendships in the U.S. Senate and it makes no difference your party affiliation in forming those friendships.

I first got to know Senator ISAKSON when he was Congressman ISAKSON. We were both serving in the House of Representatives. The House is a much larger body, and we did not have the opportunity during those years we served together in the House to get to know each other in a personal manner. But when I was elected to the U.S. Senate in January of 2007, it was Senator ISAKSON and Dianne that reached out to Myrna and me to welcome us to the Senate family.

It was not a one-time, let's get to know each other and try to understand each other. We come from different backgrounds and different States. We have different religions. But he and Dianne, Myrna and I, really wanted to try to understand each other.

You heard Senator ISAKSON talk about finding common ground. Well, you cannot find common ground if you do not know the other person you are talking with. And Senator ISAKSON has lived by example to develop that type of genuine friendship with his colleagues, so that we can really understand what our priorities are and how we can find that common ground to get things done.

So we have enjoyed a professional relationship, but it has been a true friendship. And as Senator ISAKSON has said, the way to get things done is through understanding what bipartisanship is about. Bipartisanship works, as Senator ISAKSON has said many times, to find common ground. And Senator ISAKSON has lived by that example throughout his whole life.

You have heard he is the only Georgian to have served in the State House, the State Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives from Georgia, and the U.S. Senate from Georgia, so he has been the whole legislative route in the State of Georgia.

But by using that approach of getting to know each of us and spending the time to become friends and finding out what our priorities are all about and be able to find common ground, he has been able to accomplish an incredible record of success for the people of Georgia and our Nation.

Let me give some examples. You have heard many of them, but I am going to talk a little bit from a personal point of view. Yes, I had the distinction of serving on the Ethics Committee for a short period of time on one case, and I got to see Senator ISAKSON at work and how he defended the integrity of this institution.

As I was listening to his leadership during that deliberation, I had no idea what party he belonged to in the way that he conducted that investigation. It was done with one thing in mind: to protect the integrity of the institution

and to find common ground in order to serve the institution right. He has a deep respect for the U.S. Senate, he has a deep respect for the legislative branch of government, and he has demonstrated that, over and over again, by his leadership.

You have heard about his experiences as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Well, I had the opportunity to travel with Senator ISAKSON to Normandy to celebrate the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and I must tell you the emotion of that moment as I saw Senator ISAKSON interact with our veterans and saw that genuine way that he connected to those who have served our Nation.

You see, his presence was important, his words were important, but he has also shown his appreciation through the deeds of what he has been able to get accomplished. It has been pointed out that the Veterans' Affairs Committee under Senator ISAKSON's leadership has produced numerous bipartisan bills to help our servicepeople.

We can mention maybe the one that I am most proud that we were able to get done is dealing with the healthcare issues because the healthcare issues were not fair to our veterans. Senator ISAKSON was able to find common ground in a very difficult environment so that we could pass the appropriate legislation, so that the members of the armed services could get the healthcare and our veterans could get the healthcare that they so richly deserve.

I have had the chance to work with Senator ISAKSON on the Senate Finance Committee. We have worked together to protect pensions for workers, an area that is very important to all of us. And we helped first-time home buyers. I must tell you, Senator ISAKSON's experience as a realtor helped us get through that issue as to how we could help a recovery at the time that the economy was not doing well.

You see, Senator ISAKSON had taken his experiences as a successful independent real estate leader, president of the largest company in the southeast, to his responsibilities here in the U.S. Senate, taking that business common sense of what works in the community to what can work here in the U.S. Senate.

We have worked together on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. You have heard the examples of what we have been able to do in boosting trade and development in Africa—the Global Food Security Act, which helps starving people around the world. Very few, if any, will ever know Senator ISAKSON's name. Millions have been helped, thanks to the leadership of this incredible U.S. Senator. And you heard the personal example of the Peace Corps, how he went not only the extra mile, but the extra tens of thousands of miles to bring safety to those who volunteered in the Peace Corps.

You have heard Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY talk about the

Health Committee and work he has done on education and health. I particularly appreciate the work on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a critically important bill that, again, has Senator ISAKSON's motto throughout.

He has been a champion for the people of Georgia and the United States. I particularly appreciated Senator ISAKSON's reference to Congressman JOHN LEWIS who was on the floor during Senator ISAKSON's speech. Congressman LEWIS and I came to the U.S. Congress the same year; we were both elected to Congress in 1987. We have been friends ever since.

Senator ISAKSON is correct that Congressman LEWIS is an icon of civil rights. He says what he believes, and he calls it the way it is. He is not going to change. That is who Senator ISAKSON is as a person. And as JOHN LEWIS said about Senator ISAKSON, "He did not just talk the talk, he literally walked the walk."

Over and over again, Senator ISAKSON has been in the forefront in the civil rights for all Americans.

So to my friend—and I mean a true friend—we will miss you in the U.S. Senate. It is a sad day because we know we will not have the benefit of your wisdom as a Member of the U.S. Senate, but all of us are better off because of being given the opportunity to serve with you in the U.S. Senate.

You said in your comments that you want to come back to ring the bell when we work together to promote the values that made the U.S. Senate the greatest deliberative body in the world. Well, I am going to tell you, I believe we will reach that day sooner because of what Senator ISAKSON has done and the example he has set for all of us. I look forward to ringing that bell with my friend.

