

CHAPTER 28

Robert C. Byrd's Senate

Reflections of a Party Leader

Thanks to the voters of West Virginia, I have had the opportunity to serve in the Senate longer than any of the twenty-nine other United States senators from my state. In this chapter, I wish to share my reflections on the Senate as it enters its third century. I must leave to others the task of assessing my leadership and contributions. My purpose here is simply to set forth my views about the Senate and my experiences as a Senate leader—as well as some personal observations—in the context of the themes established within these two volumes.

IN THE MAJORITY

When I was elected as the new majority leader in January 1977, I had already been handling the actual floor work for the majority party in the Senate for a decade. This equipped me with more floor experience than any other senator in history prior to assuming the top job. Such a background in working with the Senate's complex rules and precedents served me well during the periods of my majority leadership in the Ninety-fifth, Ninety-sixth, and One-hundredth congresses. Since a full description of the Senate's legislative contributions during

those years is available as part of this body's official record, I shall only mention some of the highlights here.*

The Senate of the Ninety-fifth Congress (1977-1978) faced many domestic and international challenges and achieved solutions to many of the most complex issues of modern times. That Congress enacted the first and only comprehensive energy program in history, created the Department of Energy, enacted an increase in the minimum wage, approved financial assistance to New York City in the form of a long-term federal loan guarantee, and passed two multi-billion-dollar tax cuts and a refinancing of the Social Security system to make it solvent into the next century. It approved the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties and provided the first comprehensive overhaul of the Civil Service system in almost a century. It also implemented a major reorganization of Senate committee jurisdictions and required financial disclosure by senators and Senate employees, as well as by all executive branch officials and top-level federal employees.

I was reelected without opposition as majority leader for the Ninety-sixth Congress (1979-1980). That Congress enacted impor-

* U.S., Congress, Senate, *Summary of Legislative Achievements*. 95th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 95-132; 96th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 96-78; 100th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 100-47.

tant laws to further U.S. energy independence from foreign sources, strengthen our national defense, improve the rules of international trade, and reduce burdensome federal regulation. It also created the Department of Education and passed a crude oil windfall profit tax, intelligence oversight legislation requiring the executive branch to consult with Congress on critical intelligence activities, and superfund legislation dealing with the cleanup of toxic wastes. Unfortunately, under the Reagan administrations, much of the national energy program that was established during the Ninety-fifth and Ninety-sixth congresses was dismantled and rendered ineffective.

The One-hundredth Congress (1987–1988) compiled a record of accomplishments that, by most accounts, had not been surpassed—and perhaps not equalled—in the previous two decades. At the close of that Congress, in October 1988, the *New York Times* reported that “Congress regained its voice in the 1987–1988 session, enacting groundbreaking legislation in areas as diverse as trade policy and welfare reform, civil rights and arms control.” The *Times*’ report continued, “Much of the major legislation adopted in the two sessions closely tracks an agenda mapped out by Democratic leaders in January.”*

Among the major accomplishments of that historic Congress were:

- Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act
- Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty
- Catastrophic Health Insurance Act
- Welfare Reform Act (first reform in fifty years)
- Plant Closing Notification
- Civil Rights Restoration Act (over the president’s veto)
- Fair Housing Act Amendments
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Emergency Drought Relief
- Clean Water Act (over the president’s veto)
- Endangered Species Act

* *New York Times*, October 24, 1988.

- Budget Summit Agreement
- Omnibus Anti-Drug bill
- U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement
- Surface Transportation Act (over the president’s veto)
- Creation of Veterans’ Affairs Department
- Homeless Assistance
- AIDS Research/Service
- Housing Authorization
- Tax Technical Corrections Act
- Legislation to implement the Genocide Convention
- Passed all thirteen appropriations bills in 1988 before the beginning of the new fiscal year, for the first time in twelve years

In April 1988, I announced that I would not be a candidate for Democratic party leader in the 101st Congress. I had long debated with myself whether I should seek a seventh term as leader, having announced in late 1987 that I would reach a decision in early 1988. Meanwhile, twenty-two of my Democratic colleagues had voluntarily asked me to run again, and I knew where the remaining votes were to be found in order to put together a majority for one more leadership win. But, after weighing the matter carefully over a period of several months, I reached my decision not to run. I did so for the following reasons: (1) my wife Erma had asked me not to run again for the position of Democratic leader; and (2) a telephone canvass of various newspaper editors and political leaders in West Virginia revealed that over 80 percent of them preferred that I take the chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee, which would become available to me since the then chairman, Senator John C. Stennis of Mississippi, had announced that he would retire at the end of the One-hundredth Congress. My constituents believed that I could do more for West Virginia as Appropriations chairman than as party leader. I had always felt that when the time finally came for me to relinquish the leadership post, I wanted to walk away from it by

my own choice and on my own terms. That time had come. I had led my party through the valley of despair when we were six years in the minority, and we were again the majority party and scaling the peaks of successful achievements in the One-hundredth Congress. I had reached the mountaintop, with Congress well on its way to compiling an impressive record; I would be seventy-one years old in November—exceeding even the Psalmist's promised three-score years and ten; it was time to go, and I went. And I have never been sorry.

At the beginning of the 101st Congress, in January 1989, my colleagues elected me to the office of Senate president pro tempore—a constitutional officer—and I also became, by seniority and by Senate approval, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Thus, on January 3, 1989, at the beginning of my thirty-first year in the Senate, I had served twenty-two years in the elected leadership of my party and had been honored with more Senate leadership offices than had any other senator in the two-hundred-year history of the Senate. For all of these high honors, I say to my colleagues and peers: Thank you! I shall always be grateful, and, in the chosen words of Paul the Apostle: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." (Phil. 1:3)

LEADERSHIP STYLE

I do not have any regrets as far as my leadership years are concerned. I always did my best, and I think I was an effective leader. When the going became tough, I worked all the harder. I seldom suffered a defeat as majority leader. One of the few times that I was not successful in achieving an objective, however, was when I tried to bring campaign financing reform legislation to a vote during the One-hundredth Congress. I worked hard at it; I believed in it; and I was disappointed

that I was unable to get such reform legislation enacted.

My party colleagues elected me to be the leader, and I meant to be the leader. I did not hesitate to do things my way, although I realized that others sometimes did not like my approach. If I felt that the Senate ought to stay in session to get the job done, we stayed and got the job done. If Hamlet had been the Senate majority leader, he might well have soliloquized: "To be loved, or to be respected? That is the question." If there had to be such a choice, I chose to be respected. The Senate could not march to the tune of a hundred different drummers; senators would have to adjust their individual schedules to accommodate the Senate's needs. The work of the Senate came first; the "quality of life" for senators was secondary. I did my duty, and the record of Senate accomplishments during my two separate tenures as majority leader is a record that denotes a working Senate.

