

that the leader and others in the leadership will give some consideration to that. I think we can move forward. I know that there is not certainty in the House as to the direction they want to take, but I believe passage of the Senate proposal and shipment of it to the House would cause that to happen. If it is difficult, it is difficult. It is no more difficult now than it will be later. To the contrary, as we get toward the end of this session, it may be even more difficult to find time.

I suggest, hope and urge that we bring it to the floor as soon as possible, and we resolve that issue so that we can move forward on this transportation question, which is probably one of the most important economic things we do in our States. These dollars go there, they are contracted, they go into business, and we provide a better transportation system.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MCKINLEY WISE: THE SENATE'S FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN REPORTER OF DEBATES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this month marks the 22nd year the United States has celebrated Black History Month. I want to take this opportunity to mark a relevant piece of Senate history. I am proud to serve with CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN of Illinois and to have served with Edward Brooke of Massachusetts. These outstanding Senators and African Americans are well known and recognized by those who follow the Senate. But today, I also want to recognize McKinley Wise.

Twenty years ago this month, McKinley Wise was asked to work in the office of the Official Reporters of Debates and in March 1978 became the first African American to stand on the Senate floor and record the words of this body.

I was privileged to be a Member of the Senate at that time, and I know that this happened not because there was a quota to be achieved but because McKinley Wise's ability qualified him to work on the floor of the Senate.

In 1978, the Senate was beginning its debate on the Panama Canal treaties. Because this was such an important debate and all Senators were expected to participate, the Chief of the Official Reporters of Debate expected long hours and knew that they were going to need more staff. G. Russell Walker, the chief reporter at the time, set out to find qualified people to work part time and help record the Senate's debate. One of those people he recruited was McKinley Wise. Here's how Mr.

Walker explained how Mr. Wise's name came to his attention:

We had before the Senate in late January the Panama Canal Treaties, and there was a very good possibility of the Senate's having 12- and 14-hour-a-day sessions, and we needed more reporters. I went through our file and saw McKinley Wise's name. He was well qualified, had all the certificates, and seemed to have a good background. I asked for and received authority to call him, to see if he could come down and assist us. It was on Friday, February 24th, when I called him and asked him if he could come in the following Tuesday. Not many reporters could leave their businesses and come to Washington on such short notice, but Mac was there, and he did a magnificent job.

Mr. President, I remember that very well. And we did have those 12- and 14-hour and sometimes longer days. But he was there.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article from the May 1978 issue of the Circuit Reporter, the official publication of the United States Court Reporters Association, be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit No. 1.)

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I bring this to the attention of the Senate to highlight not only this moment in the Senate's history, but also to note that qualifications and hard work do count. Although no longer working for the Senate, McKinley Wise has continued to use his skills over the past 20 years and is currently working in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We spend a lot of time in the Senate talking about opportunity and providing every American the same chance at life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Hard work is the key to success, but people need the opportunity to perform. The Senate gave that opportunity to Mac Wise in 1978, and both are better for it.

EXHIBIT NO. 1

FORMER U.S. DISTRICT COURT REPORTER,
FIRST BLACK REPORTER ON SENATE FLOOR

February 24, 1978, was the day a dream came true. McKinley (Mac) Wise, a former Official Court Reporter in the United States Court in Philadelphia, Pa., had long dreamed that some day he would have the honor and privilege of being the first black court reporter to serve on the Senate floor—but he thought it was just another of his dreams.

G. Russell Walker, Chief Reporter, Official Reporters of Debates, United States Senate, had Mac's name on his list of highly qualified reporters to call upon in an emergency. He made that call to Mac on February 24, inquiring whether Mac could report for temporary duty in connection with the expected lengthy debate on the Panama Canal Treaties.

Mac lost no time in rearranging the busy schedule of his reporting firm, McKinley Wise & Associates, Inc., of Philadelphia, and four days after the call he was on his way to achieving another "first" in his long career of "firsts."

When he arrived at the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates, Mac was cordially greeted by all of the reporters, transcribers, and staff, and before he knew what was happening, he was there—on the Senate floor—with his Stenograph machine.

A feeling of awe came over Mac when he realized that here he was at last, sitting among this august and distinguished body of United States Senators. At first, Mac had a supervisor beside him, identifying the speakers, and explaining the procedures. Mac said, "I was able to conquer the words spoken, but when it came to putting them into the proper format, it was an art to which I had never been exposed. In the beginning I felt inept, but said to myself, 'The job must do done', and I did it."

