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TRIBUTES TO HON. JOHN B. BREAUX



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John B. Breaux

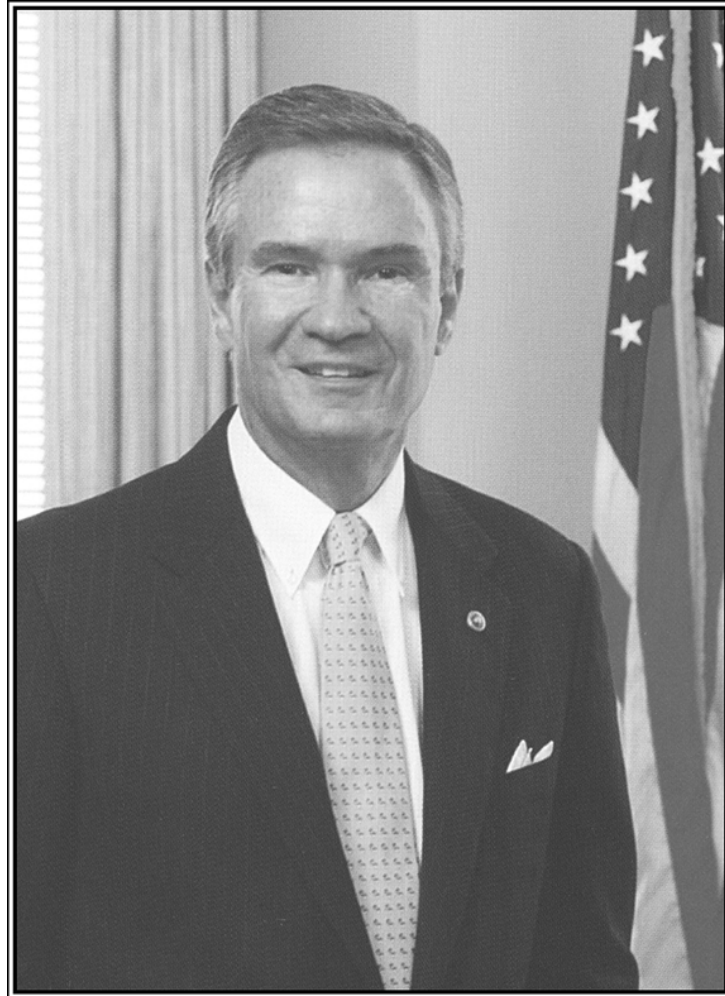
U.S. SENATOR FROM LOUISIANA

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF  
THE UNITED STATES



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John B. Breaux

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S. Doc. 108-20

Tributes  
Delivered in Congress

**John B. Breaux**  
United States Congressman  
1972-1987

United States Senator  
1987-2005



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*Compiled under the direction  
of the  
Joint Committee on Printing  
Trent Lott, Chairman*

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## Biography

Senator JOHN BREAUX, a leader in national politics, served as an effective and aggressive advocate for the State of Louisiana. Born in Crowley, LA, Senator BREAUX was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972 at the age of 28, becoming the youngest Member in the U.S. Congress. Senator BREAUX represented the Seventh District of Louisiana for 14 years before being elected to fill Senator Russell Long's seat in 1986.

In 1998, Senator BREAUX was overwhelmingly reelected to a third term in the U.S. Senate, maintaining his title as Louisiana's senior Senator and receiving an endorsement from every major newspaper in the State. Louisiana's largest newspaper, *(New Orleans) Times-Picayune*, called Senator BREAUX "a mainstream Southern Democrat who has the skill to fashion legislative coalitions that draw extremes toward a bipartisan middle."

Senator BREAUX was widely recognized as a leader in the Senate. In 1993, his Democratic colleagues elected him to serve as chief deputy whip, a position he held for three congressional terms.

A senior member of the Finance Committee, Senator BREAUX served as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy. He served on two other Finance subcommittees: Health Care, and Taxation and IRS Oversight.

From his position on the Finance Committee, Senator BREAUX played critical roles in several recent legislative debates. He was instrumental in helping forge the compromises that led to passage of the welfare reform and health insurance reform bills in 1996. He was also a leader in the efforts to reduce the capital gains tax, and proposed significant tax relief for college education expenses.

As the leader of the Centrist Coalition of Senate Democrats and Republicans, Senator BREAUX sought bipartisan agreements in a number of areas, including the balanced budget, welfare reform and health care reform.

Senator BREAUX's mainstream approach to government earned him praise from conservatives, liberals and mod-

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erates across Louisiana. As the (*Shreveport*) *Times* observed in a March 1997 editorial: “Instead of indulging in the partisan, divisive ideological politics that has characterized recent years, BREAUX has sought to build bridges between Democrats and Republicans and is widely respected on both sides of the aisle. BREAUX speaks for America and Louisiana, not for an ideology, and his constituents know it.”

Senator BREAUX was the Chairman of the Special Committee on Aging. He used this position to highlight the importance of protecting and strengthening Social Security, Medicare, and other programs essential to the health and well-being of older Americans. In 1998, he was selected by the White House and House and Senate leaders to chair the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. Also in 1998, Senator BREAUX co-chaired the National Commission on Retirement Policy, which produced legislation to help reform Social Security.

As a member of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Senator BREAUX took a leadership role on a wide variety of issues, including telecommunications, consumer protection, fisheries, shipping, tourism and aviation.

Senator BREAUX was a leader on critical issues facing Louisiana. He strongly supported Louisiana’s agriculture, oil and gas, and tourism industries. In 1993, Senator BREAUX played a crucial role in the defeat of the unpopular BTU tax—a proposal that would have harmed Louisiana industry and cost jobs nationwide.

Senator BREAUX balanced a strong economic agenda with environmental action. In 1990, he authored landmark legislation resulting in more than \$50 million annually to preserve America’s wetlands. And he took a leading role in revising the Clean Air Act to reduce air pollution, while protecting State industries.

Senator BREAUX was at the forefront of the effort to return the national Democratic Party to the center of American politics. He was a founder and past chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, succeeding Bill Clinton in 1991.

Senator BREAUX and his wife, the former Lois Daigle of Lafayette, have four children, John, Jr., Bill, Beth and Julia. He also has three grandchildren, Anna Kate Shepherdson, Campbell McKay Shepherdson and Charles Jefferson Shepherdson V. Senator BREAUX is a graduate of the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and the Louisiana State University School of Law in Baton Rouge.

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## Farewell

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President and colleagues, the last time anyone does anything in their career or in their life, I think it is a time for a certain degree of sadness and a certain degree of nostalgic remembrance of the times past. This evening will probably be my last opportunity to address this body as a Member, as a Member of the Senate, representing my great and wonderful State of Louisiana.

While some would say, well, it has to be a very difficult time to speak for the last time on the floor of the Senate, looking back at all the great memories, I look back with nothing but great pleasure over the many years I have spent in the Senate as well as in the House of Representatives.

I have been very honored to serve and be elected seven times to the other body, serving 14 years as a Member of the House, representing southwest Louisiana—it was a great and wonderful time—and then moving on to the Senate 18 years ago, representing the entire State of Louisiana.

So when you look back over those years, I think a lot of people would say: Well, it is your last speech, and it must be a very nostalgic time, and you really are sad. I am not. I am pleased. I am happy. I am overwhelmed with the opportunity that was presented to me for those 32 years in the Congress to serve the people of Louisiana in one capacity or another, both in the House, as well as in this Chamber.

Thirty-five years ago, I, with my wife, came to Washington for the very first time as a young staff person, legislative assistant, having just gotten out of law school. I worked in the Seventh Congressional District office for then-Congressman Edwin Edwards. It was a great learning period for me.

Shortly after serving as a staff person, a vacancy was created, and I ran for that vacancy as a young 28-year-old member of the Bar Association in my State. I ran for Congress and had a slogan I remember back then, when I was 28, when I was running for Congress for the first time. My slogan was: “Experience makes the difference.”