I believe that the Senate was an effective force in both foreign and domestic policy during those years. This tide ebbs and flows, of course; but I believe that, throughout my majority leadership, the Senate, when necessity indicated it, exercised an independent voice from that of the administration in formulating and implementing foreign policy, as well as in enacting domestic legislation and confirming nominations.

"Just stand aside and watch yourself go by," said a poet, but it is always difficult to see oneself as others see one. In leadership style, I think I was somewhere between Lyndon Johnson and Mike Mansfield, but more in the Johnson mold. I was energetic in pushing legislation and did not hesitate to use the Senate rules to force legislation forward and bring it up on the floor. On occasions when I could not get the consent of the minority to take up a bill, I used the rules to do so. To me, the Senate rules were to be

used, when necessary, to advance and expedite the Senate's business. I had spent years in trying to master them because I believed that, to be an effective leader, one ought to know the rules and precedents and understand how to use them.

When I first became majority leader in 1977, I established an informal advisory panel of committee chairmen. I viewed them as the leaders of the little legislatures—the committees—who knew what legislation was moving in their committees.

I met often with my Democratic colleagues in small groups, sounding them out on the politics of different approaches to domestic and international problems, thus ascertaining the center of political gravity and facilitating the shaping of consensus. Consensus politics does not unfailingly result in the sagest policy or the best legislative product, because consensus can mean taking the line of least resistance. Still, considering the fact that Senate leaders possess no patronage or other effective tools of discipline, they generally must rely on the incubative process of developing a line of general agreement and then coalescing the votes to win. It is an exercise that requires skill, hard work, and especially perseverance when the going is rough. I particularly respected the political judgment of such senators as Lloyd Bentsen, Wendell Ford, Daniel Inouye, Henry Jackson, Edward Kennedy, Russell Long, George Mitchell, Pat Moynihan, Sam Nunn, Paul Sarbanes, and James Sasser.

As a result of frequent meetings with senators of diverse viewpoints in my party, I was able to develop a collective sense of where we should go and how we should get there. I always tried to have an agenda in mind and to push hard during the sessions to accomplish the goals on my list. To develop such agenda, I depended a great deal on my committee chairmen, who helped me to determine the Senate legislative program, when

we should schedule certain legislation, and what our overall legislative objectives ought to be in a given year and in a given Congress.

PRESS RELATIONS

I seldom sought out the media, recognizing that there were others who had better television skills than I. I came up in a political era when television was not the factor in politics that it is today. In those early years, politicians generally were judged by what they could do for their people, how hard they worked at the job, and how they voted on the issues, whereas so many of the careers of today's politicians seem to be based on their ability to deliver ten-second sound bites for the television cameras and on how much money they can raise for their election campaigns. And they are good at doing both.

I had trouble with television because TV demands oversimplification of the issues. I would spend hours mastering the details of a subject, and I found it frustrating to have to answer complex questions in one or two short sentences. But I held my own and did the interviews and appeared on the talk shows when I felt it was my responsibility to do so, and I did a good many of both over the years. Still, I felt that there were other leadership duties that I could perform much better than that of making TV appearances. Television was not my forte. I think one can be on television too much and can talk too much. In fact, senators usually do talk too much, thus staking out public positions for themselves, often without first carefully considering an issue in depth or waiting to learn what the interests of party unity may require on that issue. It is then too late to extricate themselves from their press statements, with the result that party leaders search in vain for votes. All of which is to say that frequently there are too many generals and not enough corporals, sergeants, and foot soldiers to win the big battles.

During the Carter administration, when the Democrats controlled both houses and I was Senate majority leader, I held regular Saturday morning press conferences in my Capitol office that were popular and drew considerable attention.

The press often tried to get me to predict the outcome of votes, but I knew the risks in attempting to foretell the outcome of a controversial matter. During the Reagan administration, for example, I saw the House Democratic leadership predict a victory on more than one occasion, confident of the votes that they were counting, only to see their votes slip away. I knew that the White House had certain unique advantages when it came to twisting arms and nailing down votes.

I was never comfortable in trying to present important issues to reporters who became quickly bored with details. My interest was in putting the ball across the goal line and the score on the board. That often took a lot of work in the back rooms talking with other senators, and I gave it priority over running up to the press gallery and trying to make a headline. I recognized the importance of informing the people through the media, but I believed that putting the Senate on TV had gone a long way toward satisfying that requirement. I felt that my primary duty as leader was to attend to the people's business by making the Senate run. As each piece of legislation was passed, another was waiting in line.

As the Democratic leader, I had certain responsibilities to the press: not to mislead it and to answer the questions where I could—and wanted to. According to my own blueprint, effective leadership was 5 percent press relations and 95 percent hard work behind the scenes in hammering out time agreements, preparing policy initiatives, molding consensus among my colleagues, and doing the floor work. It can be argued

that I was mistaken in assigning that kind of rough balance. But in addition to not being particularly gregarious by nature, I felt constrained because I had to represent diverse elements in my party, and I often sought to temper my own personal views, at least publicly.

IN THE MINORITY

When the Ninety-seventh Congress convened on Monday, January 5, 1981, the Republicans had seized control of the Senate with a 53 to 47 majority. I ran unopposed and was elected leader of the Democratic minority. I had seen warning signs in 1980 that some of my Democratic colleagues were in trouble, judging by the polls and other indicators, and I had predicted as far back as the previous April that the Senate might switch to Republican control. Yet, I was surprised at the size of the margin by which the shift took place. When asked by a news reporter what advice I would have for the new Republican majority, both in the Senate and at the White House, and what they would have to learn, I responded, "That's for them to worry about; that's for someone else to teach. I'm not in the habit of giving unsolicited advice." I went on to say that, as minority leader, "I'll give it my best shot." And I did. I worked hard and gave it my best, sure that the Democrats would one day regain control of the Senate and believing that I would again become majority leader—all of which did, in due time, come to pass. During the years 1981 through 1986, I worked harmoniously with Republican Majority Leaders Howard Baker of Tennessee and Robert Dole of Kansas, cooperating with them whenever I could cooperate, and opposing them when I felt I had to do so. I saw the need for Senate Democrats to regroup, develop unity, propose alternatives to Republican programs, develop initiatives of our own, and, in general, prepare for the time—which

would surely come—when the voters would swing back to the Democrats.

Meanwhile, I was reelected without opposition as minority leader at the beginning of the Ninety-eighth Congress, in January 1983.

In December 1984, I was confronted with my first leadership challenge in eight years, when Senator Lawton Chiles of Florida announced he would run for leader of the Senate Democrats. Chiles offered himself as a "new face," someone who would be more telegenic. News stories stated that Chiles "and his supporters were counting on senators committed to Byrd to switch on the secret ballot." I had been preparing for a challenge for some time and was not surprised when it came, because Senate Democrats had chafed under their minority status and some of them probably thought that a super-TV personality could restore their control and bring back their committee and subcommittee chairmanships. I did not, however, expect the challenge to come from Chiles. Apparently, his candidacy was the result of a sudden decision on his part, for he was reported as saying that when his "inner voice . . . tells me to move, I got to move."

