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Senator Joe Biden Casts His 10,000th Vote

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues in recognizing a historic achievement by one of the Senate's most remarkable Members.

With the vote we are about to cast, Senator Joe Biden becomes the youngest Member of this body ever to cast 10,000 votes.

It should come as a surprise to none of us that Senator Biden should set such a record. He has always been a few steps ahead of the crowd. In 1972, at the age of 29, he mounted his first Senate campaign against a popular incumbent, Republican Senator J. Caleb Boggs. No one—not even his own Democratic party—thought he could do it. But in 1973 he was sworn in as the second youngest person ever to be popularly elected to the Senate.

The first issue Senator Biden tackled was campaign finance reform—as we all know, this is a difficult issue for anyone, much less a first-year member.

But as we also all know, Joe Biden has never shied away from a fight. His candor, strength of character and commitment to principle have led him through many battles over the years.

As chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Biden helped this institution, and this nation, sort through the complexities of the most controversial issues of our day—from flag burning, to abortion and the death penalty,

Senator Biden also presided over perhaps the most contentious Supreme Court nominations hearings in

history. In the midst of the controversy surrounding nominee Robert Bork, Senator Biden maintained a level of intellectual rigor that raised the bar for committee consideration of all future nominations.

We also recall his leadership and doggedness in crafting what may well be the most difficult and important pieces of legislation in recent years, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. This included the Violence Against Women Act, the very first comprehensive piece of legislation to specifically address gender-based crimes.

He was also instrumental in creating the position of national “Drug Czar,” which has been invaluable in our fight against illegal drugs. His commitment to keeping drugs off the streets remains steadfast.

The Senate and this nation have also benefitted from Senator Biden's leadership in the foreign policy arena. As ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, he is widely regarded as one of the Senate's leading foreign policy experts.

He was one of the first to predict the fall of communism and anticipate the need to redefine our policies to fit a post-cold war world. And, as far back as early 1993, Senator Biden called for active American participation to contain the conflict in Bosnia. In his public service and personal life, Joe Biden sets a high standard we can all admire.

His steel will, dedication and compassion, reinforcing a powerful intellect and impressive communication skills, have made Senator Biden an

exceptional Senator and friend. The number of people he has inspired through his commitment to his family, his values and his beliefs is legion.

Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure to serve with Joe Biden, and to count him as a friend. On behalf of all the Members of this Senate, I congratulate Joe on this historic achievement and thank him for his numerous contributions to the United States Senate and to his country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate my good friend and colleague, Senator Joe Biden, on casting his 10,000th vote in the United States Senate.

All of us who have listened—and listened—to Senator Biden on the Senate floor have come to deeply respect his leadership and commitment to causes of concern.

He led the historic effort for NATO expansion with courage and conviction.

He has a deep concern for America's role in the world and is a true leader of our foreign policy establishment.

Senator Biden has been a champion of victims of crime, particularly crimes against women.

Most of all, those of us who know him, have watched his grace and courage through personal suffering and serious illness.

I join my colleagues in recognizing Senator Biden's contributions to the Senate and extend my congratulations to him.

I congratulate the Senator from Delaware. I note he is only 56. I am 1 year older and he has already cast 10,000 votes. What an achievement.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator

from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I wish to pay Senator Biden a tribute. He is an outstanding Senator and an outstanding man.

When anyone reflects on their life, they do so by thinking about significant personal and professional benchmarks and milestones. Today, one of our colleagues—and my good friend— Joe Biden is marking just one such accomplishment, his 10,000th career vote in the Senate.

Casting your 10,000th vote is a momentous occasion for many reasons. Beyond being an indication that a Senator has served in this body for a substantial period of time, casting 10,000 votes is a testament to an individual's commitment to public service. Furthermore, it is proof that a Senator is doing a good job, for his or her constituents have seen fit to keep an official in office long enough to achieve this accomplishment. Then again, given the type of person Joe Biden is, it should come as no surprise to us that the people of Delaware have repeatedly sent him to the Senate since 1972. He is a man who is motivated by a desire to help others and is dedicated to serving the people of his state and our nation. Joe Biden clearly entered his life in public service for the proper reasons and with the best of motives, and he is an individual who represents all that is positive about those who seek elected office.