With that, I yield floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I rise to join my colleagues today in celebrating the distinguished career of our friend, JOHNNY ISAKSON. It is a great moment for all of us to talk about our shared aspirations as representatives of the American people, to recognize the role that we play—that all Americans play—in supporting our country, and to celebrate some of our successes. We have heard a lot about Senator ISAKSON's successes as a legislator and maybe to shrug off a few of our failures, but reaffirm our determination to make self-government work.

The senior Senator from Georgia did not set out to build a long, storied career in politics, I am told, or even to enter public service at all, for that matter. After graduating from the University of Georgia, he began a 40-year career in real estate. He opened a branch of Northside Realty and would later spend more than 20 years as that company's president.

JOHNNY's career in public service began in a unique way. It was by winning an election that he never entered. He made the mistake of not showing up at a meeting where he was selected as a member of a new commission, as new commission president, with the host of zoning issues that riddled the community, so that was JOHNNY's first election, as the new commission president of the zoning commission.

Of course, in that position, you could imagine he listened to his neighbors' concerns, and he would work with the commission to make improvements, but the truth is, from that point onward, JOHNNY was hooked. He went on to serve in the State house, the State senate, the U.S. House, and finally in the U.S. Senate, as the first and only Georgian to hold all four titles.

As we have heard—but it bears repeating—at each step, he never lost sight of his most important responsibility: to listen to his constituents and to work every day to make their lives just a little better.

Here in the Senate, I have had the privilege, as we all have had, of working with JOHNNY on a number of bills to empower our military, strengthen American agriculture, and improve our Nation's healthcare, but I believe his lasting legacy, the thing that perhaps is the most important to my mind that he should be very proud of—and I know he is—is our collective work together to support our Nation's veterans.

JOHNNY is a veteran himself, and he didn't take the position as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee lightly. He never stopped listening to America's veterans or fighting to ensure they have the services and the support they have earned.

One of the seminal pieces of legislation that we passed thanks to JOHNNY's leadership was the VA MISSION Act, which made significant reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs and strengthened healthcare options for all veterans. This was not an easy piece of legislation to move through the legislative process, which, as we all know, under the Constitution and under the way Congress works, essentially, the system is dead set to defeat you, and you have to find a way to navigate it in a way to get things done, which is hard work. But at every step, JOHNNY helped guide this legislation from a bill that looked good on paper to a law that has made a real difference in the lives of our veterans. He did what he does best; that is, listened, learned, negotiated, and built consensus between people who had very different views of what that law should look like. In the end, it was because of his hard work and dedication that it passed and was signed into law.

As great as his legislative impact has been, his personal impact on all of us has been immeasurable. During the time I served as the Republican whip, I had a chance to work with him most often and saw how this soft-spoken master operated.

Two years ago, we were working on tax reform, and I remember one crucial meeting at a luncheon conference we had. We wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page because we knew that failure was not an option. Our Members heard from colleagues who were subject-matter experts, who had been working on tax reform, but I think the most encouraging words we heard came from JOHNNY ISAKSON.

It reminds me of that old movie that Ronald Reagan was in where the coach, Knute Rockne, talked about an ailing player, George Gipp. He talked about winning one for the Gipper. Well, JOHNNY told us to win one for the Gipper that day, and we all left excited, inspired, and eager to accomplish our goals.

That meeting showed a lot about who JOHNNY ISAKSON is. He is rarely the loudest voice in the room, but when he speaks, people listen. He isn't the type to pat himself on the back. He isn't afraid to work behind the scenes or let his work go unnoticed in the press, and he cares about getting results and results alone. He doesn't care who gets the credit.

I believe the reason JOHNNY ISAKSON has been able to accomplish so much here in the Senate—and he has—is because of his focus on building relationships. In fact, as we have heard, you would be hard-pressed to find somebody more well-liked or well-respected by folks on both sides of the aisle.

I think JOHNNY summed it up himself pretty well recently when he said:

It's about relationships. It's about respect. It's about motivation, and it's about getting things done. So make friends. Be a friend, and know how to be a friend. It makes all the difference in the world. I am sure that is true in life in general, but it is certainly true in the U.S. Senate.

That is how our friend JOHNNY ISAKSON has gained the respect of every Senator in this Chamber. He is a straight shooter, a man of great integrity, and an honest broker. He is not just a nice guy by Washington, DC, standards; he is a nice guy by any standard.

I know our friend from Georgia is sad, perhaps, to leave this Chamber, and we are equally sad to bid him farewell. The Halls of Congress will not be the same without JOHNNY ISAKSON.

I will personally miss those Wednesday mornings together at the Senate Prayer Breakfast and catching up with my friend here on the Senate floor. I know we will all miss his great example—this humble man of great integrity, who has taught us all how to work together.

When another Georgia colleague, Saxby Chambliss, retired 5 years ago, Senator ISAKSON said Saxby would join Richard Russell, Zell Miller, and Sam Nunn and become the fourth face on the Mount Rushmore of Georgia Senators. Well, JOHNNY, I think they are going to have to make room for a fifth.

I thank our good friend JOHNNY ISAKSON for his dedicated service to his

State, to our country, and to this institution. I join all of our colleagues in wishing him well, along with his wife, Dianne, their three children, and their eight grandchildren. We wish him all the best as he retires to his beloved Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, a lot of things have been said today, and some things will be repeated, but as I sit here, it occurs to me that the mark of a truly great legislator and a great friend is how many people have an individual story about JOHNNY ISAKSON.

That helpful word at a right time, the ability to come in and solve a problem and get a piece of legislation passed or to get over a particular bump in a piece of legislation—those are the kinds of things that define a great legislator.