I was confident that I had more than enough commitments to win, as it was never my style to wait until faced with an opponent before making preparations for a challenge. I always started long before the next leadership election rolled around. Faced with the Chiles challenge, I responded to press inquiries, saying, "When the votes are counted, that will be the end of it."

Chiles was a worthy contender, able and amiable, and he waged a clean fight. I took the position that he had as much right to seek the leadership post as I had, and I harbored no ill will for his doing so. Asked by a reporter about a statement by Chiles' press secretary that Senate Democrats were restless because they were in the minority and it was time to "bring in a new horse," I re-

sponded to this personal criticism by saying, "It's not going to be a cliffhanger. Aides don't vote in the Senate."

When the conference vote came on December 12, 1984, I was reelected leader of the Senate Democrats, by a vote of 36 to 11, with proxies counted. The "old face" had won again.

As the 1986 elections approached, Senate Democrats sensed that the political winds were blowing their way and that at high tide in November their ship would come in—as indeed it did. As Democrats contemplated being the majority party again, Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana announced on June 12 that he would challenge me for the leadership of the party in the One-hundredth Congress, which would convene the following January. Whereas the Chiles challenge to my leadership in the preceding Congress had, according to some observers, begun too late, this time the challenge came early—six months in advance. And whereas Senator Chiles had opined that the Democratic leadership in the Senate was in need of a "new face," Senator Johnston said that the Democrats "need a brand new image . . . I think we need a little passion out there on the floor." My response was, "This is not a Johnny Carson show." It was accomplishments, not image, I said, that counted. The Johnston challenge was a vigorous one, but, as Senator Johnston had said from the beginning, it was "friendly competition." On November 11, 1986, Senator Johnston dropped his bid for the office of majority leader in the coming One-hundredth Congress. In doing so, he said, "If you don't have the votes, you might as well not make your friends walk the plank." He had fought a good fight and was gracious in withdrawing from the contest. On November 20, I was elected Democratic leader for the sixth time by my party. It was my sixty-ninth birthday, and I was grateful to my colleagues for the gift: Senate majority

leader for the One-hundredth Congress, marking two hundred years of the Senate's history.

Through the first six years of Ronald Reagan's administrations, when we were in the minority in the Senate, I developed a unity among Democrats that would serve well when we could again become the majority. This solidarity was not always easy to accomplish because of the wide diversity within the Democratic party in the Senate and because of the immense popularity of Ronald Reagan. I tried to mold a spirit of unity among my Democratic colleagues so that when we stood together, although in the minority, we could sometimes make a difference. When it came to speaking out on the issues, I was usually content to let other senators have the front seat and the front row.

In addition to attempting to build unity among Democrats, I considered it the responsibility of the minority party to develop alternate proposals to some of the legislation that was being pressed by the White House and the Senate Republican leadership.

As minority leader, I had much less to say publicly than when I was majority leader, and I received and accepted fewer invitations to be on television during that period. It was a matter of simple arithmetic: as the minority party, we did not have the votes. Having a popular president of the other party in the White House is not the most enviable position for a minority leader to be in. Unaccustomed to being out of power, the Democratic party in the Senate was demoralized and frustrated. Ronald Reagan's popularity seemed unshakable; and Senate Democrats appeared to have lost their way.

Conversely, the Democrats in the House, during those years, were in the majority, and Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr., was in a position to say what legislation would or would not be scheduled and what the House majority would be able to deliver. Thus, the

House Democrats overshadowed Senate Democrats; the House was where the action was. Being in the minority on the Senate side, I did not think that I should show up on television attempting to predict what would or would not happen in the Senate. It made a great deal of difference that I had no control of the schedule, did not have the votes, and had a dispirited bunch of Democrats looking to me for leadership in what was, in the usual sense, a no-win situation. In fact, we had to learn a new definition of "winning." Winning now often meant moderating the extremes. Winning now meant sticking together and trying to do the right thing, even when we knew we would lose.

As I said many times to my colleagues in our Tuesday conferences, "Let's go on the floor and offer this amendment because it's right. We won't win. But it's not so much how it will look today as how it will appear a year from now, when our position will have been proved right. That is what will count in the end."

To have a Republican president was bad enough for Senate Democrats, but to have Ronald Reagan in the White House was far, far worse. Reagan seemed to have a passion for kicking Congress around. He blamed Congress for everything. Confrontation was the order of the day. It appeared to me that he knew but little about the federal government when he came to Washington and that he knew little more when he left. I liked him personally and thought he was a charming man, but I believe that his fiscal and budgetary policies and his "hands-off" method of governing nearly ruined this country.

The 1981 25-percent tax cuts—5 percent the first year and 10 percent in each of the following two years—which benefited mostly the rich and high-income taxpayers, reduced the nation's revenues by the hundreds of billions in the ensuing years, while additional billions of dollars went for sci-

ence-fiction-type, exotic weapons. Meanwhile, education and research programs were cut back, the nation's infrastructure was allowed to deteriorate, and the country went on living for today at the expense of tomorrow.

In a visit to the White House oval office prior to the 1981 tax cut, I told President Reagan that, in my opinion, we could not have a massive tax cut, proceed with a massive military buildup, and balance the budget in the foreseeable future. I recommended that the third year of the proposed triple-year tax cuts be dropped, at least for the time being or until two years further down the road when we would be in a better position to assess the deficit trend and evaluate the impact of the first- and second-year tax cuts on the economy. The president did not have a ready response to my suggestion, which I continued to press. Finally, he turned to Edwin Meese III, counselor to the president, who maintained that it was necessary to include the third-year tax cut in the 1981 enactment so as to provide predictability and assurance to the investment community that the cut was indeed coming. This approach would enable investors to plan for a longer period, thus providing a spur to the economy and, ultimately, an overall increase rather than a decrease in revenues to the treasury. I left the oval office with my head bloody but unbowed.

During the Reagan presidency, the federal deficits were in the trillions annually—for the first time ever—and so were trade deficits. The national debt soared, going from just under a trillion dollars to almost three trillion, and the United States went from being the greatest creditor nation in the world to become the world's largest debtor. All of this in just eight years!

