

In 2015, I authored a bill called the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which has become the key funding account we have used to train and equip the Ukrainian Armed Forces. We need to continue to fund this account and lead the free world, carrying the torch of freedom.

Since Russia's original occupation of Ukraine escalated into a full-scale war on February 24 of this year, I have now spoken on the Senate floor 27 times—every week we have been in session—about the unprovoked, illegal, and brutal invasion of Ukraine.

My most recent speech was last night so I won't go on, except to say that we are at a critical juncture right now, and it is more important than ever that we support Ukraine. So I am going to be fighting hard for a continuation of aid to Ukraine before Christmas.

We just discussed so many examples of breaking through the partisan gridlock and getting things done. Despite these achievements, I do worry about the divisive political rhetoric in our country. It is important we restore faith in our democratic institutions, both for our own country's sake, and so we can continue to be that beacon of hope and opportunity to the rest of the world.

We can rise above the cynicism and the dysfunction. We just talked a lot about how that is happening and has happened over my last 12 years in this body.

We certainly did it on infrastructure, as I have outlined, and we have done it in so many other ways. I urge all of us to remember that there is more that unites us than divides us. I hope that one of the things we can agree on is the need to uphold this institution and what it stands for.

I strongly believe that means preserving the legislative filibuster that protects the rights of the minority in the Senate and is really the only thing that forces us to work in a bipartisan way. The result, when we find common ground, is better legislation that will stand the test of time and not be changed every time there is a change in the majority in this body.

Our country and this body face enormous challenges, whether it is economy, record inflation, the national debt that is robbing future generations, the absence of any real border security in our broken immigration system, or the looming insolvency of our entitlement programs. These issues won't be solved by one party running over the other and imposing its will on the Senate and the country. It will only be solved by us working together in good faith.

At the start of my remarks today, I said that serving the people of Ohio is the greatest honor of my life. Over the past 12 years, I have worked well with my colleague and friend from Ohio, Senator SHERROD BROWN, on issues important to our State.

SHERROD, we have canceled each other's votes out many times on the floor

of the Senate, but we have also figured out how to work together. And I am proud of the work we have done on issues that are important to Ohio, like the Great Lakes, trade enforcement, addiction, and important judicial nominations like the district court judge we just confirmed this afternoon.

Despite our differences, we made progress for Ohio together. I hope you will have the same type of relationship, a good working relationship, with my friend Senator-elect J.D. Vance. J.D. has an impressive background of service in our military and in the private sector. I know he wants to make a difference in the lives of Ohio workers and families, and I look forward to watching him in action here in the Senate.

I know what it is like to be in public service with young children so I want to wish J.D., his wife Usha, and their three kids well. Jane and I support you both.

Thanks to everyone who has served on Team Portman throughout my career—the first Bush White House, the House of Representatives, the USTR, the OMB, and here in the Senate. We are having an alumni event tonight with a couple hundred of some of the best public servants ever assembled, and Jane and I are looking forward to seeing you all there. I have an amazing Senate staff who stuck with me to the bitter end. Thank you, both in Ohio and in Washington, DC. Many of them are here in the Chamber today.

I want to thank them for their hard work and their dedication to getting things done. They worked really hard for the people of Ohio and for our country and have enabled us to be so much more effective. Nothing we accomplished would have been possible without you.

I want to thank everyone who works in the Senate and makes it function well, whether it is the cloakroom staff, the doorkeepers, the Capitol Police, the cafeteria workers, the subway drivers, all of them in a very practical way. Democracy functions because of you, so thank you. I hope many of you can join us at our thank-you reception for you on Friday afternoon.

Special thanks to Leader MCCONNELL. MITCH, I appreciate your encouragement over the years. Your trust in me to take on a leadership role on important assignments and for your commitment and devotion to this institution and the health of our democracy.

None of this works without having a loving and supportive family. All of you know that. So to my wife Jane and the three people in the world I am most proud of—Jed, Will, and Sally—thank you for your unconditional support and the sacrifices you made. I am looking forward to being in Ohio full time, spending more time with family and friends, the Golden Lamb—our family restaurant—and getting back to the private sector. And, somehow, I hope to stay involved in the public policy issues we have been talking about today.

Finally, thanks to my Senate colleagues who made coming to work every day enjoyable and productive. Thanks for reaching out to me to work together and accepting my offers to work with you. Relationships matter in this place. I will miss my colleagues.

One consolation is that our retiring class consists of good friends who I hope to cross paths with in the real world. Senators BLUNT, BURR, INHOFE, LEAHY, and TOOMEY have all made impressive contributions in their tenure here. I am thinking maybe we should start a post-Senate support group.

