

pandemic was over. But I know many of my Democratic friends disagree with me, but they can't—they shouldn't disagree with me on this: We need to do our part to help the Federal Reserve because the Federal Reserve is not raising interest rates just to raise rates; it is raising interest rates, which is its job, to throw people out of work. If it has to raise interest rates to 10 or 12 percent and keep them there, we are going to have 10-plus million Americans out of work. And do you know what is worse than not having enough money to pay for what you need? Not having any money. Losing your job.

Congress can help, but it is going to require help from both sides, both Democrats and Republicans. We are going to have to agree to spend less money. We just are. And I know we have needs, and I am not saying cut the budget in half, but we have to reduce the rate of growth in our spending, and we have to reduce the rate of accumulation in our debt. Even then, we won't be able to avoid all the pain of inflation, but we will be able to save, I predict, millions and millions of jobs we would otherwise lose to these high interest rates.

I know not all my colleagues agree with me. They don't. I have Republican colleagues—I know there are some of my Democrat friends, but I have some Republican colleagues who think that how much we spend makes no difference. They think it makes absolutely no difference. With all the respect I can muster, they are wrong. All you have to do is look at history, and the only way we conquered inflation the last time it was this bad in the 1980s was through cooperation of the Federal Reserve doing its job on the monetary side but also this Congress doing its job on the fiscal side.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, when I gave my first speech on the Senate floor 12 years ago or when I cast my first vote in the House 26 years ago, I had really no way to anticipate the challenges and opportunities that were ahead of us.

I come to the floor today grateful for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Capitol. When we agree and when we don't, we are bound by the Constitution to seek a more perfect Union.

Of course, I am most grateful to Missourians, who have given me the chance to work with them as a county official, as the Missouri Secretary of State, and in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.

Missouri is where the country comes together—the North meets the South, the East meets the West. No State has more States at its borders than us and only one with as many States as we have. We have been the population center of America for the last five decades in kind of moving down Interstate 44 as the population has moved west and south. We sit in the middle of the biggest piece of contiguous agricultural farmland in the world, and it is the only one that has its own built-in transportation system—the Mississippi River Valley.

St. Louis is sometimes described as the westernmost eastern city, and Kansas City, really, may be more like Denver and Omaha than it is St. Louis. Springfield, where I live, kind of looks to the west and the south to Tulsa and to Fayetteville. The boot heel of our State is the Delta South in every way—the economy, the topography. What happens there is reflective of other places more than it is the rest of our State.

I was in northern Missouri quite a bit this summer, and while in northern Missouri—those two counties that border Iowa—one of the people with me one day when I was the secretary of state said: When we are up here, I always feel like we are on top of the world.

I never go to northern Missouri now unless I feel like I am on top of the world.

Of course, every Senator thinks their State is unique, and it is. A couple of years ago, I spent a few minutes each day trying to figure out and, for about a period of 6 months, wondering how the other 99 Members got here. With a couple of exceptions, I was able to figure it out.

(Laughter.)

I have some question in my mind about a couple of our friends, but as I looked at it, I figured out somebody has unique people skills, and other people have extraordinary political skills. Maybe it is the ability to quickly understand complicated things or the ability to explain complicated things so that other people can understand them. Most of the time, however, we just have an incredible amount of wasted talent. If you could take the collective talent of the 100 U.S. Senators and make the most of it, there is absolutely no telling what might happen.

Now, part of that is because the Senate isn't expected to work efficiently. We don't have many rules, and what does get done usually gets done by either unanimous consent or total exhaustion. Those are our two stopping points. Our Federal Government was designed by people who didn't trust government and didn't want too much of it. They made it hard to get things done. They opted for inefficiency, and that inefficiency is really mind-boggling to people who are more familiar with the parliamentary system, where, if it doesn't get done and it isn't efficient, it fails. We certainly aren't built that way.

We have clearly found new levels of inefficiency in the past decade—one big bill at the end of the year to fund the government plus whatever the four leaders of the House and Senate can agree to add to it. Once again, we are at that year-ending process to cobble together some kind of result. Now, the only thing worse than the way we do it would be not doing it. The only thing worse than the way we do it is just to decide not to get our work done and see what happens. So we are, once again, down to the next 4 weeks to get our work done or, even better, the next 3 weeks. It wouldn't be bad if we got it done in the next 2 weeks, but we are following the pattern here, in my view, we have followed for too long.