Although I never rated Ronald Reagan as a first-class movie actor, he was certainly first class when it came to projecting his message

on television. To a considerable extent, he had the American people fooled—not that he particularly intended to fool them; I think he really believed what he was saying. He accepted the scripts that were handed to him by his budget director, David Stockman, and others and apparently did not bother to ask questions. The public liked his “feel good” messages, and the media seemed reluctant to develop the facts and challenge his misstatements. In this case, I believe the media really fell down on the job. No other president in recent times had been let off the hook as much by the press as this one. The softball treatment of Reagan by the press was a serious disservice to the public. It was difficult for us Democrats in the Senate to compete with him, because we could not get our message across, especially being in the minority as we were. Since we did not control the committees, we lacked the institutional forums in which to project our views effectively, fashion policy, and craft implementing legislation.

Because I believed that we could not just criticize the president without having some solutions of our own, I tried wherever possible to fashion Democratic alternatives. On a number of important issues, I established Democratic task forces. These were intended to give Democrats a sense of having some influence over the course of events after having lost their committee and subcommittee chairmanships and to enable Democrats to hammer out the details of our alternatives. We had some successes.

During our six years in the minority, fairness was our battle cry as we attempted to moderate what we considered to be extreme Reagan policies. We offered alternative tax and budget plans. We attempted to make nutritious school lunches available to the two million children cut off by the Reagan administration. In order to reduce budget deficits and pay for needed infrastructure

programs, we tried to suspend the third year of Reagan's three-year tax cut in 1981, and we also offered a Democratic jobs package to finance our crumbling roads and sewers, fund public works projects to employ unemployed workers, and retrain dislocated workers during a period of high unemployment and deep recession. We were defeated in these efforts, but we developed a record on which we could appeal to the voters at the ballot box, because we were advocating things that were clearly in the best interests of the country.

We sought to stress the vital need for real economic growth and competitiveness, and we tried to address the farm crisis which was devastating the family farm. Only by threatening to hold up the nomination of Edwin Meese for attorney general could the Democratic leadership secure an agreement even to consider a proposal for emergency assistance for American farmers. Congress approved this legislation, but the president vetoed it.

In foreign affairs, we opposed the administration's disastrous policy in Lebanon and sought to clarify the nation's objectives in Central America. But the administration rejected these initiatives, and the United States was left with tragedy in Lebanon and uncertainty in Central America.

We had a positive impact on foreign policy by encouraging the administration to support democracy in the Philippines, by pushing for renewed efforts at arms control, and by supporting the Afghans in their war against Soviet invaders.

We were successful in forcing the establishment of an independent inspector-general to look for waste in the Department of Defense, but perhaps our greatest success in those years was in turning the administration around in its attempt to slash the minimum social security benefit for three million retirees. In party-line vote after party-line vote, Democrats demonstrated a deep com-

mitment to maintaining the minimum benefit, and President Reagan finally capitulated.

A minority leader in the Senate who does not have a president of his own party in the White House can do little to chart the Senate's course and is limited to engaging the opposition in rear-guard actions as a way of influencing the final legislative product. In looking back, I have often wondered why anyone would want to be a minority leader in such circumstances, except I did believe that the Democrats would eventually regain majority status; and I tried to prepare the party to assume that responsibility when it ultimately happened.

I thought that the Senate Republicans in 1981 handled their new role as the Senate's majority party very well. Of course, they had their own president to help them corral votes, which makes a world of difference. I thought they demonstrated a somewhat different approach from that of the Democrats in the way the committees and the Senate operated, but that was to be expected, considering that the two parties differ in their philosophy as to the responsibilities of government. Moreover, the Democrats had been in control of Congress for so long that, from the institutional standpoint, running the Senate was probably easier for us, simply because we had had more experience and practice in doing it. But Howard Baker and, later, Bob Dole proved to be effective majority leaders in pushing the Reagan administration's agenda. Many of the president's successes during the years 1981 through 1986 can be largely attributed to the legislative acumen of those two leaders in the Republican-controlled Senate, as well as to some exceptionally bright and effective senators such as Pete Domenici of New Mexico, James McClure of Idaho, and Ted Stevens of Alaska.

Many people think it is a good idea to have the White House controlled by one

party and Congress controlled by the other, so that the two branches can keep an eye on each other. In my view, however, the resulting confrontation is not good for the country. The government works best when one and the same party is in control of both the executive and legislative branches, thus assuring responsibility and accountability. There is too much rank partisanship when the government is divided, and it leads all too often to a paralysis in formulating and implementing effective policy. Difficult problems often go unsolved because the players find it easier to assign blame than to find solutions. It is almost a sure prescription for government gridlock.

Leaders of the legislative branch must cooperate with the executive for the good of the nation. The president is the leader of the country. But even when he was of my own party, I always considered myself to be a Senate man—the Senate leader—and I felt an independence from the executive branch. I could never picture myself as being any president's "man" in the Senate, and I said so publicly. President Carter respected my viewpoint in this regard, and I tried to be helpful to him where I could. I occasionally differed with the president—not often—but I knew the Senate and I knew where the votes were. The president knew he could depend on me to be forthright with him, and he knew that I could keep a secret. I had, and still have, a great respect for President Carter. I think that history will recognize Jimmy Carter as having been a good president. He worked hard and accomplished some things that were good for the country. History will be kinder to him than were his contemporaries, including myself.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

One of the Senate actions during the years of the Republican majority in which I played a leading role, and of which I am particularly

proud, was the institution of live television coverage of the United States Senate.

The Senate Press Galleries chapter in this volume discusses the Senate's evolution from a body that met behind closed doors to one whose proceedings may now be watched live on television by viewers across the country. In the process, it describes my efforts during the 1970's to move toward the broadcasting of Senate proceedings. Here, I shall add some details about the activities in the 1980's that finally achieved this goal.

As our nation forged through the tumultuous, controversial decades of the 1960's and 1970's, it became increasingly clear to many of us that the legislative branch of our government was in danger of being left in the historical dust. We began to understand that the ability to communicate with and influence the public is directly related to the exercise of power in a democratic society. An essential prerequisite to molding public opinion is the necessity of informing the citizens. By the early 1980's, we could see that the public in general did not understand the Senate's crucial role in our governmental processes. The president had immediate access to the media whenever he desired and could explain his actions to the American people as he wished; starting in 1979, the House broadcast its proceedings on television from gavel to gavel; but, without televised proceedings, the Senate was relatively invisible.

In the Ninety-fifth Congress, I submitted a resolution which would have authorized the installation of closed-circuit television from the Senate chamber to senators' offices, but it died in the Rules Committee.

Senator Howard Baker was a strong proponent of televising the Senate, and, in the first week of the Ninety-seventh Congress, he submitted a resolution to permit television cameras in the Senate. It was reported by the Rules Committee in August 1981, and

the Senate took up the matter in February 1982. The resolution was before the Senate intermittently for the next two and one-half months. But the combination of senators who had always opposed television in the Senate, and others, like myself, who were trying to adjust to our newly acquired minority status and were not certain about how the process would function, kept the resolution far short of the sixty votes needed to close debate. The effort was abandoned for the remainder of that Congress.