And, come January, this place loses a great intellect and a great friend—BEN SASSE.

And I think, BEN, you should hold the meetings at the University of Florida, if it is OK.

Mr. SASSE. OK.

Mr. PORTMAN. OK. Done.

So to my colleagues, I have worked with every one of you in one way or another. Thank you for that privilege, and Godspeed as you continue to serve your constituents and continue to carry that torch of freedom forward.

Thank you.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from South Dakota.

#### TRIBUTE TO ROB PORTMAN

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, we all just had the opportunity to hear from our colleague—somebody who I am really going to miss—with his final remarks here on the Senate—well, I don't think his final remarks but certainly his, I guess you call it, going-away speech.

But I just appreciate so much having had the opportunity to work with Senator PORTMAN.

I know that, as he pointed out, staff not only here in the Chamber, around the Capitol, his personal staff—all people who have made profound contributions to that incredible record of accomplishments that he just talked about. That doesn't happen. Anybody who works here for very long realizes the incredible contributions that staff make to getting things done around here. And so I express my appreciation, as he did, to all of them for all you did to make Senator PORTMAN's time here so productive.

And it is great to see his wife Jane, daughter Sally here as well, who are all part of this partnership and this team that all of us know are so critical to being able to make a difference here in the Senate and the many sometimes sacrifices, contributions that they make on a day-in and day-out basis.

But ROB is someone I have gotten to break bread with a lot of times during our years together here in the Senate, and we have become really good friends, and I am going to miss having him here, as I said.

ROB has spent a lot of years in public service serving this country—12 years in the House of Representatives, where I first got acquainted with him; U.S.

Trade Representative; Director of Office of Management and Budget; and, finally, 12 years here in the U.S. Senate.

I have served with him on the Senate Finance Committee for nearly 10 years, and his going, I will tell you, is a huge loss. He played an indispensable role in the historic tax reform legislation we passed in 2017, particularly with the transition to a modernized international tax system. Our outdated international tax rules had left America's global businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy. And one of our priorities, when it came time to pass tax reform, was ensuring that American businesses could compete on a level playing field with their foreign counterparts.

Between his time in Congress and as Director of OMB and the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, ROB has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to American economic competitiveness and in the international tax system, and he quickly became the lead on that aspect of tax reform—and not just on that, but on so many aspects on that very complicated piece of legislation.

Our final legislation brought the United States international tax system into the 21st century by replacing our outdated worldwide system with a modernized territorial tax system so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign competitors, and we saw an almost immediate positive effect for American businesses, which, of course, means that we saw positive results for American workers. And that is really, in large part, thanks to ROB.

It is an important legacy, and it joins ROB's long list of achievements in public service, some of which, he mentioned, from restraining unfunded mandates on States and securing resources for addiction prevention and treatment, to advancing a pro-world trade agenda good for American workers and businesses alike.

He has also been a strong voice for American leadership and values on the global stage, especially, as he mentioned, as a cofounder of the Senate Ukraine Caucus.

It is sad to see ROB leaving the Senate, but he spent a lifetime helping to build up our country, and I know his contributions won't end here.

I am also happy that he will have more time to spend with his family and with his wife Jane. Jane is terrific. Like me, ROB married up, and I know ROB is looking forward to having more time to spend together.

I also know ROB is planning to get more involved in the family business, the Golden Lamb Inn and Restaurant in Lebanon, OH, which has played host to at least a dozen U.S. Presidents over the years.

And, as I said, while ROB's time in the Senate may be coming to a close, I know that he fully intends to continue doing what he has been doing throughout his career, and that is working to

make our country a better and more prosperous place.

ROB, congratulations on your years here in the Senate. I hope you get some very well-deserved rest in the coming months, and I, like everyone else here, look forward to seeing your next chapter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I also rise today to pay tribute to someone who is literally a friend across the aisle and across State lines.

Now, you might not think that the senior Senator from Michigan, a Democrat, and the junior Senator from Ohio, a Republican, would be friends. After all, our States share a long and passionate rivalry, particularly on the football field.

This rivalry is especially intense on game day, like recently, when the Michigan Wolverines defeated Ohio State Buckeyes 45 to 23. I am just saying.

I particularly, Senator PORTMAN, wanted to say this out loud to make sure Senator BROWN heard it also.