I have had the good fortune of knowing Joe Biden from the beginning of his Senate career and it is hard to believe that almost thirty years could have elapsed so quickly. During the course of his tenure, I have watched Joe establish an impressive and respected record of work. He has distinguished himself in the fields of the judiciary and foreign affairs, and he is considered a forceful, passionate, and articulate advocate on both these issues. Though he is often sought for analysis and insight regarding international developments, making our streets safe, or any number of other issues before the Senate, Joe Biden first and foremost works tirelessly to serve the people of Delaware. The people of his state are indeed fortunate to be represented by such a capable individual.

As most of you already may know, Joe and I have worked closely together for years as members of the

Judiciary Committee. We have both served as each other's chairmen and ranking members of this very important committee and I have the highest regard for Joe's intellect, leadership, and ability. Ironically, we not only sat next to each other on the committee for years, but we have been neighbors in the Russell Building for many years as well, our offices being literally right next to one another. You would be hard pressed to find a finer, more dedicated, or more friendly group of people than those who work for Joe Biden and I hope that he stays my neighbor for as long as he is in the Senate.

Beyond being a congenial colleague and a good neighbor, Joe Biden is my friend. He is someone whose word can be trusted, who wants to do what is right, who is devoted to his family, and whose heart is good. These are rare qualities in any individual, but they can be especially scarce in this town. That JOE has not changed over the years is testament to the man he is and the son his parents raised. I am proud to call Joe Biden my friend as I know each of my colleagues is as well. I do not think I am going out on a limb when I predict that Joe Biden is going to be in the United States Senate for a long time to come, and that as long as he is a Member of this body he will continue to make valuable contributions to public policy and the nation. Joe, I thank you for your service, I thank you for all your assistance, and most of all I thank you for your many years as a loyal and kind friend.

Mr. HOLLINGS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I join in the felicitations of our distinguished colleague from Delaware. He suffered as a young lad a handicap of stuttering. He tried to overcome that by addressing the student body. We in the Senate can well attest to the fact that he has overcome it. He has led the way in foreign policy for NATO and in judicial matters.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I add my words of praise for the Senator from Delaware and make a

point that he is going to be here a long time. If he matches his current record—he took office in 1973—if he does this, he will be only 82 when he casts approximately his 20,000th vote, and he will then be a kid compared to Senator THURMOND, who will be there at the time congratulating him on his 20,000th vote.

Joe Biden has been such a good friend to me.

When I was in the House, I asked him to introduce the Senate companion bill to my legislation to protect dolphins.

Joe did not hesitate, and he enthusiastically took up the cause—with the strong support of his beautiful daughter Ashley! And he has been a steadfast ally in that important environmental fight. He was the Senate sponsor of my Ocean Protection Act. I was the House sponsor of his VAWA Act.

I am now a proud member of the Foreign Relations Committee, where Joe Biden shows why he is one of the most respected foreign policy experts in the country.

Congratulations, I say to my good friend, and many, many more years of success and happiness with your good friends and colleagues here and your wonderful family at home in Delaware.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Delaware is the only person in this body who is younger than I am but senior to me at the same time. I congratulate him on his 10,000th vote. I jumped over the cliff with him on more than a few of those votes. I look forward to the day when I might match his record.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I know everybody wants to go home, but let me say, if we tried to review Joe Biden's accomplishments, it would take all night. Let me put it this way: I opposed most of them.

(Laughter.)

Furthermore—this is serious—Joe Biden is a caring person. I work with him on the Foreign Relations Committee. He is great to work with. Joe, I am proud of you.

(Applause.)

Mr. ROTH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, this next vote is a milestone for a friend of mine—a distinguished colleague and a leader in this chamber. It represents the ten-thousandth vote cast by Joe Biden, and I would like to take a moment not only to bring it to the attention of our colleagues, but to reflect on a career that has been—and continues to be—a bright legacy of service.

To put this vote into perspective, Mr. President, only twenty Senators in history have reached this milestone—only twenty Senators out of the 1,851 who have had the honor of serving in this distinguished body. Each of us who has the honor of representing our state in the Senate understands what a rare privilege it is to cast a vote on this floor. In fact, the first vote we cast ranks among the most memorable moment in our lives—a moment not to be forgotten.

I'm sure that when Joe cast his first vote on January 23, 1973—over twenty five years ago—he could not have foreseen this moment. Through the years, he has achieved many distinguished honors. He has gained national stature, as a candidate for President. He has established himself as a foremost expert on judicial and foreign policy matters. And though I know that we often differ philosophically, I can say that each vote Joe has cast, his focus has been on doing what's best for Delaware and our Nation, at large.