Senator Charles Mathias of Maryland and Majority Leader Baker persisted in their efforts during the Ninety-eighth Congress. With several cosponsors, they submitted a resolution in February 1983, which the Rules Committee, chaired by Senator Mathias, reported in June 1983. When Senator Baker sought to bring up the issue in September 1984, the Senate invoked cloture by a vote of 73 to 26 and agreed to the motion to consider the proposal by a vote of 67 to 32. Two days later, however, the Senate failed to invoke cloture on the resolution itself, by a vote of 37 to 44, far short of the 60 votes needed. The bill was returned to the calendar.

On the first day of the Ninety-ninth Congress, January 3, 1985, I introduced a resolution to provide for television and radio coverage of the Senate and for certain facilitative changes in the Senate rules. Senator Mathias still chaired the Rules Committee, and the committee ordered the measure reported in October of that year. In February 1986, Senator Dole, who by then had become majority leader, called up the resolution, which was debated by the Senate during most of the month of February. A good portion of the debate centered not on television but on various other rules change proposals included in the resolution.

On February 27, the Senate agreed to a substitute amendment that I offered jointly with Senators Dole, Mathias, William Arm-

strong of Colorado, Albert Gore of Tennessee, and Pete Wilson of California. This amendment incorporated the rules changes that could be agreed upon, as well as the ground rules for a trial period to test televising the Senate. The Senate adopted the amended resolution by a vote of 67 to 21.

Under the resolution, the Senate tested internal broadcasts to Senate offices during the month of May 1986, followed by a period of trial broadcasts to the nation during June and July. When the Senate finally voted on July 29, 1986, to make television and radio coverage of the Senate's proceedings permanent, a very long struggle had been won.

In 1986, I stated on the Senate floor that the coming of television to the United States Senate was not an occurrence to be feared—it was an opportunity to be seized. It was a chance to improve the standing of the Senate in the eyes of the public, the media, and the students of this country who were watching video-taped curriculums on Congress in which they saw only the House of Representatives.

The people have a right to know, to see and hear, and to understand how Congress works. I believe that we have done remarkably well in fulfilling these goals, and I look forward to improving on what we have already accomplished. After more than three years of experience with televised proceedings, we know that television has not changed the way we do business in this chamber. But it has given a vast audience of the American people the opportunity to follow the legislative proceedings that will, in so many ways, affect their lives.

FUND RAISING

A corrupting influence has evolved in recent years that creates an environment for scandal and threatens to destroy the integrity of the legislative branch—not only the Senate but also the House. It is the current

campaign-financing system, which will surely erode the confidence of the American people with the passage of time. When the public trust is undermined, then the structure is weakened. When the structure is sufficiently weakened, the edifice will fall.

Senators these days do not spend as much time in the chamber as was customary and possible in the past, partly because they are too busy with fund raising. Raising exorbitant amounts of money for campaigns has become the inexorable thief of time in the Senate, and it will ultimately become the thief of honor as well. The necessity of traveling from Capitol Hill around the city and around the country to raise funds for the next campaign keeps senators from doing their work on the floor and in committees and also takes them away from their families. They do not spend as much time in being senators as they did when I first came to the Senate.

The work load has also increased and will become heavier as the years pass. The population of the country is growing; new problems and new issues arise constantly and unexpectedly; and senators have too many committee assignments. Like most other senators, I serve on two major committees and one minor committee. Several senators are on more. I could easily spend all of my time with the work of one committee, which is the way it ought to be. But we senators are greedy when it comes to committee assignments. If the folks back home see a member's name on stationery that lists several prestigious committee, subcommittee, and other assignments, it tends to convey an aura of power, which, in reality, is exaggerated. Politically, it may be attractive, but when it comes to attending committee meetings, no senator can be in two or more places at once.

Will Rogers once said, "Politics has got so expensive that it takes a lot of money even to

get beat with." Today, it is difficult for most members to be full-time senators. Those senators who are not rich but who hope to continue public service in the Senate are reduced to being part-time legislators and full-time fund raisers. The voters are not yet fully aware of how much time senators spend away from their duties here because of the necessities of campaign fund raising.

Both as majority leader and as minority leader, I had to deal with the daily consequences of this incessant and growing "money chase." Senators were constantly reminding me of their need to be somewhere else on a particular day in order to raise money for their own campaigns or for those of their colleagues. Often, a group of six or eight senators was scheduled to go to New York or to California or elsewhere on a given day to raise money. Such trips took them away from their Senate duties and slowed the business of the Senate. When several senators are out of town for fund-raising events, the majority leader—although painfully aware of their need to raise money for campaign purposes—finds it difficult to schedule the Senate's work, since those senators will not be present to manage legislation on the floor, offer amendments, or vote.

Most senators probably do not understand the degree to which campaign fund-raising activities interfere with the operation of the Senate as fully as do the leaders, who have to deal with the problems of the whole Senate and are responsible for scheduling legislation for action, keeping the process moving, and getting the Senate's work done. The current method of financing campaigns not only interferes with the Senate's business and takes senators away from their families, as I have said, but it also is demeaning and will eventually result in shame and disgrace for some unlucky senator who will be brought down by it. It is a discredit to the American political system, and it seriously undermines

public confidence in the institution, which, increasingly, is coming under the control of special interest groups, such as the Israeli lobby, the gun lobby, and the senior citizens' lobby, to name but three of the most powerful. Such Washington-based lobbying organizations often do not accurately represent the views of the membership they claim to be working for. They sometimes promulgate misinformation and frequently use scare tactics to whip up their members to pressure Congress. The solution, I believe, is for congressional elections to be publicly financed and for fund-raising political action committees (PACs) to be relegated to the dustbin of history, thus assuring that members of Congress would vote for the people's interests rather than for the special interests that supply the money for the members' campaigns. Money talks, and while it may not actually "buy" the votes of officeholders, it certainly gets their attention and limits their vision.

A system of public financing for congressional campaigns through voluntary contributions by taxpayers similar to that used for presidential campaigns, combined with a limitation on campaign spending, would constitute a bargain for the American people. In return, they would gain a higher quality of representation and be saddled with fewer laws and fewer costly programs enacted at the behest of special interests and pressure groups.

THE ITEM VETO

As I look ahead to the Senate's third century, I see before us a proposal fraught with great danger to the legislative branch. This proposal would hand to the president the power to rescind or veto individual items within an appropriation act, rather than accepting or rejecting the entire measure.

If Congress were to adopt this ill-conceived proposal, the people's branch of

government would suffer a self-inflicted wound that would penetrate to the heart of the constitutional system of checks and balances and separation of powers. It would destroy Congress' exclusive power of the purse, articulated in Article I, section 9, of the Constitution, which states, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of appropriations made by Law." Under our national charter of government, only the legislative branch can make the law; thus, only the legislative branch can appropriate moneys.