All of us have our own personal stories about JOHNNY ISAKSON. My first memory of JOHNNY ISAKSON is long before I met him personally. In 1992, I was hiring a new pollster who also happened to be JOHNNY ISAKSON's pollster. After I hired that pollster, Linda Duvall, she brought in somebody she likes to work with in campaigns. I was looking at some campaign commercials they put together, and there was JOHNNY ISAKSON playing basketball with a bunch of seventh grade boys.

If you can play basketball with seventh grade boys, you can do almost anything. I am going to come back to the seventh grade boys in a minute.

Linda called me a few days later and said: We have been trying to figure out which of our clients you remind us of. She said: We have decided you remind us of JOHNNY ISAKSON. So in 1999, 2 years after I got to the House, when JOHNNY ISAKSON ran for the House, I was eager to meet this guy whom Linda said I reminded her of. It didn't take me very long to find out that Linda had misjudged either me or JOHNNY and that JOHNNY set a different standard than the standard most of us are able to set, but it also encouraged me to want to spend more time with him.

When he got there, I had been there 2 years. I was the chief deputy whip, and our 20 years of close friendship began then. Then I became the whip, and I asked JOHNNY to become one of the deputy whips.

JOHNNY had the worst whip card in the House. All the people he whipped were not the worse people to whip, but he definitely had more than his share of the hardest people to whip. Whoever was the most impatient with everybody else somehow couldn't resist becoming patient with JOHNNY.

Beyond that, JOHNNY somehow was always able to take the time needed. I said that JOHNNY was one of the three whips we had in the House who could take however much time it took to explain an issue to whomever he was explaining it to, in whatever level of information they needed to hear it in. He

could be very simple and basic in his explanation if that is all that was necessary, and he could be incredibly detailed if he had that unique Member who wanted to know everything before they made up their mind. But he was always ready to do what had to be done.

Back to the seventh grade boys. If you could teach a Sunday school class for 30 years that has one group of seventh grade boys after another going through that Sunday school class, you are truly ready to have the patience to be in the U.S. Congress, to be a Member of the House, and then to be a Member of the Senate and to let that become part of your extended family.

JOHNNY has such a great family who is his own family. He and Dianne have a great partnership. Dianne leads in community projects. When there is a First Lady's lunch, Dianne always does the artwork for the First Lady's lunch.

One of things you benefit from on occasion in the Congress is the ability to travel together. That has been mentioned here, some of the travels that JOHNNY has headed—the D-Day operations and other things. Not long after JOHNNY came to Congress, he, Dianne, and I had a chance to travel together. You could just tell their enjoyment in each other and their enjoyment in the people they were getting to know better.

JOHNNY's work at the VA is incredible—the VA MISSION Act, the determination that veterans would have more choices in where they get their healthcare, realizing that young veterans didn't always look at healthcare decisions the same way older veterans did, realizing that people wanted more choices than they had before, realizing that we could make that happen, and also realizing there was a standard of care that we could insist on. JOHNNY passed the legislation that allowed us to do that.

His advocacy for the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta—we have our annual discussion. I chair that committee now, and we have our annual, very subtle but, for me, almost irresistible discussion—somehow the Centers for Disease Control doesn't quite yet have everything they need, and we can do better.

Then there is the Ethics Committee. When JOHNNY announced he was going to retire, I happened to be speaking to our conference at lunch that day, to the Republicans in the Senate, and I said: The bad news is that JOHNNY is leaving. The really bad news is that someone else has to be the chairman of the Ethics Committee.

If there is a job in the Senate that you don't want, it is the Ethics Committee job. If there is a job in the Senate that you need to have exactly the right person in, it is the Ethics Committee job. Somebody has to be chairman.

In one of my favorite books, "To Kill A Mockingbird," the neighbor across the street, Miss Maude, is explaining to

Scout why her father is having to do what her father is doing. I think the best I can remember that quote is that she says someone has to do the jobs that have to be done and that nobody wants to do. JOHNNY ISAKSON has always been willing to do the jobs that have to be done, and he does them in a way that you wonder why everybody doesn't want to do them because he makes them look like they are a lot easier than they are.

We will miss you here, JOHNNY, but we are not going to miss your continued friendship. We all are already planning on how we can come up with a reason to go to Atlanta. For me, it is to check in on the CDC. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your friendship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues on the floor and pay tribute to my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, and to congratulate him on his retirement after 20 years in Congress, including the past 15 years in the U.S. Senate.

We worked together on key provisions of the SECURE Act to improve retirement planning for millions of Americans.

I would be remiss if I did not mention all the work he has done on behalf of our veterans. His work on the VA MISSION Act is important to so many people who have served our country.

We also worked together on the Finance Committee for the last 6 years on important issues like affordable housing. There has been no better advocate for the affordable housing tax credit—helping to secure billions of dollars in funding for affordable housing nationwide—than Senator ISAKSON. It is true that my colleague Senator Hatch and I had a bill that helped to increase the affordable housing tax credit, but I guarantee you, there is nobody who understood it better, could explain it better, and could bring more colleagues to join us in support of it than JOHNNY ISAKSON.

I was amazed at a debate in the Finance Committee. Some of our colleagues weren't quite sure of their support, but by the time JOHNNY ISAKSON was done speaking, I think they had to backtrack their opposition and wonder if they would ever take him on in a debate again. I thank him for that because that is an issue that has complexity to it, but at its heart and soul, it is really about providing affordable housing to our fellow human beings, and JOHNNY knew that. I so appreciated his joining us this year again as we fight to get more affordable housing.

