

NO. 20

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016

Friday, February 12, 2016
(Local Session)

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

The Senate assembled at 11:00 A.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the ACTING PRESIDENT, Senator LOURIE.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator BRYANT were ordered printed in the Journal of January 12, 2016:

Remarks by Senator BRYANT

Mr. PRESIDENT and members of the Senate, I come to you as the Anderson County Senate Delegation. I am by myself. The saying goes, "Is the glass half empty or is the glass half full?" The Senate delegation is half empty. Last Thursday morning, there was an event in Anderson hosted by the Chamber of Commerce called "Toast and Topics." They invite the delegation and have our seats arranged with our names. They had my seat, with my name, Billy's was next to me, to supervise me I guess, but the chair was empty. We did not know at the time that we had lost a dear friend and colleague. We thought Billy was caught in traffic or something. I was sitting there with my nameplate and there was Billy's nameplate, and he was not there, I will never forget that.

Billy's granddaughter's eulogy yesterday was particularly moving and touched me. I saw something else, I don't know if you saw this or not, probably not everybody did, but as we were leaving and the bagpipe player was playing Amazing Grace, I could see Mrs. O'Dell, Gail, singing Amazing Grace. That was moving to me as well.

Gail, we have been praying for you and we will continue to pray for you. We just want to remember Billy and his calm presence as a statesman. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator CROMER were ordered printed in the Journal of January 12, 2016:

Remarks by Senator CROMER

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Thank you Mr. PRESIDENT. I don't usually take the podium, especially under emotional moments like this. It's a little hard for me to get through but it is appropriate since Senator O'DELL was my desk mate and former suitemate.

I met Senator O'DELL when I shared an office with Senator Ford, who was a great suitemate. Everyone told me, "You'll never be able to get anything done in that office," but nothing could have been further from the truth. Senator Ford was one of the best suitemates I ever had.

About a year and a half later, I had the opportunity to move into an office with Billy. A year or so later, one of the coveted offices on the 6th floor overlooking the State House grounds opened up and I said, "Well, that would impress all of my friends and neighbors," so I moved. I hated leaving Billy. A little over a year after that, Senator Richardson was appointed Director of Insurance by Governor Sanford and that left a vacancy in our suite. I thought I might get to move into the big office but, lo and behold, Senator O'DELL came up and he and I became suitemates once again.

Senator O'DELL was a prince of a gentleman. I used to refer to him as the *other* Billy O'Dell because I knew another Billy O'Dell that traded with me and lived in Newberry who was a well-known baseball pitcher. Some of you older guys can remember Billy. He was a tremendous baseball pitcher. I started talking about BILLY O'DELL and what he had done for me and folks would mistakenly think I was talking about Billy O'Dell from Newberry.

Senator O'DELL genuinely was a wonderful man and public servant. Senator SETZLER, what you said about him, well, that's how I would describe him to people who did not know him. He was a quiet guy, but he always tried to do everything just right. He wanted to be fair. It didn't matter if he was voting with somebody on the far right or somebody on the far left. He was going to vote for what was right for the people and right for the State of South Carolina. I have to say he was a great guy.

Senator O'DELL was very successful in business. I never once heard anybody say what he was making in his business and we joked with him all the time about being in a business where he really "mopped up" and he would take it as the pun it was intended to be. He never bragged about it. In fact, I think Billy really enjoyed being down here more where he worked diligently to take care of the business of the State and to help his constituents. On Thursday afternoons, I would look at him and say, "Billy, I think I might be going to Edisto this afternoon." He'd say, "I

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think my wife is already down at the Isle of Palms. I need to get out of here so I can get on down.” Late in the evening when we would have somebody up here holding the podium he would say, “Ronnie, I’m hungry.” I would offer him some crackers and he would generally decline the offer. However, after another hour or so he would look over and say, “You know, those crackers sound pretty good about now.” Senator O’DELL, we are going to miss you...we are going to miss you. Godspeed.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator SETZLER were ordered printed in the Journal of January 12, 2016:

Remarks by Senator SETZLER

Mr. PRESIDENT, ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, I do not know that any of us thought that we would be here on this opening day having a memorial service for our dear friend, Senator BILLY O’DELL. This State and the South Carolina Senate, which we all love, have had a year. The massacre in Charleston and the loss of our colleague, Senator Pinckney, the loss of Mrs. Matthews, the flood, and now the news of Senator O’DELL’s passing. When we walked through those doors and saw the black cape draped on his desk, just as we did with Senator Pinckney, it brought home the reality of what had occurred. You try to put it out of your mind and think it is not true.

Senator O’DELL was a tremendous public servant. During the past 26 years, I not only had the opportunity to serve with him, but I had the opportunity to get to know him as an individual outside this Chamber. His family, just as my family, vacationed in Charleston on the Isle of Palms, and our children grew up there. One session, probably ten years ago, Senator O’DELL learned that we were going to be on vacation at the same time. He knew I played golf and asked me to play a round. I told him I had not played very much and honestly was not very good. He told me he had not played in three years. As background, this is the middle of July, it must have been 160° on the golf course, and Senator O’DELL did not quite tell me the truth. He not only had not played golf in three years, but he probably had not played in his lifetime. We were out there six hours, and all we wanted to do was finish and get inside.

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I also got to know him from the conversations here and would like to reference words as spoken by the preacher at the funeral, "Billy always had an angle." Senator O'DELL was an incredible businessman and investor. I talked with him several times about his investment property and the many ways he made money. One time he sold a place in Charleston, and he came in and showed me the check. On that one investment, he made more than I might make in a lifetime.