Of course, my friend ROB Portman may have been cheering. And he may never really say this, but, you know, I am often wondering if, behind the scenes, he is sort of cheering both sides on that because he has never advertised it and he has never said it up to this point, but let me say today that he is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School. Now that he is retiring, maybe he can say it out loud. So we are glad to have him there.

Senator PORTMAN has been a wonderful partner on issues important to both of our States, both Great Lakes and trade.

We have served as cochair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force since 2017, and we have gone to bat together on behalf of our beloved lakes time and time again.

We have introduced and passed legislation to stop invasive species from reaching and destroying our Great Lakes. When the Trump administration tried to slash nearly all the funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, we fought back together and we won. And since then, we have passed legislation to reauthorize the program and celebrated when we secured \$1 billion through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the single largest investment ever for the Great Lakes. And it would not have happened without Senator PORTMAN.

I have always said that the Great Lakes shouldn't be a partisan issue, and thanks to ROB, they have not been.

We found ways to work together on the issue of trade as well. We fought for American workers when we served together in the House and then continued a strong working relationship when Senator PORTMAN left to become the U.S. Trade Representative under President Bush.

In the Senate, we have partnered to ensure that American workers have a

level playing field. That included a great congressional delegation trip to Vietnam and South Korea, where we met with trade officials, Senator PORTMAN and I, and I got to see how much he is respected by these world leaders.

From strengthening our supply chains to securing funding to revitalized communities to promoting recycling to planting trees to funding our community health centers to keeping plastic pollution out of the Great Lakes—there is no end to the number of issues we have worked on together.

ROB, I am going to miss you. I have so valued your friendship and working relationship here. You have made a real difference, but I know you are going to enjoy spending more time with Jane and Jed and Will and Sally and watching more Michigan games that you can finally admit you enjoy.

I wish you the best of everything and hope we are going to continue to see you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. ROMNEY. Madam President, I have had both the good fortune and the misfortune of working closely with Senator ROB Portman.

I had the misfortune of debating him in 2012. He was kind enough to play the part of President Obama in my debate practice sessions. He was relentless, determined, unforgiving, and anxious to delve into the most minute facts and figures in order to defeat me and to knock any complacency I might have had out of my heart.

He more than made up for my debate whooping by tirelessly and repeatedly accompanying me across Ohio and other States, drumming up support for my campaign, raising money, and jousting with the wing nuts that tried to derail my campaign.

When I came to the Senate, I found that many of those same qualities—his relentlessness, determination, tirelessness, and ability to dig into the details—have made him a singularly successful United States Senator.

I worked alongside him on several bills. On each occasion, they became law because he dug into them, negotiated the most thorny of issues, drove the process to a result, and never, ever gave up.

We formed eight working groups on the bipartisan infrastructure bill because there were too many conflicts, too many subjects, too many obstacles for our entire group of 10 to resolve without dividing it into parts we could deal with one by one.

He then decided that he would be a member of every single one of those subgroups, knowing that he would be needed to actually drive each of us to a conclusion and a result.

You see, there are some people in politics who believe that a fiery speech or a bold appearance on a cable show and a reputation for fighting the opposition, that that is the measure of success. Not so ROB Portman.

He came here to pass bills and actually shape policy that would help the American people and strengthen our country. He came to fight and win, not just to fight. And he has won for America time and time again.

More important to me personally than all his winning is his friendship, his honor, and his character. He is a genuinely good man, and he is blessed to have married an even better woman. I will miss ROB PORTMAN in the Senate. As I think many of my colleagues know, he has been a bit of a stabilizer for me here. I will miss him and Jane in the neighborhood of our lives.

God bless you, ROB PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise to also offer to my thoughts on the career and service, the personality and the values of Senator ROB PORTMAN, one of a number of retiring colleagues whom I will dearly miss.

I was somewhat surprised by the timing of Senator BLUNT's farewell address and missed the opportunity to also speak to his departure. They have in common an important shared characteristic: a passion for getting things done, for being a Senator who serves their State and Nation, who works across the aisle and delivers real solutions.

Stop taxing death and disability—that is the first bill that ROB and I got to the President's desk and signed into law. Under the previous administration, it had a very catchy name, and it was a simple solution to a problem most of us had never heard of, which was that if someone who had taken out student loans died and thus was unlikely to repay them and those student loans were discharged as a result of their permanent disability or death, that benefit was taxed, and the tax attached, in the case of one of my constituents, to their parents, to the estate of the deceased child.

When I first talked to ROB about this on the floor, he said: That is a terrible thing; we should stop it. From that simple germ grew a dozen different legislative initiatives.

