

30,000 were not even sure he had spoken. Yet his words continue to inspire the world and the Nation today. In 272 words is what it took for President Lincoln to explain to a war-weary nation why it must continue to fight. He called on the Nation to look up from the devastation and division of the war to a higher purpose. He redefined the meaning and the value of the continuing struggle: "that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom."

He said that the ceremony at Gettysburg was more than the consecration of a cemetery; it represented an opportunity and an obligation for us, the living, to finish the work of those who had fallen there, to ensure that "this government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

It may have been the greatest speech in American history. Yet, after President Lincoln delivered it, there was only polite applause. On his trip back to Washington, Lincoln expressed disappointment. He said of his address, "It was a flat failure. I am distressed about it. I ought to have prepared it with more care."

The Chicago Times was even less charitable. They editorialized and said:

The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly, flat and dishwatery utterances of the president.

Edward Everett, the famed orator and former Governor of Massachusetts who had been the main speaker at Gettysburg, was one of the first to recognize the greatness of Lincoln's words. Within days, he wrote to the President, "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes."

In June 1865, in his eulogy to the fallen President, the fiery abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner called the Gettysburg Address "a monumental act." He said President Lincoln had been mistaken when he predicted that "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." The truth, Senator Sumner said, is that "[t]he world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech."

President Lincoln did not live to see his legacy: a United States of America that has endured, a nation so far removed from the hated institution of legalized human slavery that today President Lincoln's old office in the White House is occupied by our first African-American President.

As we commemorate today the 200th birthday of the man whose leadership saved our Union, saved our Nation and created a new birth of freedom, let us pledge that we too will dedicate ourselves to preserving his legacy and continuing the still-unfinished work for America.

I yield the floor.

COMMENDING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about today's guest Chaplain, Reverend Marshal Ausberry of Antioch Baptist Church, located in Fairfax Station, VA. I am pleased to welcome Dr. Ausberry to the U.S. Senate today.

Dr. Ausberry holds a master of divinity degree from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and a doctorate of ministry degree in preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He and his wife Robyn have been married for nearly 30 years, and have three children: Marshal Jr., Rian, and Mycah.

Antioch Baptist Church was founded in January 1989, and in its 20th year continues to bring its mission and ministry to the greater DC metro area. Since 1995, Dr. Ausberry has led this vibrant and robust congregation, expanding not only their membership, but their outreach and community involvement as well.

Through the dozens of missions and ministries at Antioch, Dr. Ausberry has made a profound impact on the lives of many members of not only my constituency but those throughout the DC metro area. I am certain that he will continue to guide his congregation for many years to come, and I look forward to seeing the direction of Antioch Baptist Church under his leadership.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to state my strong support of the economic recovery plan because the American people and their communities need it to create jobs, to stabilize the economy, and to protect those who have been most hurt by the current global economic and financial crises.

Many Americans, especially my fellow Vermonters who have watched this process, look at the resistance the eco-

nomics recovery plan has met from many on the other side of the aisle, and they are somewhat dispirited. They remember how readily Congress rubberstamped hundreds of billions of dollars the previous administration earmarked for Iraq. Now they see how difficult it has been to get bipartisan approval for investments here at home that are desperately needed to jump start an economy that is in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

I call on fellow Senators—who were willing and eager to vote for billions of dollars to rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq, who were willing to vote for billions of dollars to create jobs in Iraq, who were willing to vote for billions of dollars to help law enforcement in Iraq—to focus on the needs we have here at home. Let's spend some of that money in America to repair our infrastructure, to create jobs in America, and to help law enforcement in America.

No one disputes the clear fact that we are confronting the most severe economic problem we have had in generations. The U.S. economy has been in recession since December 2007. America's GDP declined 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, the steepest drop since 1982. The United States lost 2.6 million jobs last year, the most since 1945. Last week we learned the U.S. economy shed almost 600,000 jobs in January, putting the unemployment rate at 7.6 percent.

In Vermont, not only has the amount of credit available to small businesses shrunk significantly, but our unemployment rate jumped to 6.4 percent in December. That is the highest it has been in 15 years. Vermont is not alone in this struggle. Workers, businesses, State and local governments all across the country face mounting debt, slumping orders, and sagging budgets.

To respond to this extraordinary crisis, I agree with President Obama and the vast majority of Americans that we have to act quickly and responsibly to pass an economic recovery and job creation plan as bold as the challenges we face. Americans want jobs. They want to work. They want to support their families. We have to help create those jobs. If we act now to strengthen our economy and invest in America's future, we can create good-paying jobs, we can cut taxes for working families, and we can make responsible investments in our future.

Our first priority should be to put America back to work. This economic recovery plan will help create or save over three million jobs, including an entire generation of green jobs that will make public and private investments in renewable energy and make America more energy efficient.

Investing in our country's infrastructure and education will do more than create jobs today—it can put us on a long-term path toward prosperity. Rebuilding our roads and bridges, expanding broadband access to rural communities; making our energy grid smart