

Sen Ted Stevens Speech on ANWR – December 21, 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I hope the good Lord will help me hold my temper, and I think that will be the case.

The Senator from Illinois said some things that were not true. I have not promised him one single thing. As a matter of fact, I asked for his apology once; I wouldn't accept it now.

I wish to tell the Senator that I first went to the North Slope--and there are people from the North Slope right up in the gallery--I went to the North Slope first in 1953 as a young U.S. attorney. I have been going there ever since. My best friends in Alaska are up there. My first wife used to go up there and go on whaling trips and spend days with them. We know this Arctic. You don't know the Arctic at all. They will tell you, as I will tell you, that it is 2,000 acres of Arctic. Is that worth this fight? Did I bring this fight on? It was the minority in the House that refused to vote for the rule that we passed on the reconciliation bill. This provision was in the reconciliation bill. The majority voted for it. Every other time it has been brought up, except once, the minority has filibustered keeping the commitment made to me by two Democratic Senators in 1980, Senator Jackson and Senator Tsongas. They wrote the amendment; I didn't. They wrote the amendment that kept this area open for oil and gas leases.

I tell the Senator from Illinois that I was the one who drew the order that was issued creating an Arctic wildlife range in 1958 in which oil and gas leasing was specifically permitted. It has never been closed. The Jackson-Tsongas amendment kept it open for oil and gas exploration and development subject to an environmental impact statement being approved by both Congress and the President. But we are here today now.

As my good friend from West Virginia says, we are in the temple. I have lived in the temple now for 37 years. I have studied beside my friend from West Virginia. But I will tell him he is wrong.

Nothing in this bill will allow the majority to go amok. No majority could do anything.

In the spirit of trying to prevent what happened before when the Chair was overruled in 1996--and it took 4 years before we restored rule XXVIII--in the spirit of that, we put a provision in this bill, at the suggestion of the former Parliamentarian, that we assured there would not be that hiatus. Should someone raise a point of order against this and the Chair would be overruled, we put a provision in it that would prevent rule XXVIII from being suspended again.

I have been called a lot of things in the last few weeks. I didn't think of putting this in the Defense bill. It was a group from the House, Members of the minority, who came to me and asked me to do this, put it in the Defense appropriations bill. I have managed the Defense appropriations bill, or my good friend from Hawaii now has managed it, since 1981. I challenge anyone in the Senate to say they have greater commitment to the military than the two of us.

As a matter of fact, as I look at the minority, I ask any one of you, has anyone ever come to me as chairman of the appropriations or any other function and told me that you needed help for your State, that I have turned you down? I have fought with you. I don't care whether it was Senator Harkin, Senator Byrd, every Member. I have probably been the most bipartisan Senator on this side of the aisle in history other than Arthur Vandenberg.

Now, once again, let me say this. Every time this subject has come up--living up to the commitment of Senator Tsongas and Senator Jackson--but once, the minority has filibustered. That once we did get it passed and President Clinton vetoed it. So here I am now, after 25 years, and my two friends--they were friends, Senator Tsongas and Senator Jackson--they were friends so close that it caused people at home to place full-page ads in the paper saying: TED STEVENS, come

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home. You don't represent us. We believe the Congress will keep this commitment.

That was made in 1980. I have labored here and I have never violated the rules. There is nothing I have done here that has violated the rules. Nothing in the bill before us violates the rules. I have lived by the rules.

Now I find myself second in age and second in seniority to my friend from West Virginia--at least I am the senior one on this side.

I will talk about this amendment. First, we cannot change the judicial review provision.

Mr. KERRY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. STEVENS. I will not yield. No one yielded to me.

The impact of what I am saying is, we needed a new income stream.

I went to New Orleans with my friend Senator Vitter, and I sought Senator Landrieu's people down there. I saw the Gulf Coast States. They have lost everything. I have never seen a disaster such as that. I was faced with a question of how to find a revenue stream to help my friends. I know they are my friends. I know disasters when I see them.

