

care that cannot be safely provided on that naval base, Guantanamo.

That endangers the lives of their patients, when we mandate it in this bill.

I have come to this floor to advocate for the closure of Guantanamo for years. It saddens me that for more than two decades, the legacy of torture and indefinite detention has continued to betray our values as a nation and the rule of law. This detention facility was deliberately created to serve as a legal black hole where detainees could be held incommunicado, beyond the reach of law, and even subjected to torture. There is still, all of these years later, no due process for the prisoners at Guantanamo and no justice for the families of the thousands of people who died on 9/11.

We held a hearing on Guantanamo, and one of the family members of the survivors of that terrible 9/11 occurrence came and said to us: Finally get it over with. Close this facility. Try these individuals if you have a charge against them; if not, put an end to it.

Since that prison opened in Guantanamo, hundreds of detainees have come and gone. Today, there are 35 individuals at an unjustified and embarrassing cost of \$550 million per year to keep the facility open. Quick math—we are spending \$15 million a year for each of these detainees while there are ample vacancies in our Federal prisons. Why?

The vast majority of the men who remain indefinitely detained have never—never—been charged with any crime and have been unanimously approved for transfer by defense and intelligence agencies, and American taxpayers pay \$15 million a year for each of them to stay at Guantanamo. They languish at Guantanamo for no justifiable reason, contrary to any notion of due process or rule of law.

I filed an amendment to this bill that I am referring to earlier this fall to close this prison at Guantanamo once and for all. Put it behind us. I am disappointed that it wasn't taken up and that the final bill doesn't address it.

The Senate, again, did not have a regular floor process for this bill, which would have allowed debate and amendments. That is what the Senate used to do routinely. Now, it hardly ever happens in this body.

Ultimately, I will vote for this bill even with my objections I have stated, but I want the record to be clear: The Defense Authorization Act has not been bogged down by "liberal nonsense," as the Senate minority leader stated last week on the floor of the Senate. The reality is, this bill authorizes nearly \$75 billion more for the national defense compared to the last fiscal year—a significant increase and critical for our Nation's defense and our troops—but I hope it will be matched in an omnibus by nondefense spending to keep parity as well.

We must finalize and pass an omnibus bill without delay to keep our Federal Government functioning.

I want to note one top priority that should have been included in this bill

and should be included now in the omnibus spending bill. The bipartisan Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act is cosponsored by Republican Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and myself. We introduced it, and several of our colleagues joined us.

Most Americans would be shocked to learn that the laws of the United States of America do not allow us to prosecute foreign war criminals who are roaming free right here in the United States—hard to believe.

As that unspeakable atrocity continues in Ukraine, we must not allow those who are murdering and torturing the people of Ukraine to come and reside in the United States with impunity, period. We must close this gap in our laws and ensure that foreign nationals here on our soil can be prosecuted for war crimes. America must send a message to the Vladimir Putins of the world that their henchmen will find no safe haven here.

I look forward to finally getting to this critical bill as soon as possible.

TRIBUTE TO LONNIE STEPHENSON

Madam President, next month, the pride and joy of Rock Island, IL, and my good friend Lonnie Stephenson is stepping down from his post as president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. While Lonnie's leadership will be missed, he leaves behind a legacy of amazing service and commitment to working families.

Lonnie is the son of factory workers from Moline, IL. He knows as well as anyone the challenges working families face. He saw right through the failed practices and policies of trickle-down economics, which led to a shrinking middle class and crumbling infrastructure. Only the rich got richer.

Lonnie started off as an apprentice wireman with the electricians, and even then, he knew the value of a union. He rose through the ranks of IBEW Local 145, becoming vice president before taking over as business manager in 1991.

All the while, he fought to make things better for families in his home area of the Quad Cities through safe working conditions, fair wages and benefits, and a secure retirement. He spent countless hours organizing and grew his local from 700 to more than 1,100 members. He gave back to his community in so many different ways—organizing annual blood drives, encouraging community service among his members, supporting the Red Cross when historic flooding hit the Quad Cities.

I remember joining Lonnie for Labor Day parades in the Quad Cities, where his standing in the community and respect of his fellow union members was legendary.