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Most of the people I was running against were old enough to be my grandfather or grandparent, certainly old enough to be my parent. Yet I had the audacity to print the slogan on a bumper sticker that “Experience makes the difference.”

Of course, it aggravated the heck out of all the people I was running against because they said: How dare someone 28 years old talk about experience making the difference; He has none.

Well, I was the only person running who ever worked in a congressional office in Washington. I was the only person who had ever run a congressional office in the district. And I was the only lawyer who was running. I told the people in that first race that we were electing someone to go to Washington and make laws, and I was the only lawyer running. Therefore, they should vote for me.

That went over fairly well for a period of time until all of my opponents realized 98 percent of the people were not lawyers, and about 100 percent of them hated lawyers. As soon as they started articulating that different viewpoint on the function of lawyers, I started going down in the polls, and thank goodness the election was only a few weeks later.

To make a long story short, we were elected back in 1972 and came to Washington. I came with my wife Lois and two very small children, John, Jr., and Bill Breaux. I remember we had to rent a U-Haul truck to come to Washington. I had never had an opportunity to be up here. We came up, and I will always remember this: When we left Louisiana, my two sons did not want to go. My youngest son, the night before we left, when he was saying his prayers, said: Goodbye, God. We are moving to Washington.

My oldest son, who was about 4 or 5 at the time, ran away to a neighbor’s house and crawled under the house. In Louisiana, the houses are built off the ground. He ran under the house and would not come out. And we had my mom Katie, my dad Ezra, my father-in-law Lloyd, and my mother-in-law Doris who were all there watching us get into the U-Haul to go to Washington, and I had to crawl under the house and literally drag John, Jr., out from under the house and make him get into the U-Haul truck so we could move to Washington. I finally got him here.

We came to Washington. I will always remember we came here on a Saturday. I wanted to go to see the Capitol because I knew it was going to be such an impressive place. I remember that night the Marine Corps Band was playing, as they do in the springtime. They have concerts. They used

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to do that on the front steps. And they were having a concert. I thought they were playing the concert for me.

We were so delighted as a family to be able to see our first impressions of the U.S. Capitol, with the playing of the band on a wonderful evening. It was a great memory then, and it is still a great memory 35 years later.

In those days when I was in the House, we had an arrangement, if you will. In those days when I arrived here, Carl Albert was Speaker of the House. And then Tip O'Neill became the Democratic leader and Speaker of the House, and Bob Michel was the Republican leader. And Tip O'Neill and Bob Michel probably differed as much as any two people you could possibly know in terms of philosophy in how government should work. Tip O'Neill was an FDR liberal Democrat from Massachusetts, and Bob Michel was from Peoria, IL, a middle America Republican. They did not agree on how government should work necessarily from a philosophical standpoint, but they knew how to make government work.

They spoke more in 1 day back then than some of the leaders later on spoke in a year because the House changed to a position where now many times leaders do not speak to each other. I would suggest that government was not any worse off when you had a Tip O'Neill and a Bob Michel traveling together, playing golf together, drinking in the evening and having a cocktail together, playing golf together, betting on sporting events together, which I know they did because they had a relationship that allowed them to find out, What do we have to do to accomplish what we both realize is best for this country? They were able to do that in a way that I thought was incredibly effective.

Hale Boggs swore me in to the House of Representatives, a truly great majority leader. I learned a great deal from him and had a great deal of respect for everything he taught me and taught so many.

That was back then. My two sons, who were crawling and saying their prayers before bed, are both 38 years of age. My oldest daughter, Beth, is 34 and is married to a wonderful person named Jeff Shepherdson; and now we have three beautiful grandchildren, Anna Kate, Campbell, and C.J. Shepherdson, age 2. Also, my youngest daughter, Julie, is now 28.

So after you have been here a while, you wake up 1 day and say where has all the time gone and how fast it went. I think about that often, but I also think about all of the wonderful things I have been privileged to witness, watch,

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and participate in, in those 32 years in Congress. It has been a real privilege and pleasure. I have had the honor of serving with three great Senators, including Russell Long, when he was the senior Senator from Louisiana and I was a House Member. I remember coming over to see Russell when I first got into the House of Representatives. I wanted to come and pay my respects. I had been in Congress about a week. So I came over to the Senate and walked up in the Senate office building to see Russell Long. I remember getting on the elevator and it went up to the second floor. The door opened and Senator Jim Eastland from Mississippi got on. He looked at me—and I was on the Members elevator, which shows you the audacity I had even then. He looked at me and said, “Hey, boy, what are you doing here?” I said, “I am a Congressman and I am going to see Russell Long.” He said, “You’re not a Congressman.” I said, “Yes, sir, I am.” He looked at me and walked off the elevator. Those memories are so wonderful to look back on, and it is interesting to see how things have developed.

I learned a great deal from Russell Long. He taught me how to work with people. He could get more done in the evening over a bottle of bourbon than we can get done by having months and months of hearings and hours of debate because he knew how to bring people together. He had an incredibly great personality and sense of history of where he came from. And he learned from his father who also served in this body.

I also served with Bennett Johnston, a great person who could work both sides of the aisle. He became chairman of the Energy Committee and senior member of the Appropriations Committee. Bennett was outstanding. It was interesting because we never had a cross word politically. A lot of Members, I think, have natural competition between Members of the same State, particularly if they are in different parties. I have had the fortune to serve only with members of the Democratic Party in the Senate. Bennett and I had a wonderful working relationship. He would take the lead on some things, and I would try to take the lead on others. It was a wonderful relationship.

In the last several years, it has been Mary Landrieu, who I have seen develop into one of the greatest politicians and greatest leaders of our State. She comes from a great tradition, a long tradition of outstanding public servants in the State of Louisiana, particularly in the city of New Orleans. She learned from the masters, and the masters were her

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parents, brothers and sisters. They were all involved and they do a wonderful job in representing our State in so many different capacities.

So I have had a wonderful opportunity to serve with people from my State who have been friends and outstanding colleagues, along with all of the other folks that we have had the opportunity to serve with. I have looked at meeting people in Congress not just as colleagues who were elected to public office, but I looked at each one of them as a potential friend. I learned a long time ago that you have to understand where people come from to appreciate what they are all about. I think many times we take a position automatically that we don't like someone because of where they are from or what party they are in, without delving into their backgrounds, why they say what they say, and who helps develop those ideas.

I remember when I was in the House, I served on the Public Works Committee with Bella Abzug, who many thought was the most liberal person in the Congress. I remember Bella Abzug telling me, you know, where I come from, in my congressional district, they think I am too conservative. She had the type of district that encouraged her and helped her and pushed her to represent the people as they wanted to be represented in the Congress of the United States. So if you understand where people come from and understand their background and who they represent, I think it helps you understand how people of different positions can be friends, because they are truly trying to represent their States the best they can. It is not just because of their politics but because of where they are from.

Let me say one other thing that I think we need to pay attention to in this body, the Senate. That is, we should not let outside forces dictate to us how we treat each other and how we work together. Many times, when Democrats have a caucus lunch on Tuesday right outside this Chamber, Republicans are having theirs separate from us at the same time. Many times, we hear people call in from the outside who are in public relations, PR men and women and pollsters, who spend an inordinate amount of time telling us how we can take actions that will show how the other side is wrong and we are right. Right across the hall, the Republicans are hearing some of the same type of public relation firms arguing to them how they can posture themselves to be able to blame the Democrats for failure.

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Back in the old days, we used to do all this together. People would stand up and give their position, and the other side would give theirs and find out we are trying to accomplish the same thing, coming at it from slightly different venues and in a slightly different direction. I always feel that if you only listen to yourself, you are only going to hear an echo and you are never going to disagree. That is why it is so important to hear the other side, listen to what the other side has to say, understand what they say. You don't have to agree with them, but I think you are a better person if you understand and your position becomes stronger if you know what the other side is going to argue. It makes your position better and stronger.