Before this Congress ends, we will get the reauthorization of the End Wildlife Trafficking Act and the reauthorization of ROB's landmark work in tropical rainforest and coral reef preservation to the President's desk.

We had the chance to travel the world together. We had a remarkable trip, as did Senator KLOBUCHAR, to Ukraine—although I think our trip was just a little bit more comfortable on the train than yours. But it was a memorable opportunity to visit the Ukrainian refugees with their own incredible Embassy staff and to present the Liberty Medal from the National Constitution Center to President Zelenskyy.

I am also, I must say, grateful for your leadership on the Respect for Marriage Act, which is today going to the President's desk.

It was in August, as we traveled to five countries in Africa, together with our spouses and a great bipartisan group you helped pull together, to look at how human development can be the key to wildlife conservation in countries across the continent where too often there is instability that leads to the loss of biodiversity and to an increase in lawlessness and terrorism, and we found a way to craft together a potential legislative solution that I look forward to carrying in the years ahead.

To Jed, to Will, and to Sally, you have a remarkable dad. To Jane, thank you for being such a delightful, engaging, and supportive partner. My wife Annie and I will deeply miss you and ROB as colleagues here in the Senate, as a legislative partner, and as a personal friend.

God bless you on the next chapter of your life, and we look forward to staying in touch.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, you know, listening to Senator PORTMAN's speech, I don't know how you cannot be impressed with his incredible record of accomplishment, and it is a record of accomplishment that will stand the test of time. It is not surprising because all you have to do is look at all the things he accomplished before coming to the United States Senate. So it certainly is no surprise that he has done incredible work over the last 12 years.

He was 14 years, I think, in the House and had a tremendous record of success there. He was U.S. Trade Ambassador for President Bush, and that has the same status as full Ambassador. So for all of his time here in the Senate, he didn't want me to call him Senator PORTMAN; he always wanted me to call him Ambassador Portman. Instead, I call him "El Gran Toro," but that is another story which I will get to. And he was OMB Director for President Bush. So when you look at the incredible experience and track record of accomplishment that he brought here, it is no surprise that—in his speech, he talked about a lot of incredible accomplishments, but there is a lot more that you didn't talk about. You could have talked for a long, long time because you truly did accomplish so many things that are important not just for the Buckeye State but for our country. I am just pleased to have had the opportunity to work with you.

You mentioned some of the things we worked on, and it is interesting because as you were talking about the things you worked on and the Members you worked with, I just took a quick count. There were more than 20 Senators sitting here, and you mentioned every single one of them and many, many more. I kind of got the feeling that if all 100 Senators were here, you probably could have mentioned every single one of them and something that

you accomplished with them. Think about what that says—Republicans and Democrats.

I think he could have had every single Senator on the floor, and he could have gone around and talked about, hey, you remember we worked on this and we worked on that, and not just worked on it but passed it into legislation, and in every case, it was something that had a meaningful impact for our country and for our respective States.

Senator PORTMAN and I came here together, and we have been close right from the start, probably a little bit of our shared heritage from college. We worked together. We traveled together, you know, around the world—India, South Korea, obviously Mexico, Central America—and invariably learned an incredible amount on those trips. But whether it was on those trips or almost any other time, I always learned from ROB. I mean, the guy has incredible experience and a lifetime of learning but also such a keen intellect—such a keen intellect. He is somebody who imparts that knowledge to you in the best way possible, never coming across with any kind of ego or "I know something that maybe you don't" or anything like that but just in a friendly, helpful, great way.

The other thing is his ability to work with people. I have observed and tried to learn from it as well. I mean, it doesn't matter where you are going or what you are doing, he takes the time to talk to people and really talk to them—not just talk at them but actually connect with them and get a smile on their face.

That is one of the reasons why I asked: Hey, ROB, why don't you teach me some Spanish? We would go to a restaurant, and he would just start speaking Spanish with somebody, and you could just see them—their face would light up, and they would smile. He would make them happy and make them feel welcome and warm. And he was always genuine—always genuine—not doing it like a politician would do it but the way a person would do it for another person, somebody who actually cares about people.

That is maybe where I kind of want to go as I wrap up here, is that, you know, all the work he talked about, all of these accomplishments, these things are important. They are important for Ohio. They are important for our country and beyond. But his motivation in doing it was always because he does care about people.

He recognized the things he is doing—you know, you have to compromise here. You don't get things all your own way or the way you think would be absolutely the best outcome. You have to work with people. You have to compromise to get a result. But he always was guided by the fact that he knew what he was doing. He did make things a little bit better for other people. That is the right motivation. That is the right reason to be here and do this work.