You know, I have seen the standard process of regular order work. In my first decade in the Congress, it never worked perfectly, but it came pretty close to the standard that had been set for two centuries. There is good reason for how a bill becomes a law whether you first saw it on a filmstrip, like I probably did, or on "Schoolhouse Rock!" like my kids did. You know how it is supposed to work: Members of a committee and staff who know the most about an issue hold hearings; they mark up a bill; the bill is to be debated and amended on the floor of both the House and the Senate before it goes to the President to be signed or vetoed. For 225 years, the topics of what to fund and how to pay for it have dominated the congressional debate, and we, frankly, need to get back to that, where people see what is going on and Members feel bought in to what is going on.

But then and now, during that whole time, whether regular order was working or not, the rules of the Senate really required finding someone on the other side to work with. There have never been more than 56 popularly elected Republican Senators and only a handful of times have there been 60 or more Democrats. Finding someone on the other side to work with produces the most lasting results.

A couple of Congresses ago, there were 52 on my side and 48 on the other side. My staff decided it would be interesting—they came to me one day and said: We just thought it would be interesting to check and see how many of the 48 Democrats you figured out how to be the principal sponsor of a bill with. The answer was 44. I thought that was a pretty good number.

My point then and now is you don't have to agree on everything to work together; you just have to agree on one thing. And if you find that one thing you agree on and, frankly, particularly if you are successful, both the Members working together and their staffs think: Well, gee, we could do that again.

In healthcare research, Senator MURRAY and I, along with Chairman COLE on the House side and, eventually, the ranking member, then-Chairman DELAURO, worked together to significantly change NIH research.

Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have done lots of things together. We have worked on the travel economy, which is a big part of our economy. We have worked to rewrite the workplace harassment standards for the Senate. We have worked on adoption issues.

Senator BROWN and I passed a bill of advanced manufacturing. We had known each other for years. Once we figured out we could pass one bill together, we passed five. It has the good effect.

Senator STABENOW and I have worked so hard on Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers. We have worked on this for well over a decade now, and we have made, I think, incredible progress. Neither of us would have gotten that done by ourselves.

Senators CAPITO and SHAHEEN and PORTMAN and MANCHIN all worked with me and our committee on opioid and dependency issues. We were making real progress. I think the pandemic set that progress back, but it shouldn't stop us from moving forward.

Senator COONS founded with me the Law Enforcement Caucus. We worked, every time it came up, to expand it and the Victims of Child Abuse Act and the volunteer community efforts.

There are other retiring Members I want to mention whom I have worked with as well: Senator LEAHY and Senator SHELBY, both on the Appropriations Committee and the Rules Committee. You know, on the Appropriations Committee, I got to see the last of Senator Inouye and Senator Cochran still at their best and Barbara Mikulski—people who didn't have to have a perfect result to have a result—and it was wonderful to get to watch them work.

Senator INHOFE was, obviously, totally focused on what it takes to defend the country. He was here for his remarks, his farewell speech, the other day and pointed out that he found somebody he didn't agree with on hardly anything—Barbara Boxer—and they came up with public works bill after public works bill.

Senator BURR, who is leaving, has been my chairman on the Intelligence Committee and has been so capable and so knowledgeable on that committee. He has been really, incredibly, helpful to me.

Senator PORTMAN and I have been at the leadership table in both the House and the Senate. I have been in more meetings with ROB PORTMAN than I have ever been with anybody I have ever served on a committee with, and it has been great.

PAT TOOHEY, of course, brings incredible understanding of finance issues and the economy.

My longest relationships, of course, are with my House colleagues. Senator THUNE, Senator MORAN, and I all came to the House at the same time along with Senator STABENOW. Senator MORAN and Senator BOOZMAN and I all came to the Senate together from the House.

Senator CARDIN, Senator GRAHAM, Senator CASSIDY, Senator BLACKBURN, Senator BROWN, Senator WICKER, and others have been part of my work life for a long, long time. Together, we have faced big challenges. You know, after 9/11, we saw a new terrorist threat. I was in the middle of that discussion of the continuity of government when I had the sudden realization that our government could dramatically change, and we had not thought about what might happen if it did change.

Dick Gephardt—my fellow Missourian and who was the Democratic leader at the time—and I came up with this structure for post-9/11 compensation for victims, which worked. Unfortunately, it has worked following now with a number of tragedies, but it was something I was able to be there for as we put it together.

You know, at that time, President Bush said:

[W]e bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies.

Four Presidents have now followed that standard.

For me, the legislative highlights would, of course, include what happens at the NIH, where I have been able to be part of increasing by 50 percent, over 8 years, with Senator MURRAY and others, the commitment we made to healthcare research.

I mentioned Senator STABENOW earlier, but as for the mental health efforts, the changing that I think we have all seen here in just the last few years in how we talk about that issue and how we understand we need to respond to that issue is something I am particularly proud of.