We also have worked together on very small things with our colleague Senator FISCHER to make sure that military servicemembers didn't get charged cancellation fees for TV and internet services when they were deployed and to work on diverse issues like mass timber innovation and funding for community health centers.

One thing is clear, though, when you work on all of these issues with JOHNNY ISAKSON, you realize that not only is there great integrity behind the purpose of what he focuses on and great intelligence that he brings to the debate, but there also is just a general kindness to his personality.

You know, sometimes, I think today we have lost that kindness and ability to work across the aisle. When you read stories about our past predecessors, whether it was in the time of Scoop Jackson and Warren Magnuson, I keep thinking: Did they get along because they had to stay here? They couldn't travel all the way back to the Pacific Northwest. So they bonded together. Many of them lived in rooming houses together and did all sorts of activities and got to know each other. Our colleagues lament many times: Where has this Senate gone?

Well, I think today we saw at lunch and have seen many times over the hospitality of barbecue with JOHNNY ISAKSON that you don't have to be with each other on weekends and you don't have to stay here to get to know people. The ability to communicate just a little bit of niceness, a little bit of civility, a little bit of "I will work with you on this important issue" is what it takes to make the Senate work.

JOHNNY, I just want to congratulate you for 20 years of service in the U.S. Senate, but, more importantly, for reminding us what the Senate should be about and that just a few words and a few examples and a common attitude can really bring us together, and we mount an effort to surpass the biggest obstacles that we face because of our regions and our ideologies. That is what we have to get back to.

So, as you go home to Georgia, I hope that you will take our great gratitude for reminding us of all of that, and I know that you will always have a smile, a quick wit about you, something nice to say, and we will always remember you as the Senator who not only got things done but who made us feel like the Senate again. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, when I learned that JOHNNY ISAKSON would be retiring at the end of the year, I was saddened. I served with JOHNNY for a long time, not just here in the Senate, where we were both freshmen Members in 2005, but in the House of Representatives as well, and I have been honored to call him my friend.

It is really hard for me to imagine Congress without JOHNNY. He is, hands down, as I have said, the nicest person ever to serve in the U.S. Senate. He is a model of decency and graciousness and the kind of person who can fight hard every day for the principles that he believes in without ever developing any rancor toward his political opponents.

He is not just kind and decent. He is also a tremendously effective legislator. He is deeply knowledgeable on a

whole range of issues, and he possesses the gift of being able to explain complicated subjects in a very clear way. He gets things done. He doesn't stand around talking about things or playing to the cameras. He just rolls up his sleeves and gets to work, and he makes things happen.

If there was a decency index and we were all rated on that decency index on a scale of 1 to 10, JOHNNY would be the perfect 10. Anybody who knows JOHNNY knows that he has a real passion for people and he has a real passion for veterans.

I had the opportunity to work with JOHNNY on a couple of important issues. We served together on the Senate Finance Committee. Tax reform was something to which he brought tremendous knowledge and experience and know-how. He talked with great understanding about the complicated issues that we had to deal with when it came to reforming our Tax Code. His experience was invaluable as we did something that hadn't been done in over 30 years and reformed an outdated, archaic Tax Code that was keeping us noncompetitive in the global marketplace.

In 2015, he became the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and he spent the past 5 years working tirelessly to increase accountability at the VA, to improve healthcare for veterans, and to strengthen veterans' benefits. Over the course of 2017 and 2018, the Veterans' Affairs Committee, under JOHNNY, passed 25 pieces of legislation, all of which were signed into law. One of those pieces of legislation was the VA MISSION Act, which was a bill that made significant reforms to the healthcare delivery system for veterans to ensure that veterans have access to the care that they need when they need it.

My wife Kimberley and I have traveled with JOHNNY and Dianne a number of times over the years. One trip that will forever stand out for me is a trip we took led by Senator BURR to a number of World War I and World War II cemeteries in Europe—the Normandy American Cemetery, the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, and the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery, as well as several others. We walked in battlefields where American soldiers fought and bled, and we visited the graves of young Americans who died on those fields.

It was a profoundly moving trip, especially because we were able to visit the graves of soldiers from our home States of South Dakota and Georgia. While the trip would have been meaningful enough on its own, it was doubly so because JOHNNY cares so much about those issues. It meant so much to him to visit the places where American soldiers had served and died, to remember their sacrifices, and to honor their memory.

I am going to miss working with JOHNNY. His retirement is a real loss for the institution, and I am not the

only Senator who will miss his expertise and dedication, as well as his unfailing graciousness and good humor. The Senate is going to be a poorer place without him.

There have been a lot of tributes to JOHNNY since he announced his decision to retire, and one that I came across that I thought really captured JOHNNY was published in a Georgia magazine. The author of the piece is a political science professor at Kennesaw State University, and this is what he said:

As a political science professor and an administrator, I'm often asked by students if good people can serve in government and keep their integrity. Johnny Isakson is always the first example I come to. It's very often a shocking revelation to most people—that good people can, and often do, serve in government for long periods, fight hard for what they believe in, and remain true to themselves and their principles. And they don't have to sell their souls to do it. It's a great lesson, really.

