



February 15, 2010

Bayh Announces He Will Not Seek a Third Senate Term

“I believe I can best contribute to society in another way”

Indianapolis – Senator Evan Bayh announced today he will not seek a third term to the United States Senate. At a news conference at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), he reflected on nearly a quarter-century of public service as Indiana’s Secretary of State, a two-term Governor, and a two-term United States Senator.

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Thank you all for coming today. I know how busy you are, and I appreciate you taking the time to be with us. I would like to begin by acknowledging some people to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

First, my wife Susan, who for 25 years has stood by my side and without whose love and support so much I have been privileged to do would never have been possible. As my father told me the day we were married: “Son, you definitely married up.”

Second, my wonderful children, Beau and Nick, who I love so much and of whom I am so proud. Being their father is the most important job I will ever have.

Next, my staff members—past and present—who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much for the people of our state. There is not one that couldn’t have made more money and worked fewer hours doing something else. They have always managed to make me look much better than I deserve.

Most importantly, the people of Indiana, who for almost a quarter century have placed their trust and welfare in my hands. No one could ask for a better boss or a greater honor.

I was raised in a family that believes public service is the highest calling in the church, that what matters is not what you take from life, but what you give back. I believe that still.

For almost all of my adult life, I have been privileged to serve the people of Indiana in elective office.

As Secretary of State, I worked to reform our election laws to ensure that every vote counts. I cast the deciding vote in the closest congressional race in the nation for a member of the other political party, because I believed he had legitimately won the election.

As Governor, I worked with an outstanding team to balance the budget, cut taxes, leave the largest surplus in state history, create the most new jobs in any eight-year period, increase funding for schools every year, make college more affordable, and reform welfare to empha work. We raised water quality standards, created more new state parks than any time since the 1930s, and raised the penalties for violent crime.

In the Senate, I have continued to fight for the best interests of our state. I have worked with Hoosier workers and businesses, large and small, in the defense sector, the life sciences, the medical device industry, autos, steel, recreational vehicle manufacturing, and many, many more, to save and create jobs.

Since 9/11, I have fought to make our nation safe with a national security approach that is both tough and smart. I have championed the cause of our soldiers to make sure they have the equipment they need in battle and the health care they deserve when they get home.

I have often been a lonely voice for balancing the budget and restraining spending. I have worked with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike to do the nation’s business in a way that is civil and constructive.

I am fortunate to have good friends on both sides of the aisle, something that is much too rare in Washington today.

After all these years, my passion for service to my fellow citizens is undiminished, but my desire to do so by serving in Congress has waned. For some time, I have had a growing conviction that Congress is not operating as it should. There is too much partisanship and not enough progress -- too much narrow ideology and not enough practical problem-solving. Even at a time of enormous challenge, the peoples’ business is not being done.

Examples of this are legion, but two recent ones will suffice.

Two weeks ago, the Senate voted down a bipartisan commission to deal with one of the greatest threats facing our nation: our exploding deficits and debt. The measure would have passed, but seven members who had endorsed the idea instead voted “no” for short-term political reasons.

Just last week, a major piece of legislation to create jobs -- the public’s top priority -- fell apart amid complaints from both the left and right.

All of this and much more has led me to believe that there are better ways to serve my fellow citizens, my beloved state, and our nation than continued service in Congress.

To put it in words most people can understand: I love working for the people of Indiana, I love helping our citizens make the most of their lives, but I do not love Congress. I will not, therefore, be a candidate for election to the Senate this November.

My decision should not be interpreted for more than it is: a very difficult, deeply personal one. I am an executive at heart. I value my independence. I am not motivated by strident partisanship or ideology. These traits may be useful in many walks of life, but they are not highly valued in Congress.

My decision should not reflect adversely upon my colleagues who continue to serve in the Senate. While the institution is in need of significant reform, there are many wonderful people there. The public would be surprised and pleased to know that those who serve them in the Senate, despite their policy and political differences, are unfailingly hard-working and devoted to the public good as they see it. I will miss them.

I particularly value my relationship with Senator Dick Lugar and have often felt that if all Senators could have the cooperative relationship we enjoy, the institution would be a better place.

My decision should not reflect adversely upon the President. I look forward to working with him during the next 11 months to get our deficit under control, get the economy moving again, regulate Wall Street to avoid future financial crises, and reform education so that all children can fulfill their God-given potential. This is the right agenda for America.

My decision was not motivated by political concern. Even in the current challenging environment, I am confident in my prospects for re-election. Five times over the last 24 years, I have been honored by the people of Indiana with electoral success. But running for the sake of winning an election, just to remain in public office, is not good enough. And it has never been what motivates me.

At this time, I simply believe I can best contribute to society in another way: creating jobs by helping grow a business, helping guide an institution of higher learning, or helping run a worthy charitable endeavor.

In closing, let me say this: Words cannot convey nor can I adequately express my gratitude to the great people of Indiana.

I will never forget those I have been privileged to serve and those who have so kindly supported me. I have always tried to remember that my job is to work for Hoosiers, not the other way around.

I am constantly reminded that if Washington, D.C., could be more like Indiana, Washington would be a better place.

Lastly, let me reiterate my deep and abiding love for our nation and my optimism for our future. These are difficult times for America. But we have seen difficult days before, and we will see better days again. With all our faults, we are an exceptional people.

I look forward to continuing to do my part to meet the challenges we face as a private citizen, to work for solutions not slogans, progress not politics, so that our generation can do what Americans have always done: convey to our children, and our children's children, an America that is stronger, more prosperous, more decent, and more just.

Thank you again. May God bless you all.

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