Everything went along smoothly until the arrival of Morning Business, which was somewhat like taking pleas before a magistrate. The proceedings go very rapidly, because it is usually routine to the lawmakers, with deviations coming later in the office where proper headlines and sub-headlines are inserted.

Mac said that the cooperation of his colleagues overwhelmed him, and that their knowledge on just about any subject was astounding. No one was ever too busy to take time to answer any question that Mac had.

Mac said, "I think that being the first black reporter on the Senate floor, especially at a time when a debate of critical importance to the country was taking place, is something which I will never forget. It isn't often that one of your wildest dreams comes true."

Mr. Walker, Chief Reporter of the Official Reporters of Debates, confirmed the fact that McKinley Wise was the first black or any other minority reporter to serve on the Senate floor. Walker said that, to his knowledge, no black or minority reporter has yet served on the floor of the House.

When asked how he came to call Mac Wise, Mr. Walker replied, "We had before the Senate in late January the Panama Canal treaties, and there was a very good possibility of the Senate having 12 and 14-hour-a-day sessions, and we needed more reporters. I went through our file and saw McKinley Wise's name. He was well-certified, with all of the certificates, well-qualified, and he seemed to have a good background."

"I asked for and received authority to call him, which I did, to see if he could come down and assist us. It was a Friday when I called Mac, asking if he could come in the following Tuesday. Not many reporters could leave their business and come to Washington on short notice, but Mac was there, and he did a magnificent job."

Mr. Walker went on to say, "Ordinarily, when someone comes into this office as one of the Official Reporters of Debates, he or she is given great in-depth training in all of our forms, and parliamentary procedures, Senate rules, and so forth. I didn't give Mac any of that. We just wanted somebody to write, and write fast, because this is the kind of debate where there was not at that time a lot of parliamentary procedure going on; it was mostly stand-up, straight, hot and heavy debate."

"As I said before, he did a magnificent job."

Mac was born in Jeanrette, Louisiana, but with his parents moved to Port Arthur, Texas, at a very early age. He was graduated from Lincoln High School there, after which he served in the United States Navy, where he was given a stenomask reporting in order to report courts-martial and other related proceedings. Mac found the stenomask unsatisfactory, and while in the Navy started studying stenotype at the Certified School of Stenotype in San Francisco, California, completing his course after being discharged from the Navy.

Since then Mac Wise has had a varied reporting career, involving free lance work in New York City, substituting in many of the courts in New York City; serving as an assistant in the Philadelphia County courts,

free-lancing in Philadelphia, before becoming an Official Court Reporter in the United States District Court in Philadelphia, where he served the Hon. Charles R. Weiner and the Hon. J. William Ditter, Jr., from 1967 to 1975.

Mac left his official job to return to the free lance field, and is now the owner of McKinley Wise and Associates, Inc., with a staff of seven certified reporters. Daily copy is the specialty of the firm.

During the time when Mac was reporting in the Federal courts in Philadelphia, he was a member of USCRA. He is a member of PSRA and NSRA. Mac is now serving NSRA as Chairman of the Free Lance Committee, as a member of the Advisory Committee, Professional Examination Service, the Committee on Testing, and the Ad Hoc Committee for Professional Standards.

Mac is the holder of the following certificates from NSRA, RPR, CP, CM, and in Pennsylvania holds the CSR certificate, as well as being a Qualifier in the PSRA Speed Contest at 280 wpm.

USCRA is proud of the fact that one of its former members has achieved the distinction of being the first of his race to serve on the floor of the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 1999 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to commend the President of the United States on his budget submission to Congress. For the first time since 1971, a President has proposed a balanced budget. I hope and believe that this Congress will be the first in almost 30 years, since 1969, to enact a balanced budget without sacrificing our educational, environmental, health care and law enforcement priorities.

The President noted in his State of the Union speech last week, two historic pieces of legislation have reduced the deficit to the point where a balanced budget is now within our grasp: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. I am proud to have voted for both of these historic laws.

When President Clinton took office, the deficit was at its highest point ever: \$290 billion. But he decided to tackle the runaway deficits of previous administrations. In 1993, the Senate and House of Representatives passed President Clinton's economic plan by the slimmest of margins and without a single Republican vote.

That was a tough vote around here, but it was the right thing to do. I am proud that I voted for it. It reduced the deficit by 75 percent. Unfortunately, we were forced to make this historic deficit correction without the help of a single Republican vote in either the House or the Senate.