Joe, on this special occasion, I salute you. Ten thousand votes speak volumes about a life dedicated to public service. On behalf of our colleagues I congratulate you. And on behalf of our friends and neighbors in Delaware I thank you.

For me, it has been an honor, a pleasure, and a privilege to serve these many years with Senator Biden. He always does what he thinks is in the best interests of our country and our people of Delaware. I am proud to count him a friend.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join in commending our colleague from Delaware on reaching this major milestone in his brilliant Senate career.

For nearly three decades, he has done an outstanding job serving the people of Delaware and the Nation in the Senate. He has been an effective leader on a wide range of issues in both domestic policy and foreign policy.

It has been a special privilege for me to serve with our distinguished colleague on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and I particularly commend his leadership over the past quarter century on the many law enforcement challenges facing the nation. It is a privilege to serve with Senator Biden—and I am sure he will compile an equally outstanding record on his next 10,000 votes.

[Rollcall Vote No. 105 Leg.]

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a very dear friend of mine in the Senate and his historic 10,000th vote. His name is Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, a friend and colleague whose distinguished career has elevated both the quality and stature of the Senate. The number 10,000 is an important landmark in a career that has many milestones, but I believe Senator Biden will be best remembered for the significance of his varied votes. I have seen many of those notable votes cast.

In every one of those votes he was careful, deliberate, and respectful of his duty to the people of Delaware. Joe and I have served in the Senate for roughly the same amount of time. He has been here a couple of years longer than I. We have worked closely together in the Senate Judiciary Committee,

which he chaired and which I now chair. On occasion we have agreed to disagree. In fact, I wish he had cast more of those 10,000 votes with me. In all seriousness, however, Joe and I have found many areas where we strongly have agreed.

Joe has long been a leader on the issue of youth violence, an issue which has affected countless lives in Delaware, Utah, and the rest of the Nation.

In 1974, he was the lead sponsor of the Juvenile Justice Prevention Act. In 1992, he sponsored the Juvenile Justice Prevention Act Amendments, which provided States with Federal grants for a complete and comprehensive approach to improve the juvenile justice system and controlling juvenile crime.

He has long advocated a tough stand against illegal drugs. He authored the law creating the Nation's drug czar, and in 1986, he was the guiding force for the enactment of groundbreaking drug legislation. He has probably done as much if not more than anybody in the Senate with regard to the antidrug stances that we all should support and that we all appreciate today.

With regard to juvenile justice, next week we bring up a juvenile justice bill. Senator Biden has been a mainstay in helping to resolve conflicts that we have in that bill and hopefully helping it to become a bipartisan bill that all of us can support. What I admire most about Joe is the fact that he is the staunchest defender of his party's beliefs, yet he does not hesitate to cross party lines to forge a consensus position when he believes it is the right thing to do. Nowhere is that more evident than with the issue of juvenile crime.

Joe has a history of standing up for what is right when it comes to juvenile crime, and I believe he will continue to do so. We look forward to working with him next week.

While chairman of the Judiciary Committee, he authored the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which was signed into law in 1994. While I differed with much that was contained and dropped from the bill, this legislation contained the Biden-Hatch Violence Against Women Act, the first comprehensive law to address gender-based offenses. Senator Biden's leadership

on this issue changed how many Americans view the issue of violence against women. He even changed how we refer to domestic abuse in the Senate by continually asking, "What's domestic about beating your wife?"

Joe is widely regarded as a foreign policy expert. Many remember his leadership on NATO expansion in 1998. He stood out as a strong advocate for the inclusion of several Eastern European nations into the alliance. NATO is now engaged in its greatest test, and I am convinced that Joe's leadership was integral in strengthening the alliance.

In 1997, Senator Biden showed these same leadership skills when he led the successful effort in the Senate to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. Joe Biden has truly had a distinguished career in the Senate.

All that said and done, I could go on and on about his distinguished career, but it is his personal qualities that have impressed his friends, his family, and his colleagues, including, of course, myself as a friend and as a colleague.

