

From daily conversations to committee business, to the most dramatic moments on the floor, whether in the minority or the majority, LAMAR has taken pains to treat his colleagues exactly as he would hope to be treated in their shoes. He has worked to build consensus in a consensus-based body. He has cherished and defended the Senate the Framers designed.

It is no exaggeration to say LAMAR ALEXANDER is one of the most brilliant people I have met in my life. His mind is a steel trap. I understand he likes to keep his staff experts locked around a conference table for long sessions, turning a complex issue over and over until they have arrived at the best path forward for the country and the most precise, concise way to communicate it. He has a mastery of policy, mastery of the English language, and I can't forget to mention my friend's good cheer.

LAMAR really does live by the motto he inherited from his good friend and fellow Tennessean, the late author Alex Haley: "Find the good and praise it."

I myself have leaned on LAMAR's wisdom for many years, but I think I have learned just as much from his optimism, his can-do spirit, and his ability to look on the bright side and then discern how some more hard work can make it brighter still. So I am going to miss our regular dinners, even with our weeknight scheduling and official one-drink limit. Like I said, we weren't exactly party animals in our twenties either.

But here is something else that never changes: How reassuring it is to be weighing a thorny question and see LAMAR ALEXANDER seated across the table. You know, the Senate can be all-consuming. It is not only our colleagues but their spouses and loved ones who all get folded into the extended family around here. So I am extremely grateful that it turned out that MITCH MCCONNELL was not the most important young person LAMAR ALEXANDER met during his stint in Washington—not by a mile.

Honey Alexander is a remarkable woman. She is a force of nature and incredible partner for LAMAR. She raised a young family in the Governor's mansion for 8 years. She charmed and impressed more voters during LAMAR's various campaigns than LAMAR himself, and she has devoted her own career to public health and philanthropy. Their shared love and mutual respect inspire everyone. Honey is just about the finest "in-law" the U.S. Senate could have ever had, so Elaine and I are grateful to call her our friend as well.

So as much as I am dreading life in the Senate without my brilliant friend, even I can't begrudge him the silver lining. The most distinguished public servant has more than earned the right to spend more days fly-fishing or walking trails in the Smokies, more mornings waking up on Blackberry Farm, and a much larger share of his time with Honey and their family.

About 6 years ago, it fell to LAMAR to eulogize his friend and mentor, Howard Baker. Here on the floor, he quoted another Senator who had said that when it came to the Senate, there was Howard Baker, and then there was the rest of us.

Well, my friend, for 18 years, there has been LAMAR ALEXANDER, and there has been the rest of us. So I am sorry that in a few more weeks, it will be just the rest of us left. But you are leaving this body and those of us in it and the Nation it exists to serve stronger and better because you were here.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay before the Senate the House message accompanying H.R. 6395.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 6395) entitled "An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes," do pass with an amendment.

COMPOUND MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, agree to the request of the House for conference, and appoint the following conferees on the part of the Senate, the list of whom is at the desk.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES

The following conferees were appointed:

James M. Inhofe, of Oklahoma, Chairman; Roger F. Wicker, of Mississippi; Deb Fischer, of Nebraska; Tom Cotton, of Arkansas; Mike Rounds, of South Dakota; Joni Ernst, of Iowa; Thom Tillis, of North Carolina; Dan Sullivan, of Alaska; David Perdue, of Georgia; Kevin Cramer, of North Dakota; John Thune, of South Dakota; Rick Scott, of Florida; Marsha Blackburn, of Tennessee; Josh Hawley, of Missouri; Jack Reed, of Rhode Island; Jeanne Shaheen, of New Hampshire; Kirsten E. Gillibrand, of New York; Richard Blumenthal, of Connecticut; Mazie Hirono, of Hawaii; Tim Kaine, of Virginia; Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine; Martin Heinrich, of New Mexico; Elizabeth Warren, of Massachusetts; Gary C. Peters, of Michigan; Joe Manchin III, of West Virginia; Tammy Duckworth, of Illinois; Doug Jones, of Alabama.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO LAMAR ALEXANDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me add my words of fond farewell to

my friend LAMAR ALEXANDER and the touching moment between the leader and the senior Senator from Tennessee, which is moving to all of us.