But you also must realize that neither party has a monopoly on the truth. Both sides have good ideas. The real answer to this body and the House, and for democracies everywhere, is trying to take the best of what both sides can offer and blend them in a package that simply makes government work for all of us. People back home are not so much concerned about who wins and loses as they are about whether we are getting the job done. Congress does not have to be like a Super Bowl. In the Super Bowl, you have to have one team that is going to win and one that will lose. If there is a tie, they have a playoff and go into overtime until one team wins and one team loses. There is nothing wrong with the Congress trying to find ways to reach agreement and blending the best from both sides and coming up with something so that everybody wins. Then we can argue and fight over which team won. That way, I can go back to Louisiana and tell them look what I did, and somebody from Texas or Illinois can go back to their State and say look what I did. And that is fine, because we can argue about success and not debate over failure and whose fault it was. The American people would be better served if the debate here could be a debate about how we accomplish something as opposed to why we didn't get anything done.

I leave with a great deal of appreciation for everybody who helped me, including my staff, many of whom are in the gallery. They helped me every day over and above the call of duty. I also thank the people on the floor with me, including Diana Bostic and so many of the friends we have worked with, like Lula, who was with Senator Long before, and all of the other people. This has been a joint venture, to say the least. I leave with a great deal of optimism.



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I am not leaving because I am unhappy or because I am mad. I have enjoyed every single minute of it. I have to admit that some minutes I have enjoyed more than others, but by and large it has been a great and wonderful experience. I give nothing but the very best to my colleagues and wish them nothing but the very best in the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.



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TRIBUTES  
TO  
JOHN B. BREAUX



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## Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *October 11, 2004*

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, when the 109th Congress convenes in January 2005, this Chamber and our Nation will, unfortunately, be without the services of Senator JOHN B. BREAUX.

This will truly be a loss to the Senate and to our Nation. With the retirement of Senator BREAUX, we lose a man of exceptional political experience. This son of an oilfield worker and a dressmaker began his political career as a staff aide to Congressman, and later Governor, Edwin Edwards.

Mr. BREAUX was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives seven times, the first when he was just 28 years of age, making him the youngest Member of the U.S. Congress at the time. He served in the House for 14 years where he, among other things, was a principal architect of the 1983 reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

In 1986 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, and has served three terms in this Chamber. Now, after 32 years of congressional experience, Senator BREAUX is leaving us.

With the retirement of Senator BREAUX, we lose one of those Senators who is always ready and willing to reach across the aisle to find common ground, to achieve the workable compromise. He has constantly demonstrated the ability to reach beyond partisan and ideological differences, without abandoning his basic principles. Politics is said to be the art of compromise, and this was an art that Senator BREAUX constantly practiced. On issue after issue, including health care, energy production, tax cuts, and welfare, he demonstrated his ability to broker bipartisan deals, his penchant for dealmaking, and his talent for fashioning legislative coalitions. With his efforts to break Senate stalemates on Medicare, Social Security, education, health care for the uninsured, and other issues, he earned a well-deserved reputation as a behind-the-scenes mediator. Senator BREAUX exemplified the wisdom of not allowing the perfect to be the enemy of the good.

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Even when I disagreed with him, which I have, I still admired his efforts to find that workable solution. Even when he was unsuccessful, which was rare, I still respected his skill and the cause he was advocating. With wit, determination, and patience he is always in pursuit of a constructive course of action, and that won him many admirers, including me.

Because of his efforts and his considerable skills, he chaired the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare and he co-chaired the National Commission on Retirement Policy. He also served as chairman of the Special Committee on Aging and as chairman of the Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee. He is currently the senior member of the Finance Committee.

Recognizing and appreciating his leadership abilities, in 1993 his Democratic colleagues elected him chief deputy whip, and in this position Senator BREAUX has served this Chamber, my party, and our country effectively and successfully for more than a decade.

With the retirement of Senator BREAUX, the Senate will also be losing a fine musician. Every year at Mardi Gras, Senator BREAUX entertains the multitudes by playing a washboard. As a musical instrument, a washboard is not a fiddle, but I am sure it sounds good, as good as a washboard can, I guess.

With the retirement of Senator BREAUX, we will be losing a Senator known for his disarming humor. During the anthrax problem of October 2001, he boasted that the fish in his office would survive because "they are not weak northeast fish . . . . They are strong Louisiana fish." I think that was supposed to be funny. If it was supposed to be a fact, I will put up a good West Virginia mountain rainbow trout any day against his Cajun aquatic bottom feeders.

Most important, with the retirement of Senator BREAUX, we will be losing a good man. A man who was always there to help. A man whose word is his bond. A man who has constantly demonstrated his loyalty to this Chamber and to his country. A man who came up the "hard way," without anything being handed to him, but through hard work, dedication to duty and to his State and our country, fashioned a remarkable and successful career.

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I wish Senator BREAUX and his wife Lois the best as they enter the next phase of their lives and careers.

THURSDAY, *November 18, 2004*

Mr. BURNS. \* \* \* Don Nickles will leave this Senate in this year, having arrived in 1980 with President Ronald Reagan. The real voice of conservatism, a fiscal conservative, who stood in this Senate and fought wasteful spending and did it with grace, did it with knowledge, a leader among all.

There again, he being 8 years ahead of me, he was a mentor and someone I could look to, study and learn from.

In 1987 or 1986, Tom Daschle came to the Senate. A neighbor from South Dakota from Aberdeen, SD, we both learned a little bit here. He was much more successful than I, reaching into leadership of his party. We had a lot of common friends in South Dakota. I will be sorry to see Tom Daschle leave the Senate. But he has left big tracks here. There are fond memories on issues that we agreed on and issues that we did not agree, but we did not do it being disagreeable.

Bob Graham from Florida I learned was in the Angus business and he leaves this year.

JOHN BREAUX from Louisiana. I worked with him on the Commerce Committee regarding energy issues. His wisdom will be missed.

I am afraid I took much more from these men than I could ever return to them.

I served only one term with John Edwards and Peter Fitzgerald. They, too, will be missed in the Senate. Their contribution was huge. \* \* \*

As to all of these men, I want to say you do form relationships here, and there is a certain bond that attracts us all, as we learn that even though you may be on the same side of the aisle or the opposite side of the aisle, one could always agree or disagree without being disagreeable. That is what makes the Senate a special place.

We will miss all of these men, but I am looking forward to those who take their place as, there again, new relationships will be developed, a new bond dealing with the old challenges of a free society, with those who love the Constitution and love this country who were prepared to die for it and would if asked to do so today. No one doubts the depth

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of their patriotism nor their service to their country. We welcome them as we say goodbye to old friends, old relationships that will never be forgotten.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, it has been a pleasure to work with the Senator from Louisiana. We have appreciated his leadership on many issues not only important to Louisiana but to our energy future and important to navigation in the heartland, which is something that is vitally important for all of us.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am fortunate enough to have been here to hear my colleague from Louisiana give his farewell speech. It was my good fortune to have served with him both in the House and in the Senate. He is one of the favorites of both sides of the aisle. It is an amazing tribute to JOHN and his political career that he does have so many friends in the Senate. From the liberal wing to the conservative wing, Republicans, Democrats, North, South, East and West, you like JOHN BREAUX. You like him because he is a genuine person and also because he comes from a State that is a lot of fun and he is a lot of fun. Some of my best memories of JOHN are his hard work here and then his hard play at home.

When he would invite us to New Orleans for a Democratic leadership conference and other meetings and show us his major city in his home State, it was always a treat.

Then occasionally he would export a little bit of Louisiana to Washington and to the site of the Democratic convention, and it was always a sellout event. People wanted to be there. JOHN never let them down. I saw him at the Los Angeles convention where he gave a little party—and I use that term advisedly. It was not little at all, it was a big party. He was dressed in a costume for Mardi Gras that would have put Elvis Presley to shame. It was an amazing array of gold and sequins, the likes of which I have never seen. He looked so much at home in that outfit.