A good friend of mine, former Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, who tragically died in a plane crash 20 years ago, used to say, "We all do better when we all do better." No one has embodied this policy more than Lonnie Stephenson throughout his nearly five

decades of service to the labor movement.

Here is the good news: Lonnie steps down knowing we have one of the most pro-union Presidents in history carrying on his legacy to improve the lives of working families. Lonnie has been by President Biden's side from the start. Their special relationship was evident last May in Chicago when President Biden became the first sitting President to address an IBEW national convention. I was glad to be on the program.

Last year, when President Biden signed the infrastructure bill, a historic investment, I saw a familiar face at the signing. Lonnie was right there at the White House, along with 11 other IBEW members—a reflection of his dedication to creating jobs. But it is not just the bipartisan infrastructure law; Lonnie was a driving force on many more pieces of historic legislation, from the CHIPS and Science Act, to the Inflation Reduction Act, to saving the pensions of millions of union members and retirees in the American Rescue Plan.

These groundbreaking victories were no guarantee. Lonnie faced some daunting challenges during his tenure as president of the IBEW. The former Illinois Governor supported an agenda of unrelenting hostility to unions. That Governor is gone now, but he spearheaded a litigation effort that resulted in a Supreme Court decision overturning 40 years of law that rigged the economy against working families. And former President Trump made it clear he favored special interests at the expense of many of Lonnie's workers and their families.

Then Lonnie was faced with a global pandemic that created an unprecedented economic crisis that shuttered businesses and created massive unemployment. For most, it would have been hard to see a silver lining, but not for Lonnie. He faces challenges head-on.

He stood up for working families and organized thousands of new IBEW members. He made sure that his union's new membership was reflective of the community—strong, diverse—with an initiative to expand membership to traditionally underrepresented populations, like women and people of color, and we are seeing these gains across the country. Approval of labor unions is at its highest point in the last 57 years, and union election petitions increased 53 percent last year. That is no accident; it is because of the hard work of people like Lonnie. The workers are fortunate to have him on their side.

More recently, Lonnie has worked to prepare IBEW members for the jobs and industries of the future. One example—the bipartisan infrastructure law. Lonnie put a provision in there that includes \$7.5 billion for construction of

national electric vehicle charging networks built with union labor. In Illinois, IBEW is leading work with community colleges and high schools to train the next generation of workers.

Illinois and the entire Nation have been lucky to have had a champion of working families like Lonnie Stephenson. I am going to miss him working in a formal capacity, and I feel fortunate to consider him a friend. Loretta and I wish him a long and joyous retirement with his wife Dawn and their children, Stacey, Katie, Marty, Jacob, and Andrew.

I yield the floor.

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. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK J. LEAHY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Today, I come to the floor to pay tribute to the President pro tempore of the United States Senate. He is the longest serving Senator currently serving in this institution, and he is my friend from Vermont, Senator PAT LEAHY.

As many of you know, the Senator from Vermont also happens to be a talented photographer. His photos have been published in the New York Times, USA TODAY, and elsewhere. Senator LEAHY has also appeared in front of the camera in Batman movies. But this shutterbug was bitten by the political bug, and he certainly made his mark in Vermont politics.

At age 34, he became the youngest and very first Democrat elected to the U.S. Senate from the Green Mountain State, and today, he is Vermont's longest serving Senator, having put his name on the ballot two dozen times during his political career.

A year ago in November, my friend and colleague announced that he would not seek reelection to a ninth term. At the Vermont statehouse, he happened to be there to announce his very first Senate campaign. It was at the Vermont statehouse that he did that, and PAT, at that time, recalled the words of Edmund Burke, the Dubliner who served in the House of Commons during America's Revolutionary War. The words that Burke imparted to the electors of Bristol in 1774 inspired PAT LEAHY's approach to public service.

Burke said:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment.

Burke also said a representative ought to have "the most unreserved communication with his constituents."

Now, in my mind, that still is the essence of representative government.

Although we serve on different sides of the aisle, find ourselves on opposite sides of the ideological spectrum, and hail from different regions of the country, PAT and I are called to serve our constituents.