I have fond memories of him propping up against that rail and having the opportunity to talk with him. If you asked him a question, he was going to tell you exactly what he thought. He did not mince any words or sugar coat anything.

I think highly of Senator O'DELL and his service. Some people refer to Senator O'DELL as a Republican, some people refer to him as a Democrat or a former Democrat, and some people refer to Senator O'DELL as a RINO. I refer to Senator O'DELL and will always remember him as a bipartisan centrist. He understood that you had to work across the aisle, and the only way we ever got things done was in a bipartisan effort through the center part of this Body. I will always remember him for that.

He was fiercely committed to the things in which he believed. He was committed to his family, his friends, his constituents, the Senate, and he understood the traditions of the Senate and The Citadel. He was a humble human being -- one trait that we all hope and ask for each day. He did not take this podium much, but when he did, people listened. He worked tirelessly on behalf of his constituents and this State in committees, subcommittees and with his fellow colleagues and will be dearly missed.

This entire Senate will miss BILLY O'DELL. He was a man of grace, a man of humility, and a man of integrity. He lived a great life, and the way he lived his life represents the values for which he stood. Thank you.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator ALEXANDER were ordered printed in the Journal of January 12, 2016:

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Remarks by Senator ALEXANDER

Thank you Mr. PRESIDENT and members of the Senate. I rise to pay tribute to my friend BILLY O'DELL. He was a good man. I Timothy 2:2 says, "We may live peaceful and quiet lives..." and that characterizes Senator BILLY O'DELL. That was his spirit. He was quiet, but got the job done. He was respected, appreciated and a peaceful man.

I worked with BILLY O'DELL in many different capacities in his service here in the Senate and had the privilege of serving on the Health and Human Services Subcommittee with him. When I became Chairman of the Labor, Commerce and Industry Committee, one of the first people I went to was Senator BILLY O'DELL and I said to him, "Billy, I would like for you to serve as Chairman of the Occupations and Professions Subcommittee because of your background in business and your experience here in this Senate. I think you would make a great subcommittee Chairman." Without hesitation, he accepted that challenge and served with distinction all these years. When I think about the opportunity I had to serve with him on the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, it was truly about putting other people first and about what was right for the State of South Carolina and our citizens. I don't know of a better legacy you could have than that.

Billy was always looking out for the less fortunate, whether it be the mental health area, disability and special needs and so many others like The Citadel, economic development and many others things. I saw him being compassionate and determined to help in any way he could. He was especially a champion for the Greenwood Genetics Center and so proud of the work they do. One of my favorite poems, The Dash, is about the time in between the date of birth and the date of death on the tombstone and what you do with it. BILLY O'DELL has done a lot. He has done a lot for his family, country and State and we are a better place because of him.

It was mentioned that we need to be more aware of the opportunities of being together, whether it's being on the golf course when you haven't played in a while or just creating memories. A few days before we went to the Greenwood Genetic Center, Billy called to make sure I was still coming because he wanted me to see firsthand the work that is being done. He was proud of the opportunities there, the international recognition that the center received for their work on autism research and the cutting edge milestones in dealing with autism.

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I am so grateful, not only for his friendship, but for the opportunity to cherish that memory of time spent together and the opportunity to see Billy demonstrating his care and compassion for those he didn't know.

I will miss my dear, good friend Senator BILLY O'DELL. May God be with his family, friends and staff as we all mourn and feel great sorrow for our loss. God bless his soul.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator FAIR were ordered printed in the Journal of January 28, 2016:

Remarks by Senator FAIR

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT, ladies and gentlemen. Senator MALLOY and I have co-sponsored legislation offering reauthorization of First Steps. We would encourage any and all of you to join us in adding your name to the Bill. Perhaps many of you know that I am a state trustee along with Senator MALLOY, so it is nothing out of the ordinary for us to be very big supporters of First Steps. First Steps has created a national model. Now these are not my words or his, these are the words of a lady named Karen Ponder who is not just an average citizen, she is one of the foremost experts on early childhood in our country today. Ladies and gentlemen, what we are doing with First Steps is right. It has taken 16 years to get to the point to where we are. The reason that First Steps is working is that in the most recent external evaluation of First Steps, evaluators found that First Steps is meeting each of the goals that we as members of the General Assembly have handed to them. They have a state and local accountability system and they found that First Steps is "the battery" powering early childhood education in South Carolina.

Last week the Education Oversight Committee released its most recent evaluation of the state's 4K program. What they found was that children in First Steps private 4K programs were doing as well or better than those in the public schools. Now this is the interesting thing about First Steps -- it costs 75 cents on the dollar -- so we are getting a bargain in many ways.

So today we are delighted to introduce this Bill reauthorizing First Steps until 2021, and then on a cyclical basis thereafter. Again, we invite

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all of you to join us in this reauthorization Bill. Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT.

MOTION ADOPTED

On motion of Senators LOURIE and BENNETT, with unanimous consent, the Senate stood adjourned out of respect to the memory of Mrs. Mary Eva Bruce Mullins of Columbia, S.C. Mrs. Mullins was the mother of our beloved Michele Neal who works on the Senate Desk and also Robert Bruce Mullins, Michael Alan Mullins and Melissa Mullins Slagle. A former teacher, Mrs. Mullins was active in her church and community. Mrs. Mullins was a loving mother and devoted grandmother who will be dearly missed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:04 A.M., on motion of Senator McELVEEN, the Senate adjourned to meet next Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at 12:00 Noon.

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