I said to him: How do the people back in Louisiana take to that kind of dress?

He said: You know, they would throw me out of office if I didn't do these things. They expect that of me.

I also went down to New Orleans with him and saw him in a musical performance with a zydeco band. He has musical talent most people don't know about.

I tell you these things because people who follow the Senate, hear the speeches, look at positions on issues and look



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at the party labels, forget that behind each and every one of us is a real life story.

I love the story of your family coming to Washington, JOHN. It is a beautiful story of packing up the kids and your first impression. Every one of us has that story to tell. There are new Senators coming and saving up those stories in their own minds for the day they stand behind that desk to say what it means to be one of the few Americans given a chance to serve in this great Chamber.

We are going to miss JOHN BREAUX and all that he brought to the Senate and all he brought to this Nation. He has been a problem-solver. He has tried to reach across the aisle over and over to create bipartisan coalitions. Sometimes I was with him; sometimes I was not. It did not make any difference because it was a good-faith effort on JOHN BREAUX's part to serve his State and this Nation.

He has had a great career in the House and the Senate. His departure will leave a gap in terms of quality that many of us will work hard to fill. JOHN, I am honored I could serve with you and that I could hear your parting remarks this evening. I wish you and your family the very best.

Mr. SHELBY. JOHN BREAUX was just on the floor a few minutes ago. I first met JOHN BREAUX when I came to the House of Representatives in 1978. He had preceded me, although he is a little younger. He was a young man in the House of Representatives. He was very involved and was one of the first people I met there.

He tried to work with both sides, the Democrats and Republicans. He has been involved in the forging of a lot of compromises—meaningful ones—over the years. He has represented his State of Louisiana both as a Congressman and as a Senator well, I believe, for many years. JOHN, we wish you and your wife Lois the best. We know you are not going to go very far, but you have a lot of friends in the Senate on both sides of the aisle, and you know that.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the people of Louisiana first sent JOHN BREAUX to serve in this Capitol in 1972. He was only 28 years old. For the next 32 years, he would serve as one of the most respected and admired public servants—from both sides of the aisle—anywhere in American Government.

JOHN BREAUX has been a superb U.S. Senator. He is not inextricably wedded to one ideology or one party's line. He is thoughtful. He is independent. He is deliberative. He is ex-

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perienced. He always wants to do the right thing for Louisiana and for America.

What I admire most about JOHN is his consensus-building skills. He never gives up on bringing people together. In fact, he has helped bring this body together on landmark pieces of legislation over the past two decades—from welfare reform to health insurance reform to balancing the budget.

I have enjoyed working with JOHN to reform Medicare. We proposed the first BREAUX-Frist reforms in 1999. And we followed up with BREAUX-Frist II in 2001. And we toiled together on the Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, which JOHN so ably chaired. BREAUX-Frist laid the foundation for bipartisan work to come and, ultimately, the most comprehensive and meaningful improvements to Medicare since the program's creation.

JOHN's departure is bittersweet for me—as I am sure it is for every Member of this body. We will miss him as a leader we all love and all can work with. But he still has many of his best years ahead—which he will no doubt enjoy spending with Lois and their wonderful and growing family.

FRIDAY, *November 19, 2004*

Mr. EDWARDS. I thank my fellow Senate retirees, Senator BREAUX and Senator Hollings. One thing I guarantee you: Our accents will be missed here on the floor of the Senate. Hopefully, there will be others who will be able to speak the way we speak.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I would like to make some comments about our friends who are departing the Senate. \* \* \*

Senator BREAUX was always out there trying to pull us together. \* \* \*

Thank you very much.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, while the Senate is holding in abeyance for the final omnibus appropriations bill that the House is getting ready to file sometime tonight, I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to our retiring Senators: Tom Daschle, Fritz Hollings, Don Nickles, JOHN BREAUX, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, John Edwards, Peter Fitzgerald, Zell Miller, and Bob Graham. \* \* \*

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JOHN BREAU, the very mention of his name brings a twinkle to your eye as you recall the wonderful good times and the great sense of humor that JOHN BREAU has. He is the most popular politician in the State of Louisiana. He is going to be sorely missed as the dealmaker of the Senate. \* \* \*

So for all of these names I have mentioned, in the great poem "Ulysses," he says, "I am a part of all that I have met," and I am a part of all these great Senators. I am much richer for it and for having been their friend.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I talked before about Tom Daschle. I also will discuss the rest of our colleagues who are leaving the Senate.

When the 109th Congress convenes in January, nine of our current colleagues will not be here. I take a few moments to pay tribute to them. Collectively, our colleagues have served in the Senate for 144 years. We will miss them. \* \* \*

Another dear friend from the South, JOHN BREAU, senior Senator from Louisiana, is probably the Senate's consummate dealmaker. I don't think anyone in this Chamber has ever worked harder to bring the two parties together on taxes, on health care, and especially our two biggest entitlement programs, Social Security and Medicare.

He is the logical choice to chair the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare and the co-chair of the National Commission on Retirement Policy. He has always been an effective champion for Louisiana's oil and gas, agriculture, and tourism industries, which is why his constituents have sent him to Washington with 60, 70, or even 80 percent of the vote. He was only 28 when he first won a seat in the House in 1972. With 14 years in the House and 18 years in the Senate, he spent more than half of his entire life as a Member of Congress doing the public's mission.

We will miss his Cajun humor, his legislative savvy, and his tireless dedication of bringing Republicans and Democrats together for the good of all America. \* \* \*

I close my remarks by noting that these men have made remarkable contributions to our society, and all Americans should be grateful. I would tell those who are retiring, I retired 4 years ago, and I did not like it. So here I am. Perhaps there is hope for any of them who want to rejoin. If you want to come back, I am here to tell you it can be done. Just make sure that you get to keep your seniority.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and thank my colleagues for their indulgence while I made my remarks.

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Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me say—this is probably the first and only time I have ever said this—I have been listening carefully to my friend from New Jersey, and I agree with everything he said.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I know the hour is getting late and others want to be heard, but I briefly want to express some thoughts about our colleagues who are leaving this wonderful body. Today we have heard some very compelling speeches, particularly the one given by my good friend, Tom Daschle of South Dakota, our Democratic leader.

I was pleased to see so many of our colleagues remain on the floor to listen to the departing Democratic leader. The words he expressed about his State, his staff, his colleagues, his feelings about the country, and the future, are instructive. I know it can sound repetitive when people hear us talk about our colleagues this way, but I think it is important for the public to note that while they might hear only about the bickering, the part that you do not often see is the deep respect, affection, and caring that goes on among the Members of this body. This affection comes despite the differences that exist in red States and blue States, or being strongly conservative or strongly liberal.

There is this weaving of a common denominator through each and every one of us, particularly after years of common service in this remarkable institution we call the Senate. There is a deep and abiding respect for those who have come here, those who have served here, those who have tried to make a difference for our country.

It may seem like it is inside discussion, but I hope the public understands how deeply felt these comments are about colleagues who will no longer have the pleasure of spending each and every day in this Chamber, but whose friendship and collegiality will continue in the years ahead as we encounter each other in different walks of life. \* \* \*

Our colleague, JOHN BREAUX of Louisiana, follows a great tradition of some remarkable people who served that State in this body. For 35 years, JOHN has been, first a staff member, then a House Member for 14 years, and for the past 18 years a Member of the Senate. JOHN BREAUX was elected to the Senate to fill the seat of the late Russell Long, considered one of the most capable and effective men ever to serve in this body. In fact, my father, who served with Russell Long, as I did for some time, saw Russell Long as a great and dear friend.

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I am proud to call JOHN BREAUX a friend as well. Without a doubt, Senator BREAUX has ably filled the imposing shoes of Russell Long during his service here.