Such a shift in power would radically unbalance the delicate system of separation of powers and checks and balances that constitutes the very foundation of our constitutional form of government.

The fifty-five delegates who attended the federal convention had themselves been British subjects prior to the American Revolution. Most were well versed in the development of the unwritten English constitution, and were thoroughly conversant with the story of sacrifice by Englishmen long before their own battle to establish representative government. The framers knew that the power over the purse had been safely vested in the English Parliament only after five hundred years of struggle, and that the price had sometimes been paid in blood that had flowed from the point of a sword. They knew that Magna Carta, signed in 1215 by a reluctant king, included a clause prohibiting the levying of taxes without the consent of the prelates and greater barons.

By the close of the fourteenth century in England, it had become customary to place conditions on money grants, so that to obtain funds from Parliament, the king had to agree to the attached conditions. Parliament often insisted that the money granted would be spent only for specific purposes. Here, over four centuries before the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia,

was the beginning of our modern system of appropriations.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the English Parliament fought with a succession of kings to maintain the power over the purse. Finally, in 1689, Parliament declared William III and Mary to be joint sovereigns, but only after it prepared a Declaration of Rights, which they agreed to accept. This charter limited the monarch's powers in certain ways, among which was a restriction on levying money "without grant of parliament, for longer time or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted." Later that year, the Declaration was incorporated into a statute entitled the Bill of Rights. The supremacy of Parliament had, at last, been assured.

The power over the purse was the basic guarantee undergirding the rights and liberties of Englishmen. As the members of the Philadelphia convention prepared a written constitution for the fledgling American republic, they were guided by the long and painful history of both the motherland's unwritten constitution and the colonial experience under British rule.

With the light of seven hundred years as a lamp unto our feet, let us not now cavalierly cast aside the lessons of the past by lending voice or vote to a massive shift of power from the legislative branch to the executive. This would be the pernicious result of a line-item veto or enhanced rescissions powers for any president. Lord Byron said it best, "A thousand years scarce serve to form a state; an hour may lay it in the dust."

To concede to the executive the authority to excise items from appropriation bills, either by item vetoes or—even worse—by "enhanced" rescissions, would be an act fraught with far-reaching and dangerous consequences. The system of checks and balances established by the Constitution would be seriously altered and impaired. The executive would be strengthened while the legis-

lative branch would be correspondingly weakened.

The influence of the president in our governmental system has already exceeded the fondest hopes of men like Hamilton, who desired a powerful executive. Two factors have especially contributed to the growth of executive power. Both were unforeseen by the Constitution's framers. The first is the emergence and growth of political parties and party patronage, with the president as titular head of his own party. The second is the expansion of the means of communication through the advent of television and radio. With ready access to these media, the president is able, from his "bully pulpit," to go over the heads of Congress and appeal directly to the people. Power to veto or rescind items, provisions, and sections of appropriation bills would enable a president to control Congress, as individual members of the Senate and House would be forced to bargain with the president in order to obtain appropriations for their states and districts. Two of the constitutionally conferred powers which help to make the Senate the unique body that it is—the treaty power and the confirmation power—could be greatly compromised by such enlarged bargaining leverage in the hands of the president, thus vitiating the checks and balances ensured by these powers.

A senator who exercised his own conscience and reflected the views of his own constituents on a given treaty or nomination could risk the loss of appropriations for roads, education, public housing, flood prevention, or airport facilities in his state. To argue that the president would not use such a "blackjack" on members of Congress is to ignore political reality.

The president would be assured of dominance over a subservient Congress. Presidents Ulysses Grant, Ronald Reagan, and others have advocated a line-item veto, but

President William Howard Taft expressed an opposing view: "The veto power does not include the right to veto a part of a bill . . . I think the power to veto items in an appropriation bill might give too much power to the president over congressmen."

Those who advocate a federal line-item veto cite the fact that forty-three of the states have it. Such an analogy is not compelling—or even relevant. The principle of separation of powers is more sharply drawn at the national level than at the state level. State constitutions and state governments deal with local problems or, at the most, problems common to the immediate region. Here, we are dealing with the federal Constitution, which binds together fifty states and the District of Columbia in a common bond. This Republic is based on a system of separation of powers that are distributed among three equal branches acting under checks and balances that operate, each against and with the other. The government of the nation must decide and implement policy, not for just a single state but, rather, for fifty states and territories. Congress, unlike a state legislature, must provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; wrestle with international policies affecting trade, commerce, immigration, alliances, treaties, and finance; raise and support armies and maintain a navy; establish post offices and highways; and formulate fiscal and monetary policy that will keep the economy strong and interest rates stable.

Moreover, most state legislatures—unlike Congress—meet for only brief periods during a year, or every two years, and lack the budget, oversight, and policy-making tools that fall within the realm of the national legislature. Under such circumstances, the responsibility at the state level rests more with the executive to do the budget paring—a burden, incidentally, that is made easier by the flow of federal funds into the state

through the congressional pipeline that runs from Washington.

A study of the discussions involving the veto power that took place at the Constitutional Convention will produce no mention whatever of an item veto, nor was there any reference to such in any of the Federalist papers written by Madison, Hamilton, and Jay that explained the Constitution and advocated its ratification by the states. The convention debates on the veto concerned principally the issues of whether it should be an absolute or qualified negative; whether the votes necessary to override should be two-thirds or three-fourths of both houses; and whether the negative should be vested in the executive alone, or jointly in the executive and the judiciary.

As Hamilton later explained in *The Federalist*, No. 73, "The primary inducement to conferring the power in question upon the executive, is to enable him to defend himself; the secondary one is to encrease the chances in favor of the community, against the passing of bad laws, through haste, inadvertence, or design."

The framers, in their wisdom, decided against giving to the executive an absolute veto. Yet, a line-item veto would essentially amount to an absolute veto. Only in rare instances has Congress overridden the president's veto, even when he has chosen to veto a bill of general interest to the country at large. To expect two-thirds of both houses to override a veto of appropriation items of interest only to a few states or congressional districts is quite unrealistic.

On many occasions, provisions are included in legislation which, if they stood alone, would be vetoed, but, because they are part of a bill containing other provisions that the president wants, he declines to exercise the veto power. Such a bill, if stripped of the provisions objectionable to the president, would no longer be what Congress intended

or envisioned when it voted to give its approval. The altered bill, which the president would then sign, would become a law different from the legislation which Congress had passed. Thus, to place in one man's hands the power to revise and amend a bill or resolution by striking language therefrom or by rescinding appropriations set forth therein, would be to make the president not only the chief executive but also the chief legislator.

Clothing the president with such legislative power would be counter to the letter and the spirit of Article I, section 1, of the Constitution, which vests *all* legislative powers in Congress. The framers clearly intended that the president's choice be limited either to a veto of the whole bill or to letting it become law.

