

the Senate. That means preserving the legislative filibuster, the Senate rule that today has perhaps the greatest impact on preserving the Founders' vision of the U.S. Senate.

It also means restoring the Senate as a place of discussion and deliberation, and that includes empowering committees, restoring regular order, and engaging in extended debate on the Senate floor, where all Members should have a chance to make their voices and the voices of their constituents heard.

We have a lot to do this Congress: border security, extending the tax relief that Republicans delivered during the first Trump administration, lifting burdensome and expensive government regulations to help American businesses and families flourish, providing for our Nation's defense in an increasingly unstable world, bringing appropriations bills to the floor for serious deliberation so that we make the best possible use of taxpayer dollars, an overdue farm bill to update farm programs for farmers and ranchers to reflect current agriculture needs. And the list goes on.

In past years, I have listened to speeches delivered by other leaders welcoming Members to the new Congress and discussing the agenda for the coming months. I now find myself in the position of delivering that speech. My Republican colleagues have trusted me to lead our party—and the Senate—in the next Congress, and I will work every day to be worthy of that trust.

My philosophy of leadership comes from my dad. He was a basketball coach at our high school, and he had some very strong opinions about the right way to play. Sports, to him, was not about personal glory; it was about elevating the team. He hated ball hogs. If someone else was in a better position to take the shot, you always made the extra pass. You didn't try to pad your own statistics.

It is an attitude which I have tried to carry with me throughout my life, and it is an attitude I intend to carry with me to the leader office.

My job is to be of service to my colleagues and to our country. I am here today addressing the Senate in this role because of the confidence my colleagues have placed in me. But I am here, first of all, because of the confidence placed in me by the people of South Dakota. Without the trust that they have given me, I would not have had an opportunity to serve at all, much less have had the opportunity to serve as the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. My first priority here in Congress is always—always—to serve the people of my State.

Mr. President, I grew up in a small town in South Dakota, the town of Murdo—population today: roughly around 500 people. We didn't even have a traffic light when I was growing up there, and I wouldn't have had it any other way.

Life in Murdo had a beautiful simplicity. Sure, it had one or two draw-

backs. With a population that small, we Thune kids could be sure that our parents would have heard all about any of our misdemeanors before we even made it home.

But smalltown life was wonderful. In Murdo, you know everyone and everyone knows you, and that gave us a sense of community and belonging that we carry to this day.

I remember the day I told my mom I was going to run for Congress. She was excited, obviously, and confidently told me, "I know that you'll carry Murdo."

In Murdo, I learned the character of South Dakotans—the work ethic, the commitment to freedom coupled with a belief in personal responsibility, the sense of responsibility to the broader community.

Growing up, we knew that if a roof collapsed under the weight of snow or a windstorm came through and wiped out a barn or we lost a friend or family member, the whole community would rally to help. And that same attitude is reflected in towns across our State.

The South Dakota values I learned growing up helped shape my political philosophy: my belief that government should be limited; that it is best when it is closest to the people; and that if a matter can be handled at the State or the local level, it should be; that the legacy of the past is something to be cherished and preserved—while leaving room for change and adaptation when needed; that freedom is a sacred gift and one that must be defended; and that with freedom comes responsibility.

And, finally, that while government is necessary, government is not where we should look for salvation.

None of us gets where we are alone, and I owe thanks to many people: to my parents Pat and Harold who gave us Thune kids undying love and commitment, a strong set of values, and the most precious gift of all, faith; to my brothers and sister; to my beloved wife Kimberley, who is here with me here today. And let me say that I married up.

And I am grateful every day for Kimberley's love and wisdom, her advice and support, and her endless patience. It is not an easy thing to be married to a Member of Congress. It is not an easy thing to have a Member of Congress for a dad either, and I am grateful not only for my wife's enduring support but for the support of my daughters Brittany and Larissa. They are here today in the Senate as well with their husbands Luke and Scott and with all of our grandchildren: John, Mark, Lucy, Henley, Hewitt, Haven, and one yet-to-be-named little one on the way, who have brought me and Kimberley an immense amount of joy.