Now, maybe a bill with Senator HEINRICH, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which every conservation group in America is supportive of—maybe we can add that to the list of things I am going to consider a great accomplishment before we leave here, and it has to go in that big bill I talked about earlier that we put together here at the end.

I have had an incredible opportunity to be responsible for two inaugurations. It is one of the most important things we do. That particular event, not me being responsible for it, 100 million people watched live. Tens of millions of people around the world watched all or part of it after that. It is so important we get it right.

In 2017, I decided our theme would be the peaceful transition of power. I remember at both inaugurations I quoted—the only thing I repeated, I think, at those two inaugurations was President Reagan who said in 1981: What we do here today is commonplace and miraculous—commonplace because we have done it every 4 years since 1789, miraculous because we have done it every 4 years since 1789.

In 2021, I said, well, this time, let's talk about our need to have a more perfect Union.

The Founders didn't promise a perfect Union. They were, in that place,

pretty reasonable in their anticipation of what we could do and what we could be, but they did promise a more perfect Union. And that is the effort we continue to be a part of.

To get all of that done, so many other people have to make it possible. All of us appreciate every one of our families. I think we all appreciate each other's families because, better than anybody else, we know what families mean and how important it is that your family is part of this.

My mom and dad were dairy farmers. They never suggested there were any limits to what a person could do in America. There was no sense that you couldn't do everything you wanted to do.

I am most grateful to Abby, my wife. I wouldn't be in the Senate and wouldn't have stayed as long in the House as I did if Abby hadn't been willing to work so much, so hard to make it easier for me to do what I love to do. We are full partners, and I am grateful for that.

All of my children and even their children, we are too often being asked to defend what I did or what I believed or, more often, what people assumed I believed that they got to be a part of history too. Charlie Blunt was flying on Air Force One with President Bush on his second birthday. Who gets to do that?

I will admit, though, however, no one in my family ever said, I wish you would quit. But when I did announce, did decide I was going to leave 2 years ago, I notice that no one said "Are you sure?" except Abby, who did say "Are you sure?"

I have often said if you can only have one skill, that one skill should be hiring. And what a great staff that skill and good luck have produced for me.

My incredible chief of staff, Stacy McBride, has been responsible for so much of what we have gotten done. My deputy chief for the State, Derek Coats, led a great team that did so much for our State and in helping people deal with the Federal Government. My deputy chief of staff here, Richard Eddings, is, along with me, completing 26 years in the Congress and 26 years of working together. He managed the details for the whip's office in the House and the details for our office in the Senate.

The Rules Committee staff takes responsibility to help manage the daily infrastructure of the Senate. No issue is too small or too big. Everything from security decisions for the Presidential inauguration to a recent call to ask whether we could release someone's pet owl in the Russell courtyard so that the owl would have a home and we would all appreciate it. Senator KLOBUCHAR and I quickly decided it probably wouldn't be good for the Russell courtyard or the owl, so that owl was not released.

The Republican Policy Committee staff deals with every vote on the floor, every nomination, every issue. There is

a paper out there explaining all of those things, every bill that has been filed, every amendment, even to the dreaded vote-arama that staff was getting an amendment ready so voters know what they see.

Let me end this farewell with two things: One is another thank-you to Missouri voters.

In my view, the need to find a solution to a problem really took place and took shape in the Greene County courthouse. I have been in all 115 of our counties since I announced I wasn't going to run again. There have been some question in my house as to the judgment of that schedule, but we are through that now, so it is done. In a lot of those courthouses, I was visiting with county officials and said: In my view, there is nowhere in America you are more likely to get a solution to a governmental problem than a county courthouse filled with local elected officials who want to do everything they can possibly do for you to feel like you left with everything done that could possibly be done.

And then, going to be the first Republican secretary of state elected in Missouri in 52 years when I won that office in 1984, I never thought my leading argument was: Why don't you vote for the first Republican ever. I thought it was: If you vote for me, I will do this job, and you will be pleased that you did give me a chance to do it. So I am grateful to them and grateful for the experience.

There is a story that Senator KLOBUCHAR has told more often than I have. When I became the chief deputy whip, on my way to becoming the whip of the House, the first month of my second term in the Congress, I moved from the Cannon Building to the Capitol Building. And I looked on the top of the bookcase in my office, my new office in the Congress, and there was this bust of a person up there.

And I said to my staff: Let's find out who that is. So they come back a couple of weeks later, and they have got these newspaper articles from the 1930s and 1960s, and they say: Well, nobody knows who that is.