I remember being down in Georgia with JOHNNY a few years ago on the weekend of the Florida-Georgia football game, and we were at one of the celebrations. I remember being struck by how well known and how well liked JOHNNY was among the college students who were there. Nowadays, we often hear about young people being disillusioned with politics, but I have to tell you that these students weren't disillusioned with JOHNNY ISAKSON. I think that is because they recognized JOHNNY's character. They knew that JOHNNY was somebody who was truly, genuinely committed to making life better for the people of the State and for the people of this country. Here was somebody who had gotten into public service because he genuinely wanted to serve.

Interestingly enough, on that trip we were near the coast of Florida or Georgia, and I had to get back to Macon, GA. My daughter was competing in a cross-country meet there. JOHNNY was kind enough—he was flying back to Atlanta—to take me on that plane and to drop me at Macon, GA, so I could watch my daughter compete.

Interestingly enough, when he got on the plane to go back from Macon to Atlanta, they had engine trouble. They had to make an emergency landing. JOHNNY ended up, I think, having to drive or have somebody—a taxi or somebody—drive him 100 miles from Macon up to Atlanta and his home, but that is the kind of person that he is. He thought it was important for me to be there and to see my daughter compete, and he was always willing to go out of his way to make it possible for somebody to be able to participate in an event like that—a family event.

That is what I think about when I think about his retirement. I am sad about his retirement, but I am happy that he is going to have a chance to spend more time with Dianne, with his family, his children, and his grandchildren. I have been lucky enough to get to know Dianne, as well as JOHNNY,

over the years, and they are just the same—the warmest, kindest, most gracious, most genuine people you will ever meet.

I know that after years of sharing him with the people of Georgia and the American people, Dianne and the rest of the family will enjoy having JOHNNY to themselves for awhile. After all, somebody has to babysit those eight beautiful grandchildren.

The Senate is losing one of its finest Members, but he has more than earned his retirement. I wish him and Dianne the very best in retirement. I pray for God's blessing upon him, and let him know how much we are going to miss him.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Democrat, Republican, and Independent colleagues alike on the floor today. I understand there is an overflow that is going to be back on the floor tomorrow to say the truth and tell the truth about JOHNNY ISAKSON.

One of my friends likes to say: "Flattery won't hurt you if you don't inhale." JOHNNY, I know a lot of nice things have been said about you today, and more tomorrow, and probably for the rest of the year. So I would just say: Don't inhale too deeply, and you will be just fine.

I just want to follow up on what several of our colleagues have said. A number of them talked about how kind JOHNNY is. He is one of those people who will say hello to the folks who are custodians, the people who may run the elevators, the folks who are the security police here, and he even says nice things to the pages. Can you imagine that? That is true. He is about as kind as anybody you would ever want to meet, and it is not just occasionally. It is like that all the time.

He is also smart. I haven't heard anybody say he is smart. They may have. I may have missed it. I want to say, for the record, that he is one smart fellow—as my mother used to say, smart as a whip. He grasps complex issues, understands them, and is really good at explaining them so that even people like me can usually understand them.

I first met JOHNNY when he was newly elected to the Senate, and we had just established something called orientation. We didn't have orientation for a number of years here. George Voinovich from Ohio, LAMAR ALEXANDER from Tennessee, and Mark Pryor from Arkansas, and I put together a 3-day deal. We called it orientation for new Senators and spouses, and I remember that JOHNNY, I think, was in the first class that came through.

I had been Governor of Delaware for 8 years. I got here in the beginning of 2001. One of the Governors I served with was a Governor from Georgia named Zell Miller. Zell Miller was elected and served two 4-year terms. I think he served two 4-year terms. One of the

people who ran against him was JOHN-
NY ISAKSON. When Senator-elect JOHN-
NY ISAKSON came through orientation
right after he had been elected, I asked
him if he knew Governor Zell Miller. I
thought that they had a connection,
and, sure enough, they did because
they had run against each other in an
earlier year.

There is a saying that some of you
have heard. That saying is something
like this: Just because somebody is
your opponent, doesn't mean they have
to be your enemy.

I don't think I have ever heard any-
body say such nice things, kind things,
and generous things about their oppo-
nent in an earlier election where he
lost and Zell Miller won. That is proof
that your opponent does not have to be
your enemy. For us around here, this
day and age, that is a lesson that we
would do well to take to heart.

One of the other things I want to say
is that I want to share a story I was re-
minded of today by one of my staff
members.

My office is in the Hart Building, and
I have been in the same office for, gosh,
19 years now. My staff doesn't want to
leave. They want to stay there. They
like it. As to what makes them happy,
you know the old saying: Happy wife,
happy life. Well, happy staff, happy
life, too—they want to stay in the of-
fice, and that is where we have stayed.

Once, a number of years ago, when
JOHNNY was relatively new in the Sen-
ate, he came to a meeting on the same
floor, and he came to the wrong Senate
office. He came to my office by mis-
take. He meant to go to the office next
door where David Vitter was, a Senator
from Louisiana. His office was next
door to ours. He came into the en-
trance—the foyer, if you will—of our
office and met a couple of young people
at the front desk there. He came in and
said that he was there to see the Sen-
ator. They were looking at their sched-
ules, trying to figure out what was
going on. They didn't know quite what
to tell him. He was there to see the
Senator, and we had a wonderful gal at
the front desk who was a little bit shy.
He very kindly engaged her in a con-
versation and asked her: Well, tell me
about you.