Not one of us here in Congress could last a day without our staffs, and so I want to thank all of those who spend and have spent long days and long nights in my office serving South Dakotans and the American people.

Finally, I thank God, who has richly blessed me in every way. As it says in the Scriptures, "For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

(Applause.)

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NEW ORLEANS BOURBON STREET ATTACK AND LAS VEGAS CYBERTRUCK EXPLOSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me concur in the remarks my colleague made about the tragedies in New Orleans and the West Coast in Las Vegas, and we regret that.

REMEMBERING JIMMY CARTER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I also want to say a word about Jimmy Carter.

Last week, America mourned the loss of one of the most decent and humble public servants we have ever seen: President Jimmy Carter. President Carter was a living embodiment of leadership through service, compassion, and a thirst for justice for all.

I will have more to say about our President in the coming days, and we will all have more to say about the loss of this inspiring American. It is rare that someone leaves the Presidency only to continue building his legacy to even higher levels, as President Carter did.

But that is a testament to how rare and special a person he was. From improving human rights to his tireless efforts alongside his wife Rosalynn with Habitat for Humanity, he inspired millions with his unwavering commitment to justice and equality.

We pray for his family. We pray for his loved ones. May his memory be a blessing and an enduring reminder of what it means to truly serve.

119TH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, first, welcome to all of my colleagues to the 119th Congress. I hope everyone had a blessed and happy start to the new year, full of family and loved ones. I was lucky enough to have just that.

Today, the Senate begins a new chapter in its distinguished history. We begin our work at a moment of crossroads for our country. We convene at a time of uncertainty for American democracy, for America's economy, and for the future leadership of America on the world stage. These challenges that we face as a Nation are great, and so must be our resolve.

Let me first begin by acknowledging my friend and colleague, the former

Republican leader Senator McCONNELL. For as long as I have served as Democratic Leader, he has sat opposite me across the aisle. As he transitions away from leadership—it was nice seeing him in the seat over there where he didn't have to get up all the time—I would like to thank him for those important occasions when we worked together, despite our many fierce disagreements.

Let me also congratulate another colleague, our new Republican Leader JOHN THUNE. Leader THUNE and I have served in this Chamber for a long time. I know he is a good and decent American, someone who loves his country as we all do.

I know he just became leader a moment ago, so I hope he doesn't mind if I offer some unsolicited advice. The majority leader sets the tone, and that tone determines, to a large extent, how successful we will be moving forward.

If we look back at all the bills we passed in 2021 and 2022, most of them originated in the Senate because both parties found ways to reach across the aisle.

I want to work with the new Republican leader to keep that bipartisan streak going in the new year. I don't expect we will agree on everything or even many things, but there will still be opportunities to improve the lives of the American people if we are willing to work together.

So today I congratulate Leader THUNE and look forward to serving alongside him in the 119th Congress.

Let me also congratulate all our returning colleagues who have just taken their oaths of office. It is a great honor to serve in this Chamber with you. The work we do in this Chamber has the potential to create enormous prosperity for millions of American people, if we do our jobs right.

So I challenge our new Members as my new colleagues to make the most of the next 6 years. It will go by faster than you think.

On the Democratic side, it brings me great joy and excitement to welcome our six new colleagues to the Democratic caucus. I have spent the last year or so getting to know every single one of them as candidates; and seeing them finally raise their hands, take the oath, and walk amongst us as colleagues fills us all with pride.

Now, every time Democrats welcome new Members to our caucus, it is an exciting day, but I am particularly excited to get to work with this uniquely talented new class. I expect we will accomplish many good things for the American people and prevent bad things from being done to them.

This year's class is distinct in two ways: They are not only unusually experienced, but many of them are making history by taking the oath of office.

First, I would like to welcome Senator RUBEN GALLEGU from the great State of Arizona. Senator GALLEGU arrives to the Senate as a veteran legis-

lator, both literally and figuratively. He served our country as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. He served the people of Arizona as a longtime Member of the House. Now that he has taken the oath of office, the people of Arizona have a Hispanic Senator representing them for the first time ever.