So we will truly, truly miss ROB and Jane and their wonderful family, and I have gotten to know them all.

We are going to miss you a lot, but I do know this: We are going to continue to see you. We are going to continue to work on things with you.

I am not sure what he is going to do next, but it is just like I started out talking about. His incredible record of accomplishment before he got here and his incredible record of accomplishment here, both in what he has done and the relationships and friendships he has built, leaves no doubt—no doubt whatsoever—that he is going to continue to do some wonderful and amazing things, and I look forward to seeing what those things are.

ROB, we are going to miss you. Thanks for all you have done. Thanks for being such a good friend.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I will take off where Senator HOEVEN left off.

Listening to Senator HOEVEN talk, I was thinking, what are we going to do—JOHN and me—without ROB here to give us grief about our joint events that we do between Fargo, ND, and Moorhead? Several times, we have told ROB that we were heading out to do some esoteric event together, and he would give us a lot of grief. But then we would always send him pictures of the event to verify that this actually happened, and we had a lot of fun doing that.

I was actually thinking as I heard our colleagues talk about how ROB always teaches. This is something John mentioned. He always passes on the torch. My favorite example of that—and you are going to remember this story, ROB—was when my daughter started college, and Senator PORTMAN was going to speak at the college because his son was there, and he figured out that she was there, and he personally invited her to his talk at a residential college. She was a brandnew freshman. She went in there and sat down. She told me how nervous she was.

Two hours later, she comes back and calls me. ROB had spoken in his typical way, in a very, very authoritative manner but in a very nice way—maybe a little critical of the then-President, President Obama, where he didn't agree with him. My daughter, a freshman in college, calls me and says: Mom, you know, Senator PORTMAN said this. Why didn't President Obama do this? Why did this happen that way?

I said: Honey—I explained everything, and I said: Abigail, you have lived with me for 18 years, and I would hope that you would give some credence to what I said. You have been with ROB PORTMAN for an hour and a half.

She said: But Mom—I will never forget this—Senator PORTMAN is really distinguished, Mom. Senator PORTMAN has a lot of dignity, Mom.

Anyway, this was a family story for a long period of time, and I think part of that was he was able to reach out to students at a school, able to make his case, make the world bigger for my daughter in that way, just as he has made the world bigger for all of us.

For me, it started with our work on human trafficking under both Democratic and Republican Presidents. It extended into, I remember, the work on the USMCA. There was a moment where we feared Canada was not going to be with us and it was just going to be USMA, and the head of the Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Group reached out to ROB and many other Senators. But ROB was incredibly helpful in working with the previous administration to work out some details and get that done.

You mentioned in your speech, ROB, fentanyl and our work together on that. You have just been tremendous in understanding that there are two sides of this: prosecution, going after the bad guys and doing everything we can to keep drugs out of the hands of people who don't deserve to get addicted to them, but also the treatment and the—what we did, along with SHELTON WHITEHOUSE and, way back then, Kelly Ayotte and many others, with the First Step Act and your understanding of the need to work on addiction.

For me, lastly, I will just say there is no better sign that you were someone, as Senator BLUNT was saying, who wasn't just kind of ending your time with doing nothing—far from it. There is everything from the infrastructure bill—I see Senator SINEMA here—to the work you have done with so many.

For me, it was your devotion to Ukraine. People who will never know your name, who will never know how many times you went there to stand up for the people of their country against the inhuman barbarism of Vladimir Putin—I remember standing with you at that mass grave, at those burned-out apartment buildings, and the way you were able to make the case, working with the State Department, for what the people of Ukraine needed and what would work and the thoughtful and considerate way that people at our Embassy—all the work that they did. I remember the joy we took in finding out that one of the top names that week for new babies in Ukraine was HIMARS and the smile on your face.

ROB, we are going to miss you so much, but just as John said, I have a feeling that this is not your last act and that, along with Jane and your wonderful family, there will be much more to come.

Thank you, Senator PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, you know, it is often said here that everything has been said, but not everybody has said it yet.

(Laughter.)

This is actually a case where everything won't be said today and can't be

said. The remarkable legislative accomplishments that ROB has made are truly that—they are just remarkable.

When we were serving early in the House together, there was this big retirement bill. I thought, for a while, of Senator PORTMAN that then-Congressman Cardin's first name was "PORTMAN" because it was all about the Portman-Cardin Act, the PORTMAN-CARDIN "this and that."

(Laughter.)