She offered some things, and when
she stopped, he would just very gently
pull out her story and make her feel
special. There was another fellow at a
desk a short distance away in that
foyer, that entrance to our office. He
was a young man named David, and he
would say to Senator ISAKSON, "Sen-
ator"—and JOHNNY would interrupt
him and keep talking to this young gal
on our staff. JOHNNY would say: I am
not in a rush. Take your time.

David just couldn't get in a word
edgewise. This went on for several min-
utes, and, finally, the young man inter-
rupted, and he said to Senator ISAKSON:
Senator, I think you are in the wrong
office. Who do you think you are here
to see?

He said: Well, David Vitter.

His office was next door to ours at
the time.

He said: You are in Senator TOM CAR-
PER's office.

JOHNNY, without missing a beat, said:
Well, I will just meet with TOM.

And he picked up his stuff, and he
walked into my office. I am sure those
young people hadn't seen anything
quite like that.

We welcomed him warmly. He could
walk into any office, and he would be
welcomed warmly, whether he had an
appointment or not.

Recently, I served with JOHNNY on
the Finance Committee. The fellow
standing behind him is Senator
PORTMAN. We served there together.
Senator BOOZMAN, who is sitting down
next to JOHNNY right now—he and I
serve on the Committee on Environ-
ment Public Works. In Environment
and Public Works, we had a witness not
long ago who was here for a confirma-
tion hearing, a fellow named Rob Wal-
lace. I know Senator BOOZMAN would
remember him. He had been nominated
to be a very senior guy in the Depart-
ment of Commerce. The job he was
nominated for was to be in charge of
National Parks and in charge of Fish
and Wildlife. It was a big deal. In his
testimony, he talked to us. He used to
work for Senator Malcolm Wallop from
Wyoming. He had a distinguished ca-
reer. During his testimony, he said
words I will never forget. He said: Bi-
partisan solutions are lasting solu-
tions.

Think about that.

He said: Bipartisan solutions are
lasting solutions.

JOHNNY ISAKSON is as good at
crafting bipartisan solutions as any-
body I have had the privilege of work-
ing with here. Again, he is a great role
model for us.

I want to close with just a few words
on leadership. In my experience, having
been privileged to be in the Navy for
many years—I served in some wars and
in peace and had the chance to be Gov-
ernor and Senator, Congressman, and
treasurer of my State—I have seen a
lot of leaders. I have seen great leaders.
I have seen some lousy leaders. I expect
that is true of all of us. I have probably
learned more from the not-so-good
leaders as I have learned from the su-
perb leaders. In my experience, leaders
are humble, not haughty. Leaders have
the heart of a servant. They realize
that our job is to serve, not be served.
Leaders have the courage to stay out of
step when everybody else is marching
to the wrong tune. Leaders build
bridges, not walls. They unite, not di-
vide. Leaders surround themselves with
the best team they can find, and when
the team does well, the leader gives the
credit to the team. When the team falls
short, the leader takes the blame. Leaders
don't build themselves up by
tearing others down. In fact, it is just
the opposite. Leaders are aspirational.

There is a French philosopher named
Camus, I think—Albert Camus. He
would say: Leaders are purveyors of

hope. They appeal to our better angels.
Leaders are interested in doing what is
right, not what is easy—not what is ex-
pedient, but what is right. Leaders em-
brace the golden rule: Treat other peo-
ple the way they want to be treated.
Leaders focus on excellence in every-
thing they do. They essentially say: If
it isn't perfect, let's just make it bet-
ter.

Finally, when the really great lead-
ers know they are right, when they are
sure they are right, they don't give up.
They just don't give up. We need lead-
ership here in this building as much as
at any time I can remember. We need
leadership in this Capital City of ours,
and we need leadership in all kinds of
roles across our country. I just want to
say about the leadership qualities I
just described that you can find some
of them in all of us, but in JOHNNY
ISAKSON, you find all of those qualities.

There is a saying: "I would rather see
a sermon than hear one." In JOHNNY
ISAKSON, we see the sermon.

JOHNNY, again, my friend, God bless
you, Dianne, your family, and we will
hold you close to our hearts. We will
always be thankful for you. Thanks-
giving, year-round, forever. God bless
you. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Sen-
ator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, we
have too many people on the floor here
to pay tribute to JOHNNY ISAKSON, and
we all have to go quick. I will be back
again, talking about my buddy from
Georgia.

Let me make a couple of points. One
is—and this is a little straight talk be-
cause I heard so many great things
about him—we ought to know some-
thing else about him, which is, yes, he
is a gentleman; yes, he is a nice guy;
but he has the velvet hammer, as I
have said. That velvet hammer has
driven a lot of nails in around here and
ended up with a lot of great bipartisan
legislation. It is not just because he is
a nice guy. It is because he is intense,
and he is committed and determined
for the people of Georgia as an inde-
pendent voice for his constituents and
for the great country that he loves so
much.

Let me give you one example. We are
working on energy efficiency legisla-
tion right now. I work with JOHNNY on
a number of different legislative
projects. In this particular case, he is
the author of something called the
SAVE Act. The SAVE Act makes good
sense policywise. It helps people reduce
their energy costs and saves them
money on mortgages, but it is not sup-
ported by everybody around here.
There are some powerful groups
against it.

Once again, you will see in the
Portman-Shaheen energy efficiency
package, the SAVE Act is in there, and
it is in there for one reason and one
reason only, and that is because of the
persistence of JOHNNY ISAKSON, a real
estate guy who gets it.

To my friend, I have heard so many
great things about you over the last

several hours. I agree with just about all of them—almost.