I shall now turn briefly to the politics of the so-called item veto. I say "so-called" because there is much disagreement as to what is meant by the word *item* when it is used in this context. The proposal for an item veto is not something new; it has been around for a long time—long before Ronald Reagan, perhaps its most passionate devotee among the presidents, came to town. The item veto came into being during the Civil War, first in the provisional constitution of the Confederate States of America. It was then adopted by Georgia in 1865 and by Texas in 1866. Following the Civil War, almost every new state admitted to the Union adopted the item veto, and most of the older ones did likewise. As the states adopted the item veto, the agitation for engrafting such a veto onto the federal Constitution increased, and the proposal has been a matter of debate from its early advocacy by President Grant down to the present time.

Many who support the item veto are well-intentioned people who see it as an elixir for the disease of bloated federal deficits. Others, who have not taken the time for se-

rious thought and study of the matter, simply think it is a good idea. Advocates in the legislative branch—who ought to know better—advance it as a panacea for deficit paring when, in reality, they are playing the demagogue by attempting to shift to the president a responsibility that is theirs, but which they lack both the will and the courage to carry out.

The proposal for an item veto at the national level has its appeal, and it is understandable that it would rank high in the polls. But average Americans, concerned with raising their families, advancing in their jobs, and putting the daily bread on the table, may have neither the time nor the inclination to examine and sift through the crosscurrents of history and arcane political theory in order to become fully familiar with the pros and cons of this debate. It thus becomes our responsibility, as members of the Senate and House, not to selfishly play upon an innocent ignorance, but to put aside political gimmickry. We must do what we can to inform the nation of the impracticality and the gross imprudence of giving either line-item veto or enhanced rescission power to the executive.

Madison's words in *The Federalist*, No. 63, are worth repeating here:

. . . [T]here are particular moments in public affairs, when the people stimulated by some irregular passion, . . . or misled by the artful misrepresentations of interested men, may call for measures which they themselves will afterwards be the most ready to lament and condemn. In these critical moments, how salutary will be the interference of some temperate and respectable body of citizens, in order to . . . suspend the blow meditated by the people against themselves, until reason, justice and truth, can regain their authority over the public mind? What bitter anguish would not the people of Athens have often escaped, if their government had contained so provident a safeguard against the tyranny of their own passions? Popular liberty might then have escaped the indelible reproach of

decreeing to the same citizens, the hemlock on one day, and statues on the next.

Madison was illustrating the utility of a Senate in the establishment of the national character. From his penetrating observations, we may derive a true sense of our duty as senators to the states and to the people.

Let us then do our duty, forgetting not that the power over the purse, as Madison wrote in *The Federalist*, No. 58, "may in fact be . . . the most compleat and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure."

ADVICE TO A NEW SENATOR

If a newly elected senator were to ask for my views on how best to serve the Senate and the nation and for my advice on how to get ahead in this institution, I would recommend: stay in touch with your constituents, don't speak too often, keep your hands clean, wear no man's collar but your own, and work hard.

I believe that what is sometimes considered to be the result of genius is more the result of persistence, perseverance, and hard work. To be a good senator, one has to work at it. My advice would be to heed the Scriptural instruction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whatever assignment one is given, work hard at the job. Master the subject. The Biblical proverb speaks of the reward: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings."

Senators are quick to applaud the work that another senator does when he demonstrates a thorough grasp of the subject matter. A senator will be listened to if his colleagues perceive him as one who does his

homework. That is the way to gain the recognition and respect of one's peers. Senators are quick to distinguish between a work-horse and a show horse.

I would also suggest to new senators that when they come to Washington they not be too easily swayed by the local media—the Washington press. Many of the pundits in Washington know little and care less about the opinions and views of people outside the Washington area. A senator will soon be out of tune with the rest of the country if he listens too much to the people who sit in Washington's ivory towers. The political winds outside Washington often blow in very different directions from the prevailing opinions purveyed by the political and journalistic wise guys in this media-hyped city—sometimes referred to as the ego capital of the world. Every editorial is the opinion of its anonymous author—and Washington's editorial writers and columnists are not the constituents back home who vote. Listen instead to the people back in the hills and hollows and up the creeks. There is more real wisdom gathered around a pot-bellied stove in an old country store on a cold day in January than may be found in all of the cocktail circuit here in this city throughout the whole year. And besides, the country gathering is far less boring and the surroundings are a lot safer.

Someone has said that politics is a dirty business. It is not a dirty business. Politics is a noble calling. But dirty politicians have given it a bad name. The ancient usurper of the throne and today's corrupt politician have at least one thing in common: unclean hands. The one's hands were imbrued with blood; the other's are stained with the currency of gain that is ill gotten. The usurper resorted to the sword to wrest the diadem and don the royal purple and then exterminated or exiled the kinsmen of the former occupant of the throne; the politician's course

is more subtle—he uses words to defame his adversary and disarm the voters, and all the people suffer.

The man—or woman—who is elected to office, at any level of government, has been vested with a high honor and will never get rich solely on the salary of that office declared by law. If he uses his office for ill-gotten gains, he violates the people's trust, disgraces himself, casts shame upon his family and future generations of his bloodline, and dishonors all politicians at all levels of government.

Another politician who places an indelible stain upon his profession is one who sees all other politicians as demagogues and knows himself to be a demagogue but pretends to be something else. In a sense, he is as bad as the corrupt holder of office. He takes advantage of the gullibility of his constituents, plays upon their emotions and excites their passions, and deliberately—or at least knowingly—misleads them. He is clever, cunning, and cruel. He, as much as the venally corrupt politician, gives politics a bad name, because through him the people see all politicians as false.

Perhaps those who should bear the most guilt for "dirty politics" in the American political system are the people themselves. As some perceptive sage has said, "An elected official is one who gets 51 percent of the vote cast by 40 percent of the 60 percent of voters who registered." How true! Yet, I have to say to the newly elected senator, to myself, and to all other holders of public office, the burden and the duty are first upon *us*: keep your hands—and your conscience—clean; politics is *not* a dirty business!

SOME PERSONAL VIEWS—HOME-SPUN

We, the people of these United States, live in a country whose greatness seems to have been foreordained by her fortunate geography and rich natural resources, her agreeable

and temperate climate, and by the hardy and industrious race of men and women who hewed her forests, cultivated her fields, bridged her rivers, built her cities, and created the American Dream that has excited the envy and won the admiration of mankind around the globe. How blessed we are to have inherited this pearl of great price! And how thankful we should be to the provident hand of that omnipotent Being who has favored our undertakings from the pre-dawn infancy of the colonial experience to the present-day meridian of the American Republic!