Many may not know that Senator BIDEN overcame two operations for a near-fatal brain aneurysm in 1988 and returned to the Senate in 1989. I remember those days and I remember how catastrophic they were for him, his family, and for those of us who prayed for him. He showed great courage and persistence in overcoming that adversity. Nobody was more thankful than his wife and three children, to whom he is a loving husband and father. Indeed, he is renowned for putting his family first, as demonstrated by his daily commute to and from Delaware. The fact that he takes a 2-hour train ride to get here every day makes the accomplishment of reaching 10,000 votes all the more astounding.

So it is with great honor that I ask my colleagues to join me and others in congratulating Senator Joseph R. Biden on his 10,000th vote. His many contributions to this body are appreciated and recognized. I am sure that I speak for all of my colleagues when I say we will enjoy keeping a close eye on the many votes yet to come.

Just as a gift this evening, this is the last CD that we have done. It is, frankly, Santita Jackson, Jesse

Jackson's daughter, singing with a wonderful young African American from Nashville, who is as good a singer as anybody in the world, named Chris Willis. This CD is entitled "Put Your Arms Around the World." I think it kind of applies to Joe Biden. When he listens to the song written by Peter McCann and me—Peter McCann wrote "It's the Right Time of the Night" and "Want to Make Love"—called "Take Good Care of My Heart," that particular song, I think, really applies to Senator Biden because, in his own way, with his tremendous interest in foreign policy, tremendous interest in the law, his tremendous interest in overcoming injustice in our society not only here but throughout the world, I think this song will mean something to him. It certainly does to me. Santita Jackson and Chris Willis are two of the rising young stars in America. I would like to give this CD to Senator Biden at this time and say that I look forward to serving with him for a long time to come. So hang in there.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I join with my colleagues in paying this tribute to Joe Biden on the occasion of him casting his 10,000th vote in the Senate. The casting of that vote is an occasion to pay tribute not for voting but for a real career of service and of great distinction. It has been one of the pleasures of my service in this body to have served with Joe Biden, and one of my pleasures that we represent adjoining States. Therefore, we interact on a number of issues that otherwise would not be the case amongst Members of the Senate.

He has had an extraordinary career here. He is now in his fifth term. He got elected before he was old enough, actually, under the Constitution, before he was old enough under the Constitution to be a Member of the Senate. He was elected at the age of 29, and he has just had a terrific career of accomplishment. Those who have worked with him derive great pleasure from it. We have marveled at his legislative skill.

I want to talk about two or three of the things in which he has been very much involved. We have served together on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee all of these years. And he has exercised extraordinary leadership of the Senate Judiciary Committee at various points during his career. We

are making a lot of the fact now in America that crime rates are going down all across the country. So everyone is sort of looking to see what is the cause of that, or who ought to get the praise for it. I have to tell you that Joe Biden ought to get a lot of the praise for the fact that crime has gone down across this land. He has authored every significant anticrime initiative in the Congress over a period of time that he has been here—the Juvenile Justice Prevention Act, the Victims of Crime Act, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, and on and on and on.

Senator Biden has been a great champion of law enforcement and of those who work in law enforcement. He has been sensitive on the important civil liberties and civil rights cases, which a democracy ought to be sensitive to. He has understood how you can balance those and put it together. There are thousands and thousands of cops on the street today giving us safer neighborhoods and more secure cities and communities all across America because of Joe Biden's initiatives.

Senator Biden was the first to include the provisions with respect to violence against women and really raise to a very high level the whole issue of gender-based crimes. He has consistently focused our attention onto that area.

He has dealt in a very effective way with the gun issue, which is not easy to deal with in this body, and certainly not an easy issue to deal with effectively. I have to tell you that I think throughout all of this period Senator Biden had a clear perception and focus on how to do something about the crime issue. He did not demagogue it. He did not seek to emotionalize it. He worked hard to develop the real programs that would make a difference in our communities all across the country. I am extremely grateful to him for that.

On the Foreign Relations Committee, he has consistently been an advocate of an international stance by the United States—actually, the expansion of NATO was in large part a consequence of his very effective advocacy and leadership. He has been sensitive to the importance of human rights and democratic values in American foreign policy. I have been very privileged to serve with him on the Foreign Relations Committee and to see his effective leadership in that arena.