Now, Senator ALEXANDER and I have not always agreed, but what an amazing and capable legislator and true statesman he has been. He has been in the middle of things for much of his 18 years in the Senate. That is because he is not some ideologue who stood alone in his corner. It is because he is someone who has been always willing and insistent on reaching across the aisle, on hearing another Senator's perspective, and on searching for common ground, however narrow it may be. He searches to do the right thing.

I remember when we did the immigration bill. There was a lot of pressure on Senator ALEXANDER to vote against it, and I watched him wrestle with it and churn and churn, and I sort of knew in my heart he would do the right thing, in my judgment, and vote for that bill, as he did, at some real political consequence to himself. And that is who he was and is—a man of principle.

We often would talk in the Senate gym almost every morning for a prolonged period of time—I don't go to the Senate gym post-COVID—and more often than not, we found each other on opposite sides of the Senate gym. We helped open up the amendment process on childcare legislation. Together, we led the Rules Committee for a number of years, and we come from very different backgrounds. But I will never forget the weekend that Iris and I spent with Honey and LAMAR at Blackberry Farms, and it was a beautiful weekend for us that we will always, always cherish and remember.

Given the opportunity to put a stamp on the Presidential inauguration, LAMAR and I said whoever is in the majority—we didn't know—we would give each other time to speak, and it served us both well. This is the kind of person he has been: someone who is willing to reach out; someone who is willing to see the other side; and someone, above all, in tumultuous and very difficult times for all of us, who is a man of principle and conscience.

Senator ALEXANDER will leave this Chamber with a legacy that every Senator would be proud of. I wish him and his family the very best.

TRIBUTE TO MARK KELLY

Mr. SCHUMER. Now a few other remarks. We have a going and we have a coming, and our coming is of a new Senator who will be installed today, and that is CAPT Mark Kelly, who will be sworn in as the next Senator from Arizona.

It may not be the role he expected for himself earlier in his life as a U.S. Navy captain and then an astronaut aboard the International Space Station. As Mark likes to say, his wife Gabby was already the member of the family in Congress. But tragedy upended both their lives and changed so

many of their plans. Everyone continues to be inspired by Gabby's recovery, by Mark's devotion, and by the courage it took for their family to re-enter public life and public service. But that is who Mark Kelly is—a devoted and honorable man—and we are delighted to welcome him to the Senate Democratic caucus and the wider Senate family.

So a fond adieu to my friend LAMAR, and a fond welcome to my new friend Mark Kelly.

I have some more remarks on the topics, but I think I will defer those, with unanimous consent that I could talk about those later, so we can get right to Senator ALEXANDER's remarks at the 10:30 scheduled time.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kyle Hauptman, of Maine, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration Board for a term expiring August 2, 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank my friend Mitch, and I thank my friend Chuck for their remarks. I will have more to say to them later.

On March 9, 1967, Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., the newly elected Senator from Tennessee, made his maiden address, his first speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate. He spoke for too long.

The Republican leader of the Senate, who was also Baker's father-in-law, Senator Everett M. Dirksen, walked over to congratulate him and then said, "Howard, occasionally, you might enjoy the luxury of an unexpressed thought," which is good advice for a farewell address as well.

As Senator Baker's legislative assistant, I was also his speech writer for that maiden address, or at least I thought I was. He had developed a bad habit of not saying what I wrote for his speech. So I asked to see him, and I said: Do we have a problem with our relationship?

He said: No, we have a perfect relationship. You write what you want to

write, and I will say what I want to say.

I learned a couple of other things about "saying what I want to say." One came from Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," who heard me speak once and called me aside afterward and said: May I make a suggestion? He said: If, when you begin a speech, you would start by saying, "Instead of making a speech, let me tell you a story," someone might actually listen to what you have to say.

And then, from David Broder, who gave this advice to Ruth Marcus when she got her column for the Washington Post: one idea per column.