It is obvious when you get that bust down and look at it that it is a cleric. So it was the unknown cleric, and it has been with me ever since in one of my offices here.

The point of the unknown cleric, this is a bust that was put in the Capitol probably no earlier than 1830, and by 1930, nobody had any idea who it was.

I had lots of meetings with new freshman members in the House when I was a whip and a number of meetings with people who just happened to be around and would listen to this. I said: The point of this is somebody is famous enough that they made a bust, put it in the Capitol, and then forgot who they are. The point is: What we do here is more important than who we are. Thanks for letting me do part of it with you.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Missouri.

TRIBUTE TO ROY BLUNT

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, if I could, just a brief word of thanks and commemoration for my friend, the senior Senator from Missouri, ROY BLUNT. It has been an incredible privilege to get to serve with Senator BLUNT these last 3½ years. In a sense, I don't know that I would be here in the U.S. Senate were it not for Senator BLUNT.

I think Senator BLUNT was one of—maybe the first person to urge me to consider running for the U.S. Senate, and it has been a true privilege to get to serve alongside him.

He and Abby have been so kind to me and Erin on a personal basis. They were with us throughout the campaign. He was through all of the ups and down, as anybody who has been through a campaign knows. Roy was there. They were there with us on the final days on the bus, with Charlie, as I recall, who, between my boys and Charlie—Charlie was the calming influence on my kid. So they were all the life of the party.

But from that moment forward, Roy and Abby were such good friends and mentors to us. Roy gave me advice about what it is like to raise a family in politics—something that I was just starting out to do. He gave me advice on things large and small in the Senate: helping me understand how the floor worked, helping me choose my first committee assignments. I remember he made time to sit down and talk through that with me about this time, gosh, 4 years ago now. He has been there every time I have had a question, needed help, needed to understand something.

It has been a privilege to get to work together with him on substantive issues that we both care about. I think of veterans in our home State. I think just recently he and I were able together to lead a resolution honoring Jared Schmitz, who is one of the marines who lost their lives at Abbey Gate just over a year ago. I saw Jared's father just a few weeks ago, and he remains grateful for what Senator BLUNT did in our continuing efforts to honor him.

Roy and I have worked together for years now to try to get our Nation's laws changed to make sure that the tragedy we saw at Table Rock Lake in our home State involving the failure of duck boats, recreational vehicles, in that State would not happen again. I appreciate Roy's efforts on that. Maybe this is one of the things we will get over the line here in the next couple of weeks.

I want to close—I know there are others who want to speak—I want to close with two stories about Senator BLUNT that I have always loved and that I think really give you insight into ROY BLUNT the man.

The first is his background, his heritage, being raised on a dairy farm. He

mentioned this. I think about this every time I drive home to Ozark, MO, and I drive by the exit near where Senator BLUNT's family farm was. Every time, I usually point out to my boys that this is where Senator BLUNT is from.

Senator BLUNT grew up on a dairy farm. He was the first in his family to go to college, I think.

Is that right? Senator, have I got that right?

He was the first in his family to go to college, and then—this is one of the stories I love—he taught at the same school where his grandfather had been a custodial worker years before. There is something wonderfully Missourian and wonderfully American about that.

One of my other favorite stories is about how Senator BLUNT got into politics. I am told—now, he can say whether or not this is apocryphal, but I am told that his first job in politics was when a certain Missourian known as John Ashcroft, who once held the Senate seat I now occupy, ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1972.

The story goes that ROY walked into his campaign office and said: I would like to work for you.

John Ashcroft said: Well, how much gas do you have in your car?

ROY said: Well, I have a full tank.

John said: Good. You are hired.

And ROY went to work.

The thing about ROY BLUNT, for anybody who has known him for any length of time and certainly for anybody who has served with him in this body, working on any project of any scale, is that ROY BLUNT is a worker. He works day and night. When he says he is going to do something, he does it. When he commits to something, he sees it through. That certainly has been my happy experience with him. He leaves a great legacy of service and commitment and honor in the State of Missouri and here in the U.S. Senate.

I want to say again, ROY, thank you for everything.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I want to thank Roy. We have been through a lot together, and I am so proud to call him a friend, as well as Abby. I have such fond memories of our work together. I have really fun memories of when we once went to Canada—remember that?—with all the Canadian interparliamentarian groups; the work we did on adoption when no one thought we could get anything done, and we stood up for a number of really important bills; and the work we did on travel and tourism to make sure our country could compete with other countries around the world when it came to foreign tourists.

One of my favorite ones was when Senator DUCKWORTH was pregnant and wanted to have permission to bring her baby on the floor just for the first year or 6 months when there were late-night votes and the like. I thought that was