I had a little piece we were able to put in that was called the SIMPLE Plan. Maybe that is because the only thing I understood was the SIMPLE Plan. It was a helpful plan, but we probably wouldn't have gotten it done if ROB hadn't been constantly making the legislative things happen that he makes happen.

As I have said in my remarks, I have never served on a committee with ROB PORTMAN, in the House or in the Senate, in our more than 20 years of working together, but I have probably spent more time with him in meetings, as we have tried to figure out how to move forward, than I have with almost anybody else, whether they had been the House leadership meetings or have been the Senate leadership meetings. I knew so much about ROB that not only did Abby I and really know and appreciate the friendship with him and Jane—and I knew their kids—but there was a while when I knew the names of both of their dogs. That shows that you spend a lot of time with somebody if you know the names of both of their dogs. I did that with ROB.

He has done so well here. I was the whip in the House when ROB was the U.S. Trade Ambassador, and those trade bills are always hard to get done no matter how easy it seems. There was the Central American trade deal that we took to the floor, and like with so many was the case, we just decided: OK. Now is the time to go. I think we are going to get this done today. The work is good. Now we have just got to get the Members willing to go home and admit that they did this.

Trade agreements are good for the country, but often Members don't want to talk about them when they get home because you can always find, somewhere, somebody in your State who might think you could have done a better job in negotiating part of this.

Then there is another thing, I think, that ROB and I had in common and understood. I just heard today, on NewsRadio, while I was driving in this morning, their talking about the new, highly competitive States. They mentioned, for decades, Missouri and Ohio were always considered to be the two bellwether States. Those were the two States. I think, in our State, for 100 years, we voted for the Presidential winner every time but one. Ohio had about that same record.

We have also seen a political transition in our States—where they have gone from highly competitive, where you are really out there in so many

ways on your own when running for office, to where the parties have changed in ways that we may appreciate more than a lot of other people here would.

I had not thought about the support group. I am not sure—I hope I don't need that—but I sure do need and hope to have the additional time to continue our great friendship and times to talk. As several people have said, you always listen when ROB talks because he knows what he is talking about. That is a relatively rare currency anywhere—even in the U.S. Senate.

I hope we are going to spend enough time together that we won't miss each other, but, certainly, I will miss the times we have had to work together on both sides of the building. It was sometimes when you were with the administration and I was here, but congratulations on what you have done for America and what you have done for your family and the future of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Madam President, thanks for letting me speak here. I am not even on the list.

I just wanted to say a few comments about my friend and colleague ROB PORTMAN. I am not actually one to come and give a lot of speeches on the floor so this is a big deal. A lot of people stood up today to talk about ROB's accomplishments, of which they are numerous, but I want to talk about the ROB who is my friend.

ROB and I worked together for 6 months straight on the infrastructure package last year, which, as ROB mentioned in his comments, we built from the center out, which I am inordinately proud of. It is the model for how the legislative process should work in this country. I couldn't be more proud of him. I think, over the course of those 6 months, though, I shared more meals and more glasses of wine with ROB than with anyone in my personal life—ever. So, for that, I say to his wife and his children, I am sorry because ROB and I spent more time together, poring over spreadsheets in the basement of this U.S. Capitol, than I have ever spent with anyone, and I couldn't be more grateful for every one of those minutes.

ROB, in addition to being incredibly smart, incredibly focused, and incredibly committed to outcomes is also a delightful human being, and I consider him one of my closest friends in the world.

ROB, I am going to miss you so much, and I can't wait to go on ride bikes together. I don't want to go to the support group—I have no interest in that—but what I do have an interest in is spending time with you for many years to come. You are an incredible friend. You have got an incredible team that you have assembled, and I couldn't be more honored and privileged to consider you a lifelong friend. Thanks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am sure some people who are tuned into C-SPAN think they are watching an alternative universe because all of these Democrats have come to the floor to say something nice about a Republican, but it is ROB PORTMAN—a special Republican and a special friend.

(Laughter.)

We have worked on many things together over the years, but I really think the highlight of it has been the work that we have done together in the past year as coauthors of the Ukrainian Caucus.

I know that you have been there more often than I have, but I also know that your commitment to this issue goes way beyond anything political. It is personal. It is real. It is human. You can feel it.

ROB is the type of person, the type of Senator, who takes his job so very seriously. He put me to shame with the maps that he brought to the floor of the Senate on a regular basis to chart the course of the bravery and courage of the people of Ukraine as they fight for their freedom and their future and resist the invasion of Vladimir Putin and his thugs.