Finally, let me just say he is a terrific friend. I can't tell you how much I value and treasure his friendship, how much it has meant, how much I enjoy his sense of humor, and even how much I like to listen to his speeches—which occasionally go on for a while. But this institution has been honored by having him as a Member. It is extraordinary that at what is really, for the Senate, still a very young age, he has achieved his 10,000th vote. I wish him many, many, many thousands more. I thank him for his extraordinary service to the country and for his deep friendship to all of us.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I, too, add my congratulations to the Senator for his 10,000th vote. At this point in my Senate career, that is really an incredible number. I have known Senator BIDEN for a long time. I was the State Jaycee President when the U.S. Jaycees recognized him as one of the 10 outstanding young men of this country in Mobile, AL. I can't tell you how incredible it was to get to meet him at that point and how even more incredible it was when I got to join this body and meet him here after he must have done 9,000 votes. I read about him in the newspaper and have gotten to work with him, and I have enjoyed that experience

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, if it is appropriate, may I respond briefly?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am truly appreciative of the comments my friends have made—my old-new friends, my old-old friends, and my close buddies from across the State line.

I began to wonder about casting my 10,000th vote on the occasion of the majority leader indicating there would be no more votes for 4 days and the last planes heading west were leaving. I thank my colleagues who put in the Record their comments. I will withhold specific comment until I read them, because God only knows what they said. But let me say that I find it no particular feat to have cast 10,000 votes. If you are around here long enough and still standing, that happens.

I hope I have cast some votes that have made this country a little bit better. I am confident there is none that I have cast that have enhanced the standing of America, or the condition of the American people, that weren't bipartisan. I can't think of any that were done that weren't done in a bipartisan manner in the end.

I look at Orrin Hatch. Orrin Hatch came here, and is still one of the leading conservative lights on the American political scene, and yet we have worked together for years and years and years. I cannot think that we have ever had a cross word to one another in 25 years. We have had very different views.

Paul Sarbanes, who is literally one of the brightest people I have served with—just raw, pure, gray matter, raw horsepower—to have him say the things that he said about me in reference to our personal friendship is meaningful, particularly since my wife, who works as a professor in Delaware and seldom is in Washington, is sitting in the galleries listening to this, and my No. 2 son, who is now living in Washington, heard it as well.

I am sure they know better. But my mother probably believes everything Paul said, because I met Paul's mother as well.

I think, if I can make one, in a sense, political observation, the first vote I cast in January of 1972 was a vote I was told—I didn't remember this—on an Assistant Secretary, I believe, the No.2 person at State. I am not positive of that.

I remember the day, although I was obviously very junior, when I was sworn in by the Secretary of the Senate, Mr. Valeo, who actually came to me in Wilmington to swear me in, because of unusual circumstances. After he gave me the little certificate that we get when we are sworn in, he said, "You have arrived to the Senate, to the best of my knowledge, the least senior than any man in history," because seniority is based on the previous offices that you have held. It keeps narrowing down to State, size, population, and age ultimately.

But when I got here, there were a number of giants in the Senate. We often hear it said today that there are no giants left in the Senate. In truth there are.

There are women and men who serve in this body today who are equal to and in some ways surpass the capacity of some of the great people I have had the honor of serving with over the past almost 27 years. So the caliber has not changed. What has changed a little bit—and I am referencing this tonight, because of my colleagues who are here on the floor—what has changed since then is the impression that we don't like each other very much, that we don't get along with one another very well, that we are nakedly partisan in all of our undertakings.

I wish the public could see that there is still a degree of camaraderie here, a degree of mutual respect that crosses that sometimes "chasm" called the "center aisle," what makes this body more unique than any other legislative body at least in modern history. I will not challenge Senator BYRD about whether it equals or surpasses the Roman Senate, but I am confident that it does surpass any other legislative body in modern history.

I would just conclude by saying the lubricant that allows that to happen is genuine and personal respect that most of us have for one another. I think it is the defining feature of this institution. I remember now meeting Senator Enzi back in 1972—or 1973, I guess it was—when I received that award. But I have not gotten—because we don't serve on committees together—to know him personally as well as I know my two colleagues who remain. Notwithstanding the wonderful words they have both uttered relating to me, the genuine testimony I take from what they have done is that they are here. It is 9 o'clock at night. There are no votes. The Senator from Maryland has a long drive home, because, he, like me, commutes every day to Baltimore, MD. And he drives. My friend from Utah probably missed a plane to go back to Utah this weekend.

I truly, truly appreciate it.