To Dianne, who is by far the better half here and such a dear friend of Jane's and mine, we love you. We are going to miss you. We will stay in touch, but we are going to watch you in your retirement as that velvet hammer continues to nail things that are good for your beloved Georgia and for the United States of America.

Thank you, JOHNNY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, keeping with the brevity that we have to exercise now because I know the guest of honor may have to leave the floor and others are going to speak before he leaves, I will write a longer statement for the RECORD with detail.

JOHNNY, it goes without saying—we keep saying it over and over again—how much we are going to miss you, not only because of the bipartisan work you did and the legislative achievements but because of who you are—your decency, your integrity, your warmth even in the heat of a battle. We are grateful for all of that.

I will just make brief mention of a few issues. I will start with the Global Food Security Act, which was started here in the Senate by Senator Dick Lugar way back in the period even before 2009 when I began to work with him. JOHNNY made it possible for us to finally get that passed. What that act does is put into law to authorize into the future the Feed the Future program, one of the most successful programs the U.S. Government ever undertook. Millions of children have been saved from chronic hunger or stunting, where they literally cannot grow because they haven't been able to get enough to eat. That program will now be perpetuated over time because of the work of JOHNNY ISAKSON. I will add more numbers to that in my written version.

Here is how Feed the Future is described in their website: It is a program that works with “partner countries to develop their agricultural sectors and break the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger” the world over for the countries that are participating. I will start with that.

Second—I will be very brief on the next three—is the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education, the so-called CHGME Program that funds residency programs at children's hospitals. JOHNNY knows about this well in the State of Georgia, and three of those hospitals are in my home State of Pennsylvania. It would not be possible for that program to continue without the good work of JOHNNY ISAKSON.

Third, disabilities. We don't have time for all of it today, but I know that JOHNNY and his wife Dianne have worked with students with disabilities for years, and JOHNNY has been a partner dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities. I will go into that in more detail in my written version.

Finally, the last one I will mention for purposes of today, JOHNNY, is the work that you did on the pediatric priority review vouchers program, which makes it possible for drug companies to develop new drugs for rare pediatric diseases.

JOHNNY, you and I are working these days, in these hours, to get the Over-the-Counter Monograph Reform done. Thank you for the work you have done on that.

For these and for so many other reasons, I will conclude with this, JOHNNY. There is an inscription on one of the State government buildings I worked in at Harrisburg, PA, for 10 years. It is a beautiful inscription of public service that applies to you personally and your integrity and to the work you have done: “All public service is a trust, given in faith and accepted in honor.”

You have always accepted that trust the people of Georgia gave you. You have returned that with honor.

We are grateful to be your friend. Congratulations on your work. God bless you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. In the interest of time, I am going to put my remarks in the RECORD, but I do want to take just a moment to thank JOHNNY for his friendship. I won a special election to the House of Representatives and was assigned to the Transportation Committee. Literally, JOHNNY was one of the first people I met there. He was an important person on Transportation.

I was the 435th Member of the House, and he was so very, very kind. He helped me get acclimated.

His wife Dianne was just wonderful to my wife Cathy when I came to the Senate. Nobody was any nicer, again, helping her to get acclimated to the ways of the Senate, and, certainly, this is a family affair. We appreciate that so very much.

I had the honor of serving on the Veterans Affairs Committee. The reality is, we got a bunch done under your leadership. We appreciate that so very much.

Proverbs tells us that a good man is worth more than silver and gold, and that is really what this has all been about this afternoon, just hearing Member after Member express the good name of JOHNNY ISAKSON. We appreciate you, JOHNNY. We truly will miss you more than you know.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I will submit my full comments for the RECORD as others have done. But you can tell, as we continue to go here—and we know that we have a hard stop on the vote at 5 p.m.—Senators just want to be here to express their admiration and their appreciation and their gratitude to Senator ISAKSON. We wish JOHNNY and Dianne the very best in their next endeavors.

It is hard to see Senator ISAKSON leave this body. He has added so much in an amazing and wonderful way for the time that he has been here. It is not just that, hands down, if we were going to vote as to the Senator who everybody appreciates the most, hands down, he would win that in a bipartisan vote. There is not a question about it.

At the same time, each of the Senators has remarked on something substantive and important that JOHNNY has done and they have had a chance to be part of—legislation that affects this Nation and the great people of this country in a real and meaningful way. I want to talk about that for just a minute, and that is the VA MISSION Act.

As the chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, there is no question that Senator ISAKSON led the effort on behalf of our veterans in so many instances. He passed legislation and did many things to help our veterans—things that will help our veterans, not only today and tomorrow but for years and years to come. Included among those accomplishments is the VA MISSION Act. I had the opportunity to work with him on making sure we could include language in that legislation that would not only make sure that veterans have access to healthcare, medical care—both institutional VA care and from private providers—but also that they could access those VA benefits for long-term care and for home- and community-based care. It is legislation that, thanks to JOHNNY, we were able to include in the VA MISSION Act.

So it is not just about medical care for those veterans. It is about making sure that they can use VA reimbursement to go into nursing homes in their communities if they need nursing home care or if they need home- or community-based care. Again, it is not only the medical care but the long-term care for our veterans that will make the difference for them today, tomorrow, and in the years and years to come. This is the kind of legacy that Senator ISAKSON leaves.

To JOHNNY and Dianne, we say thank you, and God bless you. We wish you the very best.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators GRAMHAM, TESTER, and MURRAY be allowed to complete their brief remarks before the vote previously scheduled for 5 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I will be brief.