I know that you have been there to meet with Mr. Zelenskyy, who heads up the Ukrainian effort. I know, as we met this week and many weeks before, that when the Ukrainian Parliamentarians come to town, they look forward to meeting our caucus and particularly meeting the Senator from Ohio because they know that he understands their plight and that he is a voice for them.

It must be difficult to be a native of a small country—so distant from the United States—that is under constant attack, where people are leaving, their lives are being turned upside down, where innocent people are being killed every day, and you are counting on your friends in other parts of the world—the NATO alliance and particularly the United States of America. They find their way here to this Capitol Building with their Ambassador. We sit down, and we talk about the state of the war in Ukraine.

So many times, they look to you, ROB, and they look to our caucus for the kind of message to take back home—a message of hope that they are not in this alone.

Of all of the causes that I have worked on in the course of my senatorial career, this is one that means a lot to me. My mother was born in Lithuania, as I have probably mentioned to you. My feelings about freedom and my feelings about the oppression by the Russians and the Soviets over the years are very strong. That is being played out today in the course of the war in Ukraine.

I thank President Biden for his leadership, but I thank you, ROB, for making this bipartisan. Honest to goodness, that is why it is strong; that is why it is credible; that is why it is a cause that many of us in the Senate take so

very seriously. You have made that commitment.

I would like to mention one other issue. I know that you take pride in your legislative legacy—and you should—but back in 2013, you made an announcement that sent shock waves throughout Washington. You became the only sitting Republican Senator to endorse marriage equality. At the time, you attributed your position to a member of your family who was part of the LGBTQ community. You said that your son's courage “allowed me to think about this issue from a new perspective, and that's as a dad who loves his son” so very much.

Well, that evolution came full circle when you joined 11 of your Republican colleagues in supporting the Respect for Marriage Act, which protects marriage equality under Federal law. It was one of your final votes in the Chamber and a fitting coating to your proud legislative career.

Loretta and I wish you and your wife, Jane, and your three children all the best as you say farewell to Washington and welcome to Cincinnati or wherever your life may take you next. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you.

Thank you, ROB.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I was on the floor earlier listening to Senator PORTMAN's farewell address to his colleagues in the U.S. Senate, and I must tell you, it brought back some very fond memories—over three decades of friendship between ROB PORTMAN and myself as colleagues, as partners, and as friends.

Earlier this week, we had a chance in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to express our appreciation to Senator PORTMAN for his service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His wife Jane was there, and I made an observation that the sacrifice that Jane has made and that his three children—Jed, Will, and Sally—we thank them for sharing Senator PORTMAN with us and with public service.

I think back about three decades. I first got to know Congressman PORTMAN in 1993, when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. An introduction came from former Congressman Bill Gradison. Bill Gradison was a Congressman from Ohio that ROB PORTMAN succeeded in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I knew Bill Gradison from my days in the State legislature. We were friends. We had done some business—some bills—together in the House of Representatives, and he told me: You know, you are going to like this ROB PORTMAN. He is the type of guy you are going to be able to work with. And, by the way, I have an issue I would like the two of you to take up.

It was a legacy issue for Bill Gradison, and it dealt with hospice care. There wasn't a lot of interest in hospice care in the 1990s, but Congressman

PORTMAN and I got together and we worked on a bill, and we followed in Bill Gradison's footsteps to get that legislation accomplished. That was the beginning of a three-decade relationship that the two of us have had in pursuing legislation.

Perhaps our best known legislation is the PORTMAN-Cardin pension reform legislation. For many years, people thought my first name was Portman because of the association with Congressman PORTMAN at the time.

And I must tell you, we got amazing things done to expand retirement savings opportunities.

We are very proud that several bills were enacted and signed into law, but we are equally proud of the process that was used in order to put that legislation together.

We invited all stakeholders to join us. It was truly bipartisan. We wanted to get the best policy, and it was that process that led to the successful passage of the first Portman-Cardin bill that dramatically expanded retirement savings opportunities. Even though it was not in either the Democrat or Republican leadership package, we were able to get it into the Balanced Budget Act.

I mention the process because that is the process that Senator PORTMAN—Congressman PORTMAN—has always used. He has used the bipartisan process to try to bring us together to get the very best possible solutions to problems. It has been the bedrock of his career, and that is why he has been so successful here in the U.S. Senate, and so many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have expressed our gratitude for his public service.

Now, I must tell you, he used that relationship sometimes to move issues that were not necessarily his partner's top priority. As he mentioned on the floor, he got me engaged in the IRS reform bill that dealt with the nuts and bolts of the IRS.

Now, I ask you: How many people want to be known in their district for improving the IRS services for collecting their taxes?