PAT LEAHY and I have battled together in the trenches countless times over the years. He is a worthy adversary and, countless times, a trusted legislative ally. It takes grit; it takes grace; it takes gravitas to score victories and stick to the courage of one's convictions.

Indeed, PAT and I have more in common than might meet the eye. He is a dyed-in-the-wool liberal from New England, with a law degree from Georgetown. I am a Midwestern conservative and lifelong family farmer. As Senate colleagues, we share an abiding respect for this institution of the Senate. We value bipartisanship. For decades, we have earned the public trust of the voters of Vermont and Iowa. That tells me that Vermonters and Iowans prioritize hard work and constituent service.

At his announcement last November, PAT shared that he and his wife Marcelle made the decision together and that it was, to quote his words, "time to put down the gavel."

First, I want to say how much Barbara and I cherish our friendships. Barbara and I celebrated 68 years of marriage last August 22. Two days later, Marcelle and PAT celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Barbara and Marcelle are both cancer survivors and have developed a close friendship over these many years. These wives are strong and resilient and use their voices to advocate for early detection and treatment to save lives. Now, I can only speak for myself—and I believe my friend would agree—the unconditional support of Marcelle and Barbara have made us better men and then better Members of the U.S. Senate.

As I mentioned, PAT and Marcelle arrived at their heartfelt decision—made in partnership—to, using his words, "put down the gavel." As you can see here from this photograph, Chairman LEAHY certainly knows how to wield a gavel. He has had plenty of practice. In his nearly half century of service, PAT has chaired all of these committees: the Agriculture Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and the Appropriations Committee. This photo was taken in 2015 when then-Chairman LEAHY presented me with an engraved gavel as I prepared to take the helm of the Judiciary Committee. By the size of this gavel he is firmly holding in his hands, I am awfully glad that Senator LEAHY and I get along so well. Although we don't always see eye to eye on politics, we have found common ground on issues that matter. We respect each other's views and values and build consensus based on mutual trust.

We have served many years together on the Agriculture Committee. Senator LEAHY added tens of thousands of acres to the Green Mountain National Forest and is one of the few people on Earth who can explain Federal milk marketing orders—and, boy, did he go to bat for the Northeast dairy farmers.

Senator LEAHY has cultivated expertise in Foreign Affairs that is recognized here at home and around the

world. He has leveraged his leadership to help ban the export of anti-personnel land mines and secure justice for war victims.

For years, Senator LEAHY and I partnered together to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and also the very important whistleblower protection laws.

We have worked together to root out fraud and protect national security with reforms to the EB-5 investor visa program.

We share a fierce commitment to securing our States' fair shares as champions of small, rural States in America.

From broadband to infrastructure, to the opioid crisis and pandemic relief, Senator LEAHY and I have rolled up our sleeves and put in the work to ensure the people of Iowa and Vermont don't get short-ended.

For decades, Senator LEAHY and I have served together on the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group to advance bilateral economic and trade issues.

In May of 2000, we held our annual conference on the steamboat Delta Queen along a route from Memphis to New Orleans. I cochaired the committee discussing international trade, and Senator LEAHY cochaired the panel on international affairs.

In May of 2011, our group met with international partners in Belgium and traveled to Russia, where Senator LEAHY gave a very important speech on the judiciary and the rule of law, and then to Ireland to advance in all of these places diplomacy, peace, and prosperity.

I have enjoyed working together to forge fruitful relations around the world.

As I reflect on our years of service together here in the U.S. Senate, some observers might actually suggest times sure are different than when we first came to Washington. PAT was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1974, the same year that Iowans elected me to the U.S. House of Representatives—at that time, the only Republican in the Iowa delegation. Despite the partisanship and polarization that is defining civic life this year and for the last few years, I have great hope for America.

Senator LEAHY and I share an abiding fidelity to uphold the promise of America. I am honored to have served these many years in Senator LEAHY's company.

Vermonters placed their trust in Senator LEAHY's judgment. They counted on his vote, his voice, and his leadership to represent their values, and Senator LEAHY has delivered.

Barbara and I wish PAT and Marcelle joyful days ahead in each other's company on their farm, and we wish them that for many, many years to come.

Godspeed to my friend from Vermont.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.