Let me yield the floor by saying, Mr. President, that I am asked sometimes what is the best, the most significant perk that exists being a Senator. I always answer that there are two things. Before I became a Senator, as a young man campaigning in the midst of the Vietnam war, and the civil rights crisis, and the assassination of men who I had an incredible regard for in 1968—both Martin Luther King and

Robert Kennedy—I came here thinking that all that had to happen was that we elected women and men who had a greater degree of intellectual capacity, had a better education and were smarter. I got here and I was truly dumbfounded—truly dumbfounded—by how many people who serve in this body who are so incredibly bright, who are so significantly schooled in the areas in which they speak. I arrived and I found out that Jack Javits could tell you as much about modern art as he could about foreign policy. There was Mike Mansfield, who could tell you as much about Chinese history as he could about the politics in Montana.

Paul Sarbanes can tell you as much about the international monetary system, about the history of the Balkans, about the banking system, as he can tell you about his hometown baseball team and the local politics of Baltimore.

Orrin Hatch is a man who used to be a card-carrying union guy from Pittsburgh, who goes out as a boxer, goes out to his now home State of Utah, and gets elected after having a career as an incredible trial lawyer. I mean it is amazing—the diversity here.

I will not mention the judge's name. But I was having lunch with a Justice once in my capacity as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. The issue was about pay raises for judges. This particular Justice said publicly—this Justice accidentally said it. He didn't intend to be quoted—that he could understand why the public wouldn't want Congresspersons and Senators to get a raise but judges were different, they were academically qualified. I know the Senator from Utah knows who I am talking about. To this particular, very competent Justice—I was in his office—I said, "May I close your door, Mr. Justice?" I said, "Mr. Justice, I have sat in the Judiciary Committee for years. I have had the opportunity as either ranking member or chairman for, I think, a 14- year period to look at the background of every single person who has come on the bench." At that time it was 10 or 12 years. I said, "I am willing to make you a bet. I will take the intellectual potential of the Senate"—in the House I didn't know as well—"and match it against the entire judiciary." They are bright, they are competent. If I am not mistaken in time, we had, like Senator Sarbanes, seven Rhodes scholars in the Senate. We had a half a

dozen Marshall scholars—not me. I don't qualify on that account. We have men and women in here whose academic distinction exceeds that of 99 percent of the people—all the jobs anywhere in America, corporate, labor, business, academia.

The greatest perk I have had as a Senator was access to people with serious, serious minds and a serious sense of purpose, and who cared about something. If I dropped dead tomorrow, I would be thankful to the people of Delaware, for the individuals they have allowed me to be exposed to, to argue with, to fight with, to debate with, to agree with Members. I will be thankful to them for the gift they gave me in having that access. I don't believe there is any other place in the Nation I could have gotten that kind of exposure.

The second thing I found that has been the greatest gift in those 10,000 votes during that period is that this is the ultimate graduate education. If you take this job serious, as all my colleagues do on this floor, you learn one thing: You don't get a driver, you don't get a house, you don't get a bodyguard, nor should we, but what you do get is the ability to pick up the phone and call anybody in the world and they will take your call. You can call Nobel laureates, you can call experts in any field, and if you want to learn, this is the ultimate seminar if you take it seriously. There is no other place I can think of that a person can do that.

Mr. President, I have a lot more to learn. And of those 10,000 votes, I am sure there are many that were not as enlightened as I thought they were at the time I cast them. Hopefully, I have learned. Hopefully, I will get a chance to learn more than I know now. If you want to do it, and if you take it seriously and if you reach out across that chasm, you reach out across that aisle, believe it or not, there is somebody on the other side willing to talk to you, willing to exchange ideas with you. If you work hard enough, you actually may do a little bit—just a little bit—to change the state of affairs in this great country. That is all we can do here.

I have no illusions about the significance of the Senate in terms of determining national policy, but within the context and the role the Senate plays, we get to play little parts. The only time it works is when we cross that chasm. That is the only time it works.

I thank my colleagues. They are honorable men. They are men of achievement. I think the public gets a pretty good buy for their investment in the men that are sitting here on the floor today and the women and men who cast all the votes today; they are competent. It has been a pleasure working with them. I hope I get to cast a few more votes. I hope I get to convince Orrin Hatch and Senator Enzi to cast more votes my way. The truth of the matter is, as I said, nothing gets done unless you reach across that aisle. I appreciate the fact there has always been somebody on this side to talk to me.

I thank all my colleagues. For those who made other statements, I will respond in the Record and not take the time of my colleagues. The Baltimore-Washington tunnel is probably clear by now. We can both head north.

I yield the floor.