Let us not forget, however, that a nation's ascendancy to the heights of power carries with it no assurance that fortune's smile will never turn away. The pages of history are replete with the instructive accounts of other great civilizations that, in their prime, strode like colossuses upon the sands of time. Yet, they declined and fell—many without a trace. A hundred generations have since dropped, like the leaves of autumn, into the silence of the grave, leaving only a few decaying monuments, or fragments thereof, to testify to their bygone greatness.

For example, the mighty Roman empire was for centuries the wonder of the world. Her far-flung provinces stretched from Britain in the west to the waters of the Euphrates in the east; from the Rhine and the Danube in the north to the pyramids of Egypt and the deserts of Africa and Arabia in the south. Her temples and triumphal arches, her roads and aqueducts were among the noblest monuments to her engineering and creative genius. Commerce from all points of the compass flowed through her ports and over her highways into her thriving cities. Her forts and garrisons and her intrepid legions, bearing the glittering standard of the golden eagle at their head, protected her vast dominions against the marauding barbarians of the north and defeated the invading armies

of Persian monarchs from beyond the Euphrates.

But, as Edward Gibbon tells us, the Roman empire's decline began when the Praetorian guards succumbed to the luxuries of the baths and theaters and easy living, and disobedience and relaxed discipline weakened the Roman legions. The decline was assured when public virtue and patriotism gave way to immorality and sedition, and when Roman citizens demanded free bread and public shows. The Roman Senate lost its dignity and its honor; corruption and venality were enthroned in high places; laziness and indolence were rewarded; emperors were assassinated and their wives and children exiled or put to death; and citizens were massacred in the civil wars fought to benefit tyrants ambitious to secure the throne and wear the purple.

A lesson to be drawn from the brilliant works of Gibbon is that the enemies of Rome were within her bosom, and they paved the way for the empire's collapse and fall—first, to the relentless barbarian invaders in the west and, a thousand years later, to the Turks in the east.

Many of the early symptoms that heralded the Roman empire's decline may be seen in our own nation today: the ubiquitous violence and immorality so pervasive throughout our society; the prevalence of corruption, dishonesty, and greed in government and in business circles; too much money in politics; the apathy of the governed toward the selection of those who govern; laziness, the love of easy living, the loss of pride in our work product, the exit of discipline from the schoolroom, the "government-owes-me-a-living" syndrome; and the decline of religion and family values. All of these, as I have watched them come about over a lifetime now of more than seventy years, are the early but sure signs of a decay in our society and institutions and in our national life. In

my view, they bode ill for the future of our country. Like Edwin Markham, an American poet and lecturer, in his poem "The Fear for Thee, My Country":

I fear the vermin that shall undermine
Senate and citadel and school and shrine—
The Worm of Greed, the fatted Worm of
Ease,
And all the crawling progeny of these—
The vermin that shall honeycomb the towers
And walls of State in unsuspecting hours.

Markham's words are prophetic, and I believe it is our duty—as senators, as citizens who care and to whose hands the stewardship for the future has been entrusted—to do all we can to reverse, or at least arrest, the national decline in moral and religious values and in educational and professional standards, and go back to the basic virtues that made America "the land of the heart's desire."

The Biblical proverb admonishes us, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set." Sometimes I fear that we have about lost sight of the old verities and values that made this a great country. My old "Mom" would probably say we have gotten above "our raisin'." Some of us have become so "sophisticated" that we look with scorn upon others who still hold onto the old beliefs: that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand; that honor and reward are to be found in honest toil; and that mediocrity is not good enough in anything, anywhere, or anytime. Ours is becoming a nation of hardened cynics. We ought to return to our beginnings, go back to the hills, look up at the treetops and the open sky, and gain a renewed sense of God's presence in our personal lives and in the life of the nation.

My foster parents on their knees influenced my life from my early beginnings. We

may stray from what we were taught, but if we have had fundamental values ingrained in us from the outset, we will return to those early lessons. As senators, we especially need to remember the old values—such as faith in God, obedience to law, respect for the flag, honesty and thrift—and, as leaders, we should commend those values to the young people of America.

We senators should never forget that the roads that led us to Washington also lead back home. It is the people out there in the hills and hollows and what *they* think that counts. The farmer with his hand on the plow and the miner with his pick and shovel; the women who stay after the church meetings to wash the dishes; the teacher in the schoolroom; the fisherman in his boat on the stormy deep; the driver of a dog team in the frozen wastes of the far North; the lonely policeman who keeps the midnight watch—these are just plain folks, the people who count. They live near the bone and marrow of life, and they struggle daily to make a living.

Their's is a song of little men,
Whose strength is iron and leather,
Who have no time for gold and fame
While holding a world together.

I know that the hour is late and that "the world is too much with us," as Wordsworth said, but there is yet time and we should not "lay waste our powers." One senator, one teacher, one man or woman may set in motion today the forces that will change tomorrow's world. As leaders of the nation, we have a responsibility to urge our people to excel—in the workplace and in the classroom. Education is the best insurance for old age. One should never stop trying to learn. All of man's learning has barely scratched the surface of even the best brain. Aristotle said that "the fate of empires depends on the

education of youth." Any nation that honors its ballplayers more than its scholars does not have its head screwed on straight, to use a familiar idiom. No ball game ever changed the course of history.

Regarding both the rewards of education and the cultivation of wholesome values in our national life, major network television, which can be, and is, a tremendous force for *good* in our society, often is just the opposite. On most nights, with the flick of a remote-control device, the living rooms of American families can be treated to a melange of foul-mouthed brats uttering language for which any stranger entering those same living rooms and uttering that same language would probably be thrown out bodily, and the use of which in any polite company would earn its user a reputation as a boor and a lout. The crudeness, profanity, vice and violence, and the semipornographic visualization of so much that is being broadcast over the airwaves for public consumption, are eroding our traditional mores and values and benumbing the nation's conscience. By the current tolerance of this diminution of taste and values on television we are teaching our children that the basest level of human behavior is the accepted norm. I consider it a duty to speak out in protest of such degradative programs.

This amazing electronic medium *could* be one of the greatest of all forces for the advancement of excellence in learning; yet, its pitch to the audience seems geared to a common denominator pegged to the lowest point on the mediocrity scale. While television does serve the nation in many ways, so much of its programming is quality-minus, filled with inane clutter, and has a corrosive effect on the nation's character. Little wonder that discipline has exited from the classroom, our students have fallen behind those of other industrialized countries, and America's moral fabric is not just becoming

frayed around the edges but is falling apart at the seams.

All of the junk television and junk movies can never be worth the price of one good book. Violence, drugs, and booze are not the way to happiness and long life, and four-letter words are neither "in" nor right nor smart. Let's keep our values straight. Just because they may seem old fashioned doesn't mean that they are not good.

In these confusing days, "The time is out of joint." Each of us is duty "born to set it right," and our compass and our anchor today, as in the days of old, should be the Book our fathers read.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.*

* Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."