JOHN BREAUX has won great respect on both sides of the aisle for his ability to reach across party lines and bring Senators together. He is a legislator's legislator. We don't often celebrate legislators. People often run to serve in this body by promising to be independent, to be their own person, to not compromise. It is an appealing political argument. But all of us who serve here know that our ability to get anything done requires our ability to compromise with one another.

We are 100 co-equals serving in this great legislative body. The only way anything ever happens is if people are willing to compromise and work together. JOHN BREAUX understood that from the day he arrived here and never failed to seek out the means to achieve those goals during his 18 years of service.

He is a wonderful example of what Senators need to do if they are going to be successful. If I could offer any words of advice to the incoming class of Senators who will be arriving on January 4, it is to follow the model set by JOHN BREAUX. I don't care what your politics are, if you want to succeed, if you want to help your State, if you want to make a difference for your country, then find out ways to work with people across the political aisle. If you do not, you may enjoy your service here but you will accomplish very little.

JOHN BREAUX accomplished great things because he understood the importance of reaching out to people, people with whom he disagreed but he would constantly seek them out if there were some common ground about which they could agree. As a result, his accomplishments were significant. Many times the accomplishments don't bear his name. You might not find JOHN BREAUX's name on the bill, but ask anybody who was around when the bill became law, and they will tell you it happened because JOHN BREAUX brought people together.

I will miss him. This body will. He had some wonderful accomplishments here which made a huge difference, and I wish him and his family the best in the years to come. \* \* \*

I apologize for taking this extra time. It is important that the public hear Members talk about each other, even those who disagreed on matters, that they understand why this institution works more than 230 years after the Founders created it.

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I, as a Senator from Connecticut, take unique pride in the Senate because it was Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, both of Connecticut, who offered at the Constitutional Convention the idea of the Senate representing small and large States. Arguing over a unicameral system, Sherman and Ellsworth said, how about having a second body with equal representation, regardless of the size or the population of the State. As a result, this institution was created. It has been a great place that has served our Nation for so long and I am confident it will in the future.

We have been blessed by the participation of those who are leaving. All of us wish each and every one of them the very best in the years to come.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the State of Louisiana has grown accustomed to sending its Senators to Washington and keeping them there for a long time. By the standards of his illustrious State colleagues like Allen Ellender, Russell Long, and Bennett Johnston, some might think Senator BREAUX is making an early exit after only three terms. However, add in the 14 years that he represented his State's Seventh Congressional District in the House of Representatives and that comes to 32 years of congressional service for the people of Louisiana.

During a period when it has become increasingly difficult to work across party lines, I admire Senator BREAUX's determination to continue pursuing bipartisan efforts. He has a genuine respect for the senatorial traditions that can still help this body reach consensus, even on difficult issues.

Since I became a member of the Finance Committee in 1993, the gentleman seated to my left has been JOHN BREAUX. I know first-hand his commitment to the Social Security and Medicare Programs and how deeply he cares about their long-term stability. He also made effective use of his position as chairman and ranking member of the Special Committee on Aging to highlight the importance of these programs to seniors both today and in the years to come.

Just over a decade ago, Senator BREAUX was one of a handful of moderates who came together to seek a bipartisan approach to health care reform. When the budget process stalemated a few years later, Senator BREAUX went to our late colleague, Senator John Chafee, to develop a centrist approach to fiscal discipline. As a founding member of what came to be called the Chafee-Breaux group, I saw how Senator BREAUX worked to expand participation and come up with compromises on the key sticking points of tax and enti-

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tlement policies. In 1996, we put forward an alternative budget that got 46 votes despite the active opposition of both the Democratic and Republican leadership. This effort directly laid the groundwork for the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, which put us on the track to balance the moral budget in fiscal year 1998 for the first time since fiscal year 1969.

Senator BREAUX put the same energy into Medicare reform. He refused to be discouraged by the slings and arrows of partisans on both sides who complained that his approach did not sufficiently adhere to either side's vision of ideological purity. His tireless efforts paid off last year when Congress adopted the most far-reaching changes to Medicare since its inception. Due in large part to the efforts of Senator BREAUX, Medicare for the first time will provide prescription drug coverage to our seniors.

I also had the privilege of working closely with Senator BREAUX on the Finance Committee to protect the interests of our highly efficient sugar industry. As co-chair of the Senate Sweetener Caucus, Senator BREAUX was a zealous advocate for the Louisiana sugarcane industry. We joined together to fight misguided provisions of the NAFTA that would have threatened the U.S. sugar industry and succeeded in getting the Clinton administration to renegotiate this part of the agreement. More recently, Senator BREAUX has taken a lead role in opposing the Bush administration's efforts to trade away the future of our sugar industry in ongoing trade negotiations with Central America, Australia, and other countries.

Senator BREAUX already has one lasting legacy firmly in place as one of the creators of the Wallop-Breaux Aquatic Resources Trust Fund. This far-sighted and innovative idea resulted in a funding mechanism for programs to promote recreational boating safety and sport fish restoration by using proceeds from the excise taxes on motorboat fuel and fishing equipment, along with duties on related imported goods. The beneficiaries are the more than 70 million recreational boaters and sport fishing enthusiasts across the country.

I doubt that Senator BREAUX will be out of the public policy business for long. Someone with his experience and ideas will be a valuable asset wherever he decides to go after leaving the Senate. We will miss him as a colleague, but I would not be surprised to see our friend JOHN BREAUX back here often.

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Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is hard to believe that my good friend from Louisiana, JOHN BREAU, is retiring from the Senate. We served in the other body together when we were very young, and we have been friends ever since, even though he almost always beat me on the tennis court.

JOHN BREAU always took his responsibilities in the House and in the Senate very seriously but he was always humble and courteous to his colleagues. His pleasant manner, his quick wit, and his diligence were great assets which he has used over the years to fashion an impressive legislative record.

His service in the Senate has been truly outstanding. I will miss him greatly. I wish for him and his wife, Lois, much happiness and satisfaction in the years ahead.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to some of my colleagues who will be leaving the Senate at the end of this session. \* \* \*

The Senate will be saying goodbye to another great centrist, Senator JOHN BREAU. Senator BREAU has a well-earned reputation on the Hill of being able to bring both sides together and forge bipartisan compromises.

In a time of blue States and red States, Senator BREAU has been a leader in bringing Americans together in the mainstream middle, instead of dividing Americans with the ideological extremism.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to take this opportunity to honor our departing colleagues who are leaving the Senate. In almost each new Congress a different group of 100 men and women comes together from different backgrounds and political philosophies, representing different interests and constituencies, but through all our differences, we develop respect and admiration for each other. Many times we step across the aisle and work together on legislation, and oftentimes genuine friendships are created. As I pay tribute to these departing Senators, whether they have been here one term or seven, they are a remarkable group and we thank them for their honorable service.

JOHN BREAU is retiring after serving three terms in the Senate. I would like to take this time to acknowledge a friend, colleague, and dedicated public servant.

Senator BREAU was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972 at the age of 28, and at that time he was the youngest Member of Congress. After serving 14 years in the



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House, the people of Louisiana elected JOHN BREAUX to the Senate in 1986.

I have had the pleasure of working closely with Senator BREAUX on many energy matters over the years. During this time, I have admired his ability to find common ground between those who hold disparate views. His uncanny ability to bring industry leaders, policymakers, and administration leaders together is unique, and I will always appreciate his candor in resolving energy policy differences. JOHN was always someone I could reach across the aisle to work with on the budget resolutions.

It is well known that Senator BREAUX is passionate about improving health care for all Americans. He worked tirelessly on welfare and health care issues, and took an active interest in the elderly as a member of the Finance Committee and a leader of the Special Committee on Aging. Just last year he played an integral part in drafting the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003. This historic legislation will provide relief to the millions of people struggling to pay for prescription drugs and he should be honored for his dedication to this bill.

Senator BREAUX's work has touched the lives of a great many Americans, and his talents and unrivaled sense of humor will be sorely missed in the Senate. Just as important, he has been a great advocate for his home State of Louisiana, and his State has been lucky to have his service for so many years.