Every one of us can stand here and talk on the floor about JOHNNY ISAKSON ad nauseam.

By the way, I have been watching this on TV, and I appreciate your stick-to-itiveness in your being on the

floor, listening to this. You are a great man.

The fact doesn't escape me that we are standing in the U.S. Senate, a body that has seen so many great Senators over the years. We can go back and have a history lesson on Clay, Calhoun, La Follette, MURRAY, Wheeler, Mansfield, Metcalf, and all of these folks. The truth, though, is the reason we are all here, talking today, is that JOHNNY ISAKSON is a very special guy, and he is special for a number of reasons.

He treats everybody with respect, and because of that, everybody treats him with respect. His word is his bond, and his handshake is worth something in this body, which is not something you see all the time. JOHNNY is somebody who can get things done. I speak from experience in being the ranking member on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He has shepherded through many, many very difficult pieces of legislation, and he has done it because he has developed trust.

If we ever get in a foxhole together, JOHNNY, I will have your back. Do you know what? I know you will have mine because you have exhibited it before. It has been such an incredible pleasure to be in this body, serving with you. You are one of those guys who doesn't have to be disagreeable, but if you disagree, you can disagree. Thank you very much. It has been a pleasure to serve with you.

Godspeed to my friend JOHNNY ISAKSON.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. JOHNNY, at some point, this has to be painful for you. Very few people get together at their own funerals.

What we are trying to say is that we like you. You are a breath of fresh air in a body that has a hard time agreeing on much. I have known you since I got into politics. I served in the House with you, and I have served in the Senate with you. I have traveled the world with you. I have played golf with you. I have had dinner with you. I have gotten to know your family.

To sum it up, when it comes to being a U.S. Senator, JOHNNY ISAKSON has become the gold standard.

God bless you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF SARAH E. PITLYK

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to turn to the nomination that is pending before the Senate and that we will be voting on as soon as I finish my remarks.

I have come to the floor many times to speak in opposition to President Trump's ideologically driven, deeply partisan judicial nominees and to express my frustration that under Republican leadership, the Senate is rubberstamping one lifetime judicial nomination after another. The Republican leaders have been willing to

rubberstamp these nominees whose qualifications are in doubt. A record number have been deemed unqualified by the American Bar Association, whose impartiality is virtually nonexistent and who are, without a doubt, chosen for their commitment to upholding President Trump's agenda rather than to upholding our Nation's laws.

These nominees have sided with shady for-profit colleges rather than with student loan borrowers—just like the President's Department of Education. President Trump's nominees have followed his footsteps on healthcare, ruling and speaking against expanding affordable healthcare to more families. They have allowed major corporations to skirt rules that are intended to help address the urgent threat of the climate crisis.

Perhaps most consistently, President Trump's judicial nominees have adhered to rigid, backward, deeply harmful ideology when it comes to reproductive healthcare. One called *Roe v. Wade* "radical abortion rights." Another pushed pseudoscience and claimed that birth control can lead to suicide.

The vast majority of women and men in our country would agree that these are not positions you would want a supposedly impartial judge to espouse. Unfortunately, what I have just laid out pales in comparison to what we know of the judicial nominee we are considering today, Sarah Pitlyk.

Ms. Pitlyk, whom the American Bar Association rated as "unqualified," has actively worked to erode women's access to birth control and abortion. She even defended legislation that would have allowed landlords to have evicted their tenants and employers to have fired their employees simply because they had used birth control or had gotten pregnant before they had gotten married.

These views are already wildly invasive and disqualifying. Unfortunately, there is more.

Ms. Pitlyk has also not only expressed her personal bias against assisted reproductive technology, or ART, but she has actually authored briefs that have argued that surrogacy and ART have "grave effects on society."

I am very proud to have personally worked to expand access to in vitro fertilization, or IVF, especially for our military families who struggle with infertility, and I firmly believe all families who face this painful challenge should have our strong support.

My good friend the junior Senator from Illinois, who has spoken powerfully about her struggles with fertility and how IVF gave her the opportunity to realize her dream of motherhood, wrote in a letter to our colleagues: "As a mother who struggled with infertility for years and required IVF to start my family, I would be one of the many Americans who could never enter Ms. Pitlyk's courtroom with any reasonable expectation that my case would be

adjudicated in a fair and impartial manner."

Given Ms. Pitlyk's record of supporting cruel policies that would punish women for accessing basic healthcare like birth control, her support for banning women from exercising their right to abortion, as well as her personal bias and professional actions against starting a family via assisted reproductive technology, I believe a vote in favor of Ms. Pitlyk's nomination would be indefensible.

That is why I ask my colleagues on the Republican side to stop and really consider this vote. If confirmed, Ms. Pitlyk's tenure on the courts will last for decades—well beyond President Trump's last day in the White House. That would mean, for years and years, decisions would be made that we can only expect would harm women and families, restrict women's access to reproductive healthcare, and even potentially jeopardize their ability to become parents. In other words, a vote for Ms. Pitlyk now will keep hurting people long after the President's name-calling on Twitter doesn't drive headlines anymore.

I urge all of my colleagues to do the right thing for women and families today and for years to come and join me in opposing this nomination on the floor.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sarah E. Pitlyk, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, John Thune, Steve Daines, Thom Tillis, Kevin Cramer, Chuck Grassley, Tom Cotton, Rick Scott, Cindy Hyde-Smith, David Perdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sarah E. Pitlyk, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted "nay."