But ROB PORTMAN was the leader on this, and he needed a Democrat in the House, and he was very persistent, and we were able to get significant reform done in the IRS when we were both Members of the House.

Well, as you know, ROB PORTMAN moved on to become the USTR, to become the budget director, and then returned to the U.S. Senate. And I was so pleased to be able to partner with him again when he returned to the U.S. Senate.

On the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we talked about some of his major accomplishments. The two of us have worked together to promote the U.S.-Israel special relationship, to fight against anti-Semitism and the BDS movement, and there has been no stronger advocate in the U.S. Senate for the defense of Ukraine.

His record has been an unbelievable amount of accomplishments of getting

solid legislation accomplished because he has that ability to work across party line. He is very engaged on the issues. He knows the issues. He knows the substance. He knows your concerns. So we can work it out and reach a common level of agreement so we can get a bill to the finish line.

So that is why he has such a remarkable record in getting retirement legislation enacted into law, getting trade legislation enacted into law, dealing with our National Park Service enacted into law, fighting drug addiction, which has been one of his major passions, making a huge difference on our war against drugs.

And as was pointed out earlier, and I just really want to underscore that, his values of promoting human rights.

In so many cases, he has been the key supporter, initiator, and had the ability to reach the finish line on bills that affect the basic rights of Americans going against such issues as human trafficking and so many other areas.

So I just really wanted to take this time to say to my friend ROB PORTMAN, through the Presiding Officer, thank you so much for your many, many years of public service.

We wish Jane and you and your entire family only the best going forward. You have left the legislature once before and returned. Maybe, you will return again. We will see. But I wish you only happiness and success in what follows your Senate career. Thank you for sharing your talent with the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MR. PORTMAN. Madam President, we have talked about more important legislative measures, and I just want to say thank you to all of my colleagues and to my colleague from Illinois who spoke and to the others who were overly generous in their comments. I appreciate it. I think my mom would have believed it, and my dad would have liked it.

Seriously, you can see why I will miss this place and why I believe that these colleagues, who talked all about the need for us to find that common ground and make a difference for our constituents, are people I have enjoyed working with and look forward to staying in touch with.

So this is a bittersweet moment. I am looking forward to getting back to Ohio full time with family and friends, as I have said, and the private sector. I have a deep respect for my colleagues, and I thank them for being on the floor today even though the jet fumes can already be smelled and people are already heading back for their weekends and important meetings back home.

So thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, let me add my thanks to Senator PORTMAN for his tremendous work here. I wish him the very best in his future as well.

#### PREVENT PANDEMICS ACT

Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about a very important issue.

Our country has made great progress in the fight against COVID-19. Families have been getting back to their daily lives. The thing I keep hearing from people in my home State is they want to keep it that way. They want to keep moving forward and making sure we never find ourselves in a situation like that again. I couldn't agree more, but that means actually taking action. It means not letting this moment—this Congress—pass us by and, instead, actually delivering the public health reforms that families need, which is why I am here today urging my colleagues to ensure that any end-of-the-year package includes our bipartisan PREVENT Pandemics Act.

Senator BURR and I led the HELP Committee this Congress, and from day one, it was clear to us that pandemic preparedness had to be a priority because the next time there is a crisis like this, we cannot have people asking: Why can't I get a test? Where can I get reliable information? How can we be so unprepared for this?

That means we must learn the lessons of the pandemic and ensure that our government actually works better and smarter in preparing and responding to public health threats, which is exactly what Senator BURR and I set out to do when we crafted the PREVENT Pandemics Act, which passed out of our HELP Committee in an overwhelming 20-to-2 vote earlier this year.

Our bill improves our public health system by learning from what worked and what did not in our COVID response. A big piece of that is establishing the Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response Policy at the White House to serve as mission control so that we have a team in place, ready to go, 24/7, to guide our Federal response to new and emerging threats.

We have also seen how dangerous shortages have been throughout this crisis, which is why the PREVENT Pandemics Act strengthens our stockpiles and supply chains for drugs and ventilators and testing and components and masks and other lifesaving medical supplies. Of course, with a new threat, the issue isn't just a shortage of tools; it is that the tests and the treatments and the vaccines may not even exist yet. So our bill establishes ARPA-H, which is a new Agency focused on cutting-edge medical research like the kind that made it possible for us to develop a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine in record time.

Our bill also supports potentially lifesaving research on issues like antivirals for pathogens with pandemic potential, antimicrobial resistance, better coordination in our blood supply, best practices for emergency preparedness and response, and long COVID, which many people are still struggling with.