**Harry Reid Retirement Floor Speech**

**Mr. / Madam President (wait to be recognized)**

(If no one else is speaking you must ask, “**I ask that the quorum call be dispensed with**.”)

Mister President, I stand in front of you today to commemorate the life-long service of a fellow Nevadan who has given his all to serve our state and country. It’s been said that it is better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both. And as many of my colleagues in the Senate probably believe, no individual in American politics embodies that sentiment more than my colleague from Nevada: Harry Mason Reid.

I’m here today to pay respect to Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid after his 30 years of service in this chamber in addition to the years of public service before entering the Senate. I know Harry is notorious for his short conversations and for hanging up the phone before our conversations end, even midsentence, so I will try to keep my comments short.

But before I truly get into this speech, I must first recognize Harry’s family. As a public official, very often, it’s time with your family that is often sacrificed the most. And it’s very true, as stated by a leader of our shared faith when he said, “nothing compensates for failure in the home.” Harry was keenly aware of this fact, and it showed in his adoration for his wife, Landra, and five children: Lana, Rory, Leif, Josh, and Key. He made sure to keep a very close bond with wife, his children, and his grandchildren. That is something we all respect. And is something I wish to emulate.

So, what can I say? It’s the end of an era for my home state of Nevada. Harry has devoted his entire adult life to one cause: the state of Nevada and serving it. And trust me, though we had our differences when it came to our state – I can attest - there was no stronger partner to serve the people of Nevada than Harry Reid.

It’s been said, victorious leaders feel the alternative to winning is totally unacceptable, so they figure out what must be done to achieve victory, and then they go after it with everything at their disposal. And I believe that describes Harry Reid in a nutshell.

Another measure of success, something Harry and I have found amusing in the past, is being blamed for all things: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Senator Reid has served in every level of government from city attorney, to state assembly and Lieutenant Governor, to United States Congressman and Senator. As a Senator, he’s one of only three to serve at least eight years as Majority Leader. And even in retirement, due to his far-reaching influence in just about every facet of local, state, and federal government: I totally expect he will operate as Nevada’s third senator.

After 26 elections, Harry knows a thing or two about representing his constituency. He is one of the sharpest tactical minds ever to enter the political arena. Having worked together over the years, my hope is that we sent a message, not only to all Nevadans, but to everyone across this country that two people – that you can tell differ on opinions – can work well together and get things done for their constituents when they are both willing.

That’s why it’s fitting this week that the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act will pass the Senate and will be sent to the president’s desk to be signed into law. After fighting for years to refocus federal policy on the twenty-first century threats to the Lake, we teamed up to ensure important work that preserves the Jewel of the Sierra for future generations will advance. One of Harry’s lasting legacies will be that he and I worked to improve water clarity, reduce wildfire threats, jumpstart transportation and infrastructure projects, and combat invasive species at Lake Tahoe. Because of this work, Lake Tahoe has once again been made a national priority.

Another policy initiative we worked on together was the fight against Yucca Mountain.

Harry, rest assured, I will continue to fight Yucca. My mantra is borrowed from one of your friends, the late Senator Ted Kennedy, “the work goes on, the cause endures…”and we will not allow for Nevada to turn into America’s nuclear dump against the will of its own people.

Harry, you share the Nevada values like faith in God, hard work, and commitment to family. I know because you displayed these values at home, at work, and in church. That’s actually how I got to know Harry. It was during his tenure as Lieutenant Governor when he spent time in Carson City. Our families were able to meet each other and become friends. And, eventually, I became very good friends with his son, Leif, because of that. Harry, your dedication to family is extraordinary and serves as a model for all of us.

But I would be remiss if I didn’t share a couple of my favorite Harry Reid stories. So here goes.

Before serving in the Senate, I was elected to the House of Representatives from 2007 until my appointment to the Senate in 2011. Late one evening, I’m sitting in my office with my Chief of Staff Mac Abrams discussing a few last minute details before leaving for the day. It must’ve been the end of the week because staffers in the House offices were milling about in the hall celebrating a birthday party, enjoying each other’s company, playing loud music, and taking a few moments to relax. I was having a hard time keeping the noise from the halls out of my office because the walls were so thin. Then all of a sudden, it’s as if it all stopped immediately. A quiet hush fell over the crowd. It became so quiet, to the point, all I could here was an echoing: Tap. Tap. Tap. The taps became magnified and the hallway which was previously full of life just immediately died. I began to walk toward the hall to see what it was. I could tell the tapping noise was the sound of footsteps. As they grew louder and closer, I barely heard a peep in the hallway. Sure enough, the next sound I heard was the door knob in my office turning and in walks Harry. “Hi Dean, do you have a few minutes?” That story illustrates how much presence Harry has, and the respect he commands no matter where he is. He quieted an entire hallway full of lively staffers by just passing through and walking down the hall.

Now the second story occurred more recently. We were in Harry’s office on a January morning, soon after I was elected to my first full term. During that campaign, Harry and his special friends gave me about 12 million reasons why I shouldn’t be standing there in his office that morning for breakfast. But hey, this is the Senate – where collegiality reigns supreme and it was a breakfast event for constituents so there I was. Harry and I have known each other for many years, and he made it a point to tell those in attendance just how close we were. We were having a great breakfast and he gets up to tell everyone about how long he’s known me, some of my background, but he kept highlighting how close we were. So after giving a short speech, Harry looks at me and offers for me to say a few words of my own. So I just got up in front of the room and made sure everyone knew I could attest that at least one Reid voted for me: Harry’s son, Leif. The look on Harry’s face was priceless. Seeing Harry process the fact there was a Reid that voted for me is a memory that is seared into my brain forever.

For me, this speech is not goodbye because I know I will be seeing you back home in our great state. Harry – people, like me, may disagree with you at times. But we will always respect you for three things: your devotion to family, your service to our state and nation, and your commitment to fighting for what you believe in. This chamber has been blessed with some of the greatest men and women to have ever served our Republic. Today, I rise to recognize your place among those same figures and hope your career will give inspiration to a young child from Carson or Searchlight, or anywhere else in Nevada, to follow in your footsteps.

Again, congratulations on your career. We, the people of Nevada, thank you for your service. Lynne and I wish you and Landra all the best in the years ahead. And as your new senior Senator, I hope I can count on your vote.

 Thank you, Mr./Madam President, I yield the floor (and if no one else is on the floor getting ready to speak, you must also say, “I suggest the absence of a quorum.”)