



Co-ops Connect FYI

By Jonathan Chambers • Jul 25, 2024

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Joe Biden



I first met Joe Biden in 1987. I had an office a few doors down from his in the Russell Senate Office Building. One day, we both happened to be walking down the hall at the same time and he asked me who I worked

for. When I told him I worked for Jack Danforth (the senior Republican Senator from Missouri at the time), Senator Biden smiled and told me how lucky I was. I stopped at my office and Biden kept walking down the hall. Then he turned back and called out to me, “He’d make a great Supreme Court Justice.”

I saw a fair bit of Senator Biden in those years. When Judge Clarence Thomas was nominated to the Supreme Court, I was Senator Danforth’s legislative director. Senator Biden was Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. I was in