From the State of Delaware, I would like to welcome Senator LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. Many of us know Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER well because like many of our new colleagues, she was a longtime Member of the House—five of our new six colleagues were House Members, so they have a lot of great experience—where she climbed up the ranks of leadership to become assistant whip while serving on the influential Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Like the other historymaking Members of our class, Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER is the first woman and the first person of color ever to represent Delaware in the Senate.

Let me welcome our new colleague from Maryland, Senator ALSOBROOKS. Born and raised in Prince George's County, she was the youngest person and first woman ever elected as the top law enforcement officer of the county she grew up in. So she has immense experience in fighting crime, standing up for victims of abuse and violence, and helping working-class Americans as County Executive. And she now becomes the first African-American Senator ever to serve from the State of Maryland.

From the State of Michigan, we are excited to welcome Senator ELISSA SLOTKIN, another deeply experienced public servant. She is another longtime veteran of the House and one of America's top national security experts. At a time when Americans demand bipartisanship, Senator SLOTKIN knows how to do it. She served in the CIA under President Bush and in the Department of Defense under President Obama.

And, finally, I would like to acknowledge two more colleagues who have already taken their oaths but deserve special recognition on this special day: Senator ADAM SCHIFF from California and Senator ANDY KIM from New Jersey.

A longtime Member of the House, Senator SCHIFF is a well-known leader to many of us, admired for his thoughtfulness, his eloquence, and fierce level of democracy.

And, finally, last but certainly not least, I would like to congratulate our newest colleague from New Jersey, Senator ANDY KIM. He boasts an impressive record as a longtime leader in the House, a top national security expert and diplomat, and is the first Korean American from any State to serve in the Senate.

So to our new colleagues, we say, "Welcome." We are excited to work with you; we are ready to help you. And as you find your bearings, we urge you never to lose sight of the great responsibility you carry as a Member of this body.

NEW REPUBLICAN MAJORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, the election is behind us. It is time to look to the future. Now begins the hard work, the important work, the solemn work, of rewarding the trust people have placed in us. Very soon, a new administration will be sworn into office alongside the new majorities in Congress. But for the first time in a long time, the next President will be someone we have seen before, President-elect Trump will return to the Oval Office.

In this first day of the 119th Congress, I would like to take a moment to talk about how Senate Democrats will approach the next 2 years.

It can be summarized like this: Democrats stand united, not because of who we fight against but because of who we are fighting for—the American people.

We are here ready to fight for the American people. We are here to fight for the working class of this country. We are here to build ladders of opportunity to the middle class.

Democrats aren't a monolith. We come from many different States and many different opinions. But we grew up in places as varied as Brooklyn, NY, and Atlanta, GA. We are from the West Coast, the East Coast, the industrial Midwest, and everywhere in-between. And we sometimes disagree, just as any tight-knit family disagrees. But Democrats are united—fiercely united—when it comes to fighting for working Americans, for working families.

In the months and years to come, Democrats will show where our values lie through our actions and words and through the policies we push in this Chamber.

Democrats are here to tackle the biggest problems that face our country. Democrats are here because we need to make housing more affordable for the millions struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

We need to make sure Americans earn higher paychecks, and keep more of their paychecks too. Democrats are here because we want to lower the cost of childcare, an outrageously high expense for too many American families who have struggled to get the best lives for themselves and their children.

Democrats are here to defend a woman's right to choose, to defend our fundamental liberties, to defend the wellspring of our democracy. We want to help our small business owners thrive and function as the engines of our economy. We want to help Americans save more money when they go to the grocery store, when they go to the pharmacy, when they pay their cable and internet bill. We want to make sure Americans aren't ripped off by giant corporations through hidden fees and predatory behavior.

Democrats stand ready to make lives better for the American people. We want to work with anyone and hold the line whenever necessary to achieve that goal.