Last year, Democrats and Republicans together made additional deficit reduction progress by passing the bipartisan budget agreement to reach balance by 2002.

That package included net savings of more than \$900 billion over the next ten years. It also secured and strengthened Medicare for our seniors and made the largest investment ever in education for our children.

Today, the deficit is at its lowest dollar figure since 1970—\$5 billion—and at

its lowest point as a percentage of the economy in 30 years. This past year, the Gross Domestic Product grew at its highest rate since 1988, unemployment fell to a 24-year low, and inflation dropped to levels last seen in the 1960s. Our economy is in the best shape in a generation in no small part because of these two historic deficit reduction measures.

I am most proud that the President and Congress can achieve a balanced budget this year without demeaning the fundamental charter of our democracy, the Constitution of the United States. The proposed constitutional amendment to require a so-called balanced budget did not reduce the deficit by a single dollar or move us one inch closer to achieving those goals. Rather, it was a political exercise serving only to delay and distract—a display in bumper sticker politics.

I hope the Senate will learn from this lesson and abandon such destructive efforts for illusionary quick-fixes by constitutional amendment for the rest of this session and into the future.

Instead, Congress working with the President can do the job today.

Hard choices and bipartisan cooperation are what is needed. We cannot legislate political courage and responsibility. No amendment to the Constitution can supply the people's representatives with these essential attributes.

Political courage has been an essential ingredient that has helped us achieve remarkable deficit reduction over the past six years. We have succeeded in reducing the deficit every year of the past six. We have cut the deficit by more than 98 percent in that time while pursuing sound economic and strong fiscal policies.

Now we need to stay the course and work in a bipartisan way to finally balance the budget. We should now be focusing our attention and energies on the strenuous tasks of building a working consensus on budget priorities and achieving agreement on how to balance the budget.

Within a balanced budget, we must reach consensus on strong support for education funding as one of our top priorities. As I watched my colleagues during the State of the Union address, I noticed that those with school-aged children cheered the loudest at the President's continuing commitment to keep education a national priority. A national commitment to education, however, is not just for the students and parents of today; it is for all of us.

Only a few decades ago, our students were taught that the countries blessed with the most natural resources held the keys to the highest standards of living and the most vibrant economic growth. Today, it is the countries that invest in their "human capital" that have the greatest success in the global economy.

I applaud the President for investing in our people by making a higher priority of education at all levels—from an expansion of Head Start, to access to

affordable quality child care, to more teachers in the classroom, to literacy training, to lower fees for college students using loans.

The only way to keep our nation strong and successful in the global marketplace is through an educated workforce. To do this children must understand the basics, the three R's. We need to make sure that teachers are trained and have access to continuing training education. Only after this foundation is built will computers and other technologies in the classroom help students reach their full potential.

Technology in the classroom can be a great leveler. On the Internet students can see Michelangelo's work on ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in wonderful detail. Students in the United States can "chat" with students in Japan or South America or even their U.S. senator about their daily lives to better understand one another.

Another great leveler is to ensure that students of all abilities have access to quality education. To this end, I am committed to increasing federal funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). More than two decades ago the federal government made a commitment to local school districts to provide assistance in this funding, and the federal government has not lived up to its end of the bargain. I am disappointed that the budget did not include an increase for this program. I am committed to working with my colleagues as we move through the budget and appropriations process to remedy this shortfall.

I also find room for improvement with the Administration's proposal for Amtrak. Last year was a critical one for our national passenger railroad. Included in the Taxpayer's Relief Act was a one-time, \$2.3 billion infusion of capital, intended to modernize Amtrak and enable it to reap sufficient revenues to become self-sufficient. Congress also passed a far-reaching Amtrak Reform Bill, which will refine the way Amtrak does business for the 21st Century, while making sure that its employees are fairly treated. I am disappointed that the Administration has proposed using a portion of these capital funds, instead, for Amtrak's day-to-day operating costs. This would undermine Amtrak's modernization plan and all of the hard work we did last year on these proposals. As always, I will work with my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to try to find ways to ensure that Amtrak receives the resources it needs.

Mr. President, on balance, the President has proposed a budget that reflects priorities that are good for the nation and that will find strong support by the American people. I am delighted that the President and Congress can achieve a balanced budget this year while serving the needs of the nation. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to enact the first balanced budget in a generation.