I also was faced with a question from the border security people saying, they have to have money this year. We could not get it. We could not get approval of emergencies.

So I met with the Congressional Budget Office. I said, I think you have underestimated the income from ANWR, you have underestimated income from spectrum sales. I have a letter from CBO somewhere. I will be glad to put it in the RECORD. They said, yes, we did underestimate revenues from ANWR. It will be at least twice as much as estimated, but we cannot change it now. But it is true. They also agreed with me, making the assumptions I made, that there will be more money from spectrum. We allocated the spectrum money in the bill in excess to the amount committed in the bill just passed. We take care of those needs.

The first responders is the first group. When you look at the first responders group, they need equipment. There are people involved in homeland security. This bill has \$3.1 billion for them in terms of the border security. There is \$1.1 billion in emergency funds offset by future revenues from ANWR.

The second group deals with the first responders, particularly in New York and throughout the country. That tragedy made us aware that first responders could not communicate with one another. In this bill, we have allocated \$1 billion for first responders. That is interoperable communications, equipment, grants. We know if that is there, they will be able to communicate with one another if, in fact, there is such a disaster.

We have also public safety people. They have come to me in the last week--this is a list of all the groups that have come to me now--in support of this bill. They need money to train and respond in the event we have another terrorist attack.

Also in this bill is money for home heating. Part of the income from ANWR is dedicated to home heating. The bill

provides \$2 billion in emergency money--yes, I said emergency--for 2006 in this bill.

If you take out ANWR, you take out that money. If you take out that money, you do not have money for LIHEAP this year other than what is in the bill just passed and that is what was available last year. As we all know, the price of energy has gone up.

Yes, a vote for this bill--and to bring cloture to this bill--helps our Nation's farmers--our State does not have many farmers. We have some great people out there trying to farm. They do a good job, but they do not have the problems of what I call the south 48. Their problems are high fuel prices, which we are paying, but also fertilizer. Fertilizer prices are off the wall. We do not have that.

We are able to get the money for disaster funding in this bill for farmers in dealing with the conservation programs that are so necessary to ensure productivity for the lands of our country for generations to come.

Some Members of the minority have challenged my sincerity with regard to this. I lived through an earthquake. I lived through the flood in Fairbanks in 1966. This vote is a vote for the people of Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, Florida, and Mississippi. As I said, I went down there. I viewed the damage of that city. I saw devastation in China in World War II where the Japanese wiped out cities, but I never saw devastation like I saw in New Orleans. It was mile after mile after mile of homes of ordinary people, not just damaged, but just not there. Not there.

When I came back, I made a commitment to the two Senators that I would help them. I have tried to keep that promise.

This bill provides on the Katrina side \$29 billion for education, housing, reconstruction of disaster areas. It is very needed. The people of New Orleans cannot go home for Christmas. I cannot go home for Christmas. I have already canceled my trip. I spent one time before in the chair on New Year's Eve. I don't look forward to it. I want Members to know we will be here until we settle this problem. The severability clause in this bill is not new. It has been there before.

I am not a fair-weather friend. I have not turned down one person on that side of the aisle in my life without trying to help. I did not even go to you and say, Please help me. I did talk to one or more of you about the fact that I thought this was the thing to do. I don't deserve some of the comments that have been made by some Senators in this Senate right now.

We are going to stay here until this is finished. As I said, a vote for cloture is a vote for the troops. The Senator from Massachusetts says it is not. But the easiest way to get the money to troops is to vote for cloture. We will be home for Christmas if we do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. STEVENS. I say this to my friend from West Virginia: In all the time we have worked together I have great admiration for you and studied at your feet, but I do not believe I deserved that speech on the rules. I have not violated the rules. I do not ask the Senate to violate the rules. I ask them to vote for cloture, which is part of the rules, and see where we go from there.

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