In the course of working together for so many years, I have developed genuine respect for Senator BREAUX. I thank him for years of distinguished service, and wish him the very best in all his future undertakings. I will miss Senator JOHN BREAUX.

SATURDAY, *November 20, 2004*

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I rise to say good-bye to several of my colleagues, dear friends and colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure to work in the Senate.

Madam President, Senator JOHN BREAUX is a voice of moderation and bipartisanship. He helped pass landmark welfare reform under a previous administration, and has consistently been able to work with Members of the other side

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of the aisle whether his party has been in the majority or minority.

His commonsense approach to energy legislation and many other issues will certainly be missed. He helped defeat the BTU tax which was so injurious to the energy industry in both my State of Texas and his State of Louisiana.

Senator BREAUX was the youngest Member of the House of Representatives when he was elected, at age 28, in 1972. He served in the House for 14 years before being elected to fill the legendary Senator Russell Long seat in 1986. You would think Washington would change someone after all that time, but JOHN is still a Cajun through and through and sees the world with a sense of humor that keeps everything in perspective.

I will miss JOHN BREAUX. He was often an ally on transportation, energy, and telecommunications issues. Even when we were on opposite sides in a debate, he brought wisdom, experience, and a willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion to the Senate.

And no, JOHN, Louisiana cannot annex Texas.

Madam President, I will miss all of my colleagues. As we take the opportunity to go forward in a new Congress, we will make new friends, but we will never forget the old ones.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I want to share my views, as did Senator Hutchison and others, about our colleagues who are leaving for new adventures in life.

I wish all the best to Senator Hollings. We will miss his booming voice. We will miss Senator Edwards, Senator Graham of Florida, and Senator Daschle. We will also miss JOHN BREAUX, a man we know will enjoy life with his good common sense and sense of humor. He is a good friend.

Mr. REID. JOHN BREAUX and I came to the Senate together. We served in the House together. He comes from a State that, of course, is famous for unpredictable politics, and JOHN has done every bit of his work to make sure that tradition is upheld.

When he was running for the Senate, as only JOHN BREAUX could do, his opponent raised a question, and his opponent, who was somebody who also had served in the House of Representatives, said JOHN BREAUX can be bought. They would rush out to JOHN BREAUX and would say: Your opponent said you could be bought. How do you respond to that? JOHN BREAUX said: Well, I can be leased but I can't be

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bought. Who else, other than JOHN BREAU, could get away with something like that?

He is a great person, a person of integrity, a person who came to the House of Representatives way back in 1972. He served in the Congress for 32 years. There is no one who is better at making a deal than JOHN BREAU. I say this in the most positive way. Legislation is the art of compromise, consensus building, and JOHN BREAU understood that to a T. We need more people such as JOHN BREAU with the ability to reach across the aisle.

We will miss JOHN BREAU, Mr. Problem Solver. I appreciate his and Lois's friendship over these years. I will miss him very much.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to departing Senators for their service and devotion to the U.S. Senate. They are not only my colleagues but my friends.

The reality of elections for the Senate is that every 2 years we experience change—current Members depart and new Members are welcomed. At every transition I am reminded by the reality that life is more than just politics. I am certain the departing Senators are experiencing a tremendous feeling of sorrow, yet anticipation of things to come, as they leave their friends, colleagues, and this great nurturing institution.

Though we may fight hard during campaigns, we return to the Senate after the election to realize that we are not just losing Senators—we are losing friends. There is a bond—a collegiality and friendship in the Senate that crosses party lines. We face long hard battles on the campaign trail and sometimes things can get ugly. But after all is said and done, after election day, we must all come back to Washington and work together to do what is best for our country.

I will certainly miss my colleagues with whom I have worked for several years. I have had the honor to serve on the Finance Committee with four of my distinguished retiring colleagues, including Senator JOHN BREAU and Senator Don Nickles. Both of these men were instrumental in leading the fight to reform Medicare.

Senator JOHN BREAU and I have worked side by side on Social Security issues. He is a good friend and he has always been willing to compromise. He is the master of a very noble craft—that of bringing people together from both sides of the aisle.

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Our departing Senators have been lights of inspiration and men who went above the call of duty to serve our country in their congressional capacities. They each have their own unique political perspective that has served the Senate well. Although my philosophies may differ from some Senators, we do not disagree on the greatness of America. We can all agree that we live in the greatest nation in the world, and we all believe that without democracy, life, liberty, and justice cannot flourish.

My departing colleagues are great men and great Americans. They have contributed immensely to our country—making their States and our country significantly better than when they first set foot on the Senate floor.

We are all going to miss their presence and wisdom here in the Senate. Their departures will surely leave a hole in expertise and leadership that will be hard to fill. I wish them health and happiness in their future endeavors—wherever the road may take them. May God continue to bless them and their families.

Come January, as we face another transition, I welcome the new Members and look forward to forging new relationships as we continue to work toward making Americans safer, healthier, and more financially secure.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, there are not many things on which all Senators agree. But on one thing, there is universal, bipartisan agreement in this body: We are going to miss Senator JOHN BREAUX when he retires at the end of the 108th Congress.

Make no mistake, JOHN BREAUX is a tremendously accomplished Senator, with scores of legislative achievements and accomplishments. He is a Senator's Senator. But when I think of JOHN BREAUX, I think first and foremost of his character, his unique way with people, and his wonderful good nature.

You can disagree with JOHN, but you can never dislike him. He has a knack for taking disagreements and disputes, and turning them into deals to move people forward. This is a priceless talent—a special skill—and I have never met another politician who could match JOHN BREAUX's gifts in this regard.

For JOHN, politics is not something you do with clenched teeth. Politics is a joy. Politics is fun. They used to call Hubert Humphrey the "happy warrior." And that is very much the spirit that JOHN BREAUX has always brought to his work in the Senate. However, JOHN would rather not make war on

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other Senators; he would rather cut a constructive deal that gets things done for ordinary people.

Of course, these personal qualities have allowed JOHN BREAUX to be an amazingly effective Senator for his State of Louisiana. When JOHN comes to you, when he tells you he needs help on a measure critical to his State, it is mighty hard to say no. Frankly, many times I have had a preconceived notion against the oil and gas industries, and I have opposed what they are trying to do on this or that bill. But JOHN BREAUX would come to see you, he talks it through, and next thing you know, you find yourself supporting him. He is just so effective in that kind of one-on-one persuasion. And, time and again, Louisiana has been the big winner.

Another hallmark of JOHN BREAUX in the Senate has been his commonsense centrism. JOHN is a man of strong principles, but he is not rigid and he certainly is not an ideologue. The questions JOHN asks are, "What is practical?" "What is going to work in the real world?" "What can we bring people together on, in order to make a positive difference?"

Typical of Senator BREAUX was his proposal a couple years ago to address the problem of 54 million Americans without health insurance. He called for universal health care. But he kept it practical. He proposed that all Americans have access to a basic, government-defined insurance package similar to what Members of Congress and our staffs get from the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan. And he proposed tax credits to make premiums more affordable for middle- and lower-income citizens.

Perhaps it is symbolic that JOHN BREAUX is leaving the Senate at this time. As we saw this week in the conference on the FSC bill, the spirit of compromise and the art of constructive accommodation seem to be dying in the Senate—and even more so in the House. Increasingly, the attitude around here is "my way or the highway." And that is not the Senate that I have loved over the years. That is not healthy for our democracy.

The shame is that JOHN BREAUX is leaving at exactly the time when we need his talents more than ever. In fact, we need a dozen JOHN BREAUXs around here to heal this body, to show people how to rise above partisanship in the best interests of the country.