So here is a story about my one idea for this speech.

In August of 1968, Senator Baker was in the Republican leader's office, where Senator McConnell is today. He overheard this conversation. Senator Dirksen was saying:

[No.] Mr. President, I cannot come down and have a drink with you tonight. I did that last night and Louella is very unhappy with me.

About 30 minutes later, there was a commotion out in the hall, and in the door of the Republican leader's office came two beagles, three Secret Service men, and the President of the United States. And Lyndon Johnson said to Everett Dirksen: "Everett, if you won't come down and have a drink with me, I'm here to have one with you." And they disappeared into the back room.

Later that same year, around a long table, in that same office, the Democratic President and the Republican leader worked out the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It took 67 votes to break a filibuster, but when the bill passed and Johnson signed it, the Senators who voted no went home and said: It is the law. We have to accept it.

And it still is today, along with many other civil rights laws.

So that is the one idea I have for this speech. Our country needs a U.S. Senate to work across party lines to force broad agreements on hard issues, creating laws that most of us have voted for and that a diverse country will accept.

In the 1930s, we needed a Senate to create Social Security; after World War II, the United Nations; in the 1960s, Medicare; in 1978, to ratify the Panama Canal Treaty; in 2013, more recently, to tie interest rates for student loans to the market rates, saving student borrowers hundreds of billions of dollars in the last several years; in 2015, to fix No Child Left Behind.

That bill had 100 alligators in the swamp. The Wall Street Journal said, when we finished, that it was the largest evolution of power from Washington to the States in 25 years. When President Obama signed it, he said it was "a Christmas miracle" because, in the end, 85 Senators voted for it. In 2016, as Senator McConnell mentioned, there was the 21st Century Cures Act, moving medical miracles faster to patients and into doctors' of-

fices. That bill ran off the track every 2 or 3 days. On one of those days, I called the Vice President, Joe Biden. I said: Joe, I am stuck in the White House. I have the President's personalized medicine in this. I have your Cancer MoonShot. Senator McConnell's regenerative medical proposal is in it. Speaker Ryan has worked out a way to pay for it. But I can't get the White House to move. I feel like the butler standing outside the Oval Office with a silver platter, and nobody will open the door and take the order.

And Joe Biden said: If you want to feel like the butler, try being Vice President.

Well, in the next few weeks, the Senate rules literally forced us to come to an agreement, and, in the end, we almost all voted for it. Senator McConnell said then, as he said today, it was "the most important legislation" of that Congress. And, today, it is helping to create vaccines and treatments in record time. Then, in 2018, there was a once-in-a-generation change in the copyright laws to help songwriters be fairly paid; this year, the Great American Outdoors Act. Everyone agrees that it is the most important outdoor and environmental bill in 50 years.

All of that took a long time, a lot of palaver, many amendments, many years. Too many years, civil rights advocates, students, patients, songwriters, and conservationists would say. But the point was that those bills didn't just pass. They passed by big margins. The country accepted them, and they are going to be there for a long time, and most of them were enacted during divided government, when the Presidency and at least one body of Congress was of different political parties.

That offers an opportunity to share the responsibility or the blame for doing hard things, like controlling the Federal debt. That is why our country needs a U.S. Senate, to thoughtfully and carefully and intentionally put country before partisanship and personal politics, to force broad agreements on controversial issues that become laws that most of us will vote for and that a diverse country will accept.

Nearly 60 years ago, I had traveled from my home in the mountains of Tennessee to New York University's Law School in Manhattan, on Washington Square. It was my first trip ever to New York City, and I had asked for a roommate whose background was as different from mine as possible. One of those roommates turned out to be a tall skinny guy from New Jersey. When I would go to his home in New Jersey and spend the night—his mother was a seamstress and his dad was a contractor; they were Italian immigrants—his mother would become so concerned about my frayed collar on my one white dress shirt that she would turn it while I slept.

Years later, that roommate, Paul Tagliabue, invited me to go to the Italian American Dinner here in Washington. They were bursting with pride