So I will miss JOHN's presence in the Senate. We will all miss him. But JOHN BREAUX is the youngest 60-year-old person I have ever met. And you can bet that he has many chal-

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lenges and opportunities still ahead of him. JOHN and Lois have been, and will continue to be, wonderful friends. And I wish them all the best.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the State of Louisiana has a proud history of sending remarkable public figures to serve in the Senate. Louisiana has elected leaders that have been influential in guiding the direction of our country. Our colleague JOHN BREAUX is a man from this same mold. For more than 30 years the senior Senator from Louisiana has represented his State in Washington, with 18 years as a Member of this body, and 14 years of service in the House of Representatives. In that time, he has always been willing to reach across the aisle to bring our colleagues together, and his leadership has produced a list of impressive legislative accomplishments.

As chairman and then as ranking member of the Special Committee on Aging, Senator BREAUX has fought tirelessly for the rights of older Americans, working to reform and protect both Social Security and Medicare. The senior Senator from Louisiana has also provided strong leadership within the Senate during his 8-year tenure as deputy chief whip. His repeated election to this position speaks to the respect that our colleagues have for Senator BREAUX's ability to routinely bring together Members with differing opinions to build a consensus.

One of Senator BREAUX's lasting legacies will be the leading role he has taken with regard to environmental conservation. In 1990, the Senator authored the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, which provides for the restoration of the vital coastal wetlands of Louisiana and has since become known as the Breaux Act. This legislation was passed during his first term in the Senate and has since been renewed. More recently, Senator BREAUX has supported legislation that would help protect coastal regions from the impact of offshore oil and gas exploration.

In our many years of service together, Senator BREAUX and I have had the opportunity to work closely on a wide range of issues. We both have been actively involved in telecommunications legislation, and collaborated on legislation that authorized reform of the telephone industry. I am particularly appreciative of Senator BREAUX's unwavering support for legislation opposing the use of antipersonnel landmines, an issue of great significance to me personally and to the safety of millions of people around the world.

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I am proud of the body of legislation that Senator BREAUX and I advanced together throughout our shared time in the Senate. I commend Senator BREAUX for his dedication to being a watchdog for American seniors, for his legacy of environmental protection in Louisiana, and for his record of public service on behalf of his fellow Louisianans. The Senate and the people of Louisiana are losing a dedicated public servant and exceptional leader. I congratulate the Senator on a remarkable congressional career and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

On a personal level, JOHN and Lois BREAUX are good friends. Marcelle and I share the joy of telling grandchildren stories—and even of borrowing Mardi Gras costumes. I quickly realized in wearing one that you needed the special Cajun flavor of Louisiana to carry it off. JOHN can do that one day at a Mardi Gras party and the next day handle on the floor the most complex issue facing the Finance Committee. He is a Senator’s Senator.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my friend and incomparable colleague in both the House and Senate for 26 years, Senator JOHN BREAUX. The senior Senator from Louisiana leaves this institution stronger for having lent his voice and his leadership to these Chambers. Senator BREAUX’s commitment to bipartisan statesmanship has enriched the Senate, improved the lives of Louisiana families and resulted in landmark accomplishments for the American people.

Churchill said that “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” By that definition, none can doubt which camp Senator BREAUX falls in. He is the Senate’s most irrepressible optimist. He steps into the breach, not merely in words, but in countless efforts over his tenure in both the House and Senate to make the process work for the people it is intended to serve. Where some see hopeless gridlock, Senator BREAUX always sees a glimmer of hope and acts on it. Never settling for complacency, he uses his trademark tenacity and energy to move the deliberative process forward. His is a record of achievement over acrimony.

I personally was privileged to work closely with Senator BREAUX for more than two decades. He and I have always shared a vision of politics and public life as positive and constructive endeavors. And we have a long history together, dating back to our days serving in the House of Representa-

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tives, of reaching across the aisle to reach consensus and produce results.

In fact, we worked together on such fundamental issues as the Federal budget when Senator BREAUX was a member of a moderate, southern Democrat group called the Boll Weevils, and I a member of the northeast Republican Gypsy Moths. Some still wonder why both our groups carried the names of ravenous insects.

But it was fortuitous that Senator BREAUX and I had this record of cooperation because it seemed only natural when we later teamed up as co-chairs of the Senate Centrist Coalition, which Senator BREAUX founded along with the late Senator John Chafee in 1995 during the government shutdown.

So there is no question that I will miss him—we will all miss him—because we need more leaders such as Senator JOHN BREAUX in Congress. He has proven that we can cultivate common ground even out of sometimes barren partisan landscape. And his ability to forge compromises has made possible many signature accomplishments of both Democrat and Republican administrations. Senator BREAUX views public service as an opportunity to get things done for the people he serves, to make a difference in their lives—whether it was reforming welfare to help families move from public assistance to self-sufficiency, strengthening and saving Medicare and Social Security, preserving wetlands like the Louisiana Bayou, or providing tax relief to stimulate job creation.

What has made Senator BREAUX so effective is not only his legislative acumen, but also his personal bonds with colleagues. The Senator has brought people together with his self-effacing wit, his candid approach, and his eagerness to reach out to colleagues on both sides of the aisle. So it is not surprising that he departs the Senate with the respect, trust and affection of Senators across the political spectrum.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served alongside Senator BREAUX, and I wish him, his wife Lois, and their entire family all the best in their future endeavors.

Mr. DASCHLE. Today I would like to say a few words about eight Senators with whom I have served these last historic 6 years, all of whom will be leaving when this Congress ends.

Senator Nickles, Senator Campbell, Senator Fitzgerald, and Senator Miller, it has been a privilege to work with each of you. You have each sacrificed much to serve our Nation



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and I am sure you will continue to serve America well in the years to come.

Six Democratic Senators are leaving at the end of this Congress. Among them is our friend, the senior Senator from Louisiana.

I was joking with another friend recently that the good thing about JOHN BREAUX retiring is that maybe now he will finally be able to loosen up a little.

JOHN's ability to make us laugh even in tough times is a gift we have all treasured. Another gift of JOHN's is his ability to find workable compromises on even the most difficult issues. He really is a master of the art of the compromise.

A couple of years ago, I read a newspaper article in which JOHN talked about what he might do if he ever left the Senate. He pointed out that Huey Long had actually served as Louisiana's Senator and Governor at the same time. I thought when I heard that that maybe JOHN would never leave the Senate; he would just diversify. Regrettably, he is leaving now.

I know that serving as Ambassador to France has always been high on JOHN's list of post-Senate dream jobs. I understand that a few years back, JOHN asked President Clinton, "Do you think I could handle France?" to which President Clinton replied, "The question is whether France could handle you."

Whatever JOHN BREAUX decides to do next, I have no doubt that he will continue to find ways to serve the people of Louisiana and America. And I know he will have a heck of a good time in the process. JOHN and Lois are special members of our Senate family, and we wish them all the best in the future. \* \* \*

I have to be honest, Mr. President, it was not my wish to depart with these fine Senators. But it has been my honor and a joy to serve with them, and one that I will remember all the days of my life.

Mr. McCONNELL. We cannot conclude the 108th Congress without a sense of sadness. There are many—in fact there are too many—great Senators who are leaving this institution. I have already had an opportunity to express my goodbyes to Senator Nickles, Senator Campbell, and Senator Fitzgerald.

I also wish a happy and healthy future to our colleagues across the aisle, Senator Daschle, Senator BREAUX, Senator Hollings, Senator Bob Graham, Senator John Edwards, and

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Senator Zell Miller. Each of these men has made a lasting contribution to this marvelous institution.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, we are in the midst of a very important discussion, of course, as we are considering what to do. As the leadership meets to consider what we should do that hopefully will either move this process forward or come up with some other resolution, I thought I might take a moment to speak about our colleague, Senator BREAUX, and his retirement.

This would probably be a good time to talk about the senior Senator from Louisiana and to pay tribute to him because he would be one of the Senators most certainly who could help us figure out this situation. He has been helping us figure out situations like this for 32 years with a lot of success and, I might say, with a lot of respect from all the Members in this body, both on the Republican side and the Democratic side.

It might be appropriate for me to speak a few moments about the great contribution this man has made to this body.

Senator BREAUX came to the House when he was 28 years old, and after four children and now three grandchildren, he leaves us after serving well and admirably for 32 years.

When he came to Congress 32 years ago at the age of 28, he was the youngest Member of Congress to be serving at that time. He has served with 7 Presidents and 16 Congresses. He served with President Nixon, President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton, and now currently with President Bush. He served through 16 Congresses for 32 years in times of war and peace, through recessions and irrational exuberance. He has served as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather, and he served our State with great grace, great steadiness, and great leadership through it all.

It might not come as a surprise to my colleagues as we consider at this time what we are going to do to look at this picture of JOHN BREAUX that will give us all a laugh. I do not know whether he was playing Li'l Abner or a farmer, but this is on his Web site and he displays it proudly. It shows a sense of humor, even as a young man.

He has been called brash and good looking and confident, and he still is that today. He is not only a storyteller, but a great dealmaker. He has a rollicking sense of humor. He is admirable. He is hard-working, amiable, smart, a bridge builder, a strategic thinker, and someone who has our deepest respect. He has been, and continues to be, a team player.

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I found this picture of JOHN BREAUX with his uniform on, which is the way he pretty much came to work every day, with his hat on, a baseball cap, maybe just in a suit, but ready to get the work of the Senate done and get the work of Congress done.

There is probably not a major piece of legislation passed by this Senate that did not have JOHN BREAUX's assistance. He was the teammaker, always ready to bat or pitch or catch or sit on the sidelines or referee because he basically did it all.

He was also considered a strategic thinker and a great leader for our country. He, as many of us, gets the opportunity to not only speak on this floor but to be on major television and radio programs speaking about the great issues of the day. And he most certainly has put his mark on many pieces of legislation.

As a member of the Finance Committee, as a member of the Commerce Committee, and as a member of the Fisheries Committee in the House during the time he served there, I can say there is probably not a major piece of legislation that has not felt the good mark of Senator BREAUX: always there with a compromise, always there with a suggestion, always there with a little prodding. We and the people of our Nation can be grateful for his wisdom and his input at those critical times.

Whether it was the Medicare overhaul, laying the groundwork for a stronger Social Security system, or whether it was legislation related to agriculture, to sugar or rice, the commodities in Louisiana that are so important, JOHN was always there.

I want to say a word about a very important bill—and we will show JOHN playing tennis because this demonstrates that not only is he a great athlete and team player, but he is a great tennis player. What I like about this picture is he always kept his eye on the ball. Despite all of the great work that Senator BREAUX did in this Senate on so many pieces of legislation, helping all States, he always kept his eye on the ball—the State of Louisiana.

There are 4.5 million people who live in our State—wealthy people, poor people, people who live far out in the woods in the country and people who live in the great urban centers of New Orleans and our capital city of Baton Rouge and our other cities. Not only did he keep his eye on the ball in Louisiana, he kept his heart with us.

I can tell you he has left a great mark on our State.

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There is an act we are proud of that we now call the Breaux Act. It is referred to as Wallop-Breaux, but at home we call it the Breaux Act because JOHN, in his typical quiet, responsible fashion, crafted a very special tax arrangement that is ongoing—and we will not talk too much about the details, JOHN, on the floor—but there was a very special arrangement made years ago with members of the Finance Committee that has helped us finance and send money to the State of Louisiana that has literally laid the groundwork to save our coastline.

It is not just Louisiana's coastline; it is America's wetlands. Two-thirds of the Nation is drained by it. Forty percent of the fisheries are in the Gulf of Mexico. The greatest shipping channel in all of North America comes through that Mississippi Delta.

Because JOHN kept his eye on the ball—and although he did all this great work for the Nation, he always loved Louisiana the most, always put his State first—we are now able to build a great environmental legacy to save this coastline. We already lost land the size of the State of Rhode Island, but because of JOHN's work, because of his great strengths and great sense of humor, great respect, and great intelligence, he was able to lay that groundwork.

Whether it was advocating for senior citizens in our State when they did not have an advocate, or showing up at senior centers early in the morning and late at night, whether it was advocating for children through education or whether it was advocating for sugar, he did it all.

Maybe this picture says it the best. On the front page of one of our Nation's leading magazines, here is Senator BREAUX sitting at the table holding all the cards and most of the chips, which is the most important thing about this picture, with the elephant on one side and the donkey on the other, and JOHN BREAUX in the middle. At times, we need men and women in the middle. We need people who can listen to both sides and try to figure it out.

Tonight, that is what we are trying to do on the Senate floor, just trying to figure out this situation. It is a serious situation, and I do not at all mean to be light about it, but figuring it out is what we do as leaders, making our government work.

While I do not gamble too much myself, I can most surely appreciate—and there are plenty of people in Louisiana who do gamble. So we are proud of this picture and proud of JOHN, but deals need to be made on principle and for the

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people. The people need the government to always give them a fair deal, a good deal, and a square deal, and that is what JOHN did.

So, JOHN, on behalf of so many people in Louisiana and around the Nation, let me say that you are going to be missed because you will not be a Member, of course, of the Senate, but we know that we can call you. We know that we can reach you. We know that you will always be advocating for us in Louisiana and for our Nation.

Let me also mention what has not been said on the floor and what was not said in my remarks. Besides having his name on many bills, the phone conversations and quiet consultations that he held with Presidents and with senior Members of this body, his wisdom was found and went through those conversations and into legislation that became part of the work of this body and the Congress.

So, JOHN, for all of your not only legislative work but for your good counsel to us, to Presidents, to leaders of nations, to leaders in industry, we thank you for that and may you look forward to many happy years with Lois. I know that your father Ezra, and I know that your mother, God rest her soul, would be proud. I know that your father Ezra has watched you all these years and continues to be very proud of you. From Crowley, LA, from a young man who ran when he was 28 years old on the theme of experience matters, and was brash enough at 28, having never served a moment to say that experience matters, let me say, experience does matter, and we are proud to have had a Senator with the kind of experience and legacy of my senior Senator from Louisiana, JOHN BREAUX.

MONDAY, *December 20, 2004*

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, with the adjournment of the 108th Congress, Senator JOHN BREAUX is retiring. With his departure Louisiana loses a vigorous and effective advocate, the Nation loses a dedicated and skillful legislator, and the Members of this body, on both sides of the aisle, lose a trusted and respected colleague and a dear friend.

JOHN BREAUX has spent 35 years serving the people of Louisiana in one capacity or another. In 1969, as a recent law school graduate, he came to Washington for the first time to become a legislative assistant to the Representative from Louisiana's Seventh Congressional District. When the

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seat became open 3 years later, JOHN ran for Congress himself, and won. He was then 25 years old. From 1973 until 1977, we served together in the House of Representatives. JOHN continued serving the House for another 5 terms, before being elected to the first of three terms in the Senate, in 1986.

The decision to come to Washington was a very major decision for the BREAUX family, so much so that one child prayed: “Goodbye God. We are moving to Washington.” For the people of Louisiana and the Nation, it has proved to be a most fortunate decision.

JOHN BREAUX’s accomplishments over 18 years in the U.S. Senate are legion. He has served on the Finance Committee; the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; and the Rules Committee. He has chaired the Special Committee on Aging. For 8 years he served his Senate Democratic colleagues as chief deputy whip. He has left his mark on virtually every piece of legislation that passed through the committees on which he has served. He has been a tireless advocate for older Americans, and a proponent of universal health care.

Above and beyond any specific issue, JOHN BREAUX has sought to make government work. He has won the respect and affection of his colleagues—and, time and again, their attention—with what Charlie Cook, in “The Cook Report,” described as “his moderation, personality, manner and legislative style.” In commenting on JOHN’s decision to retire, *The Shreveport Times* called him “a Louisiana natural resource” and “the bridge-builder in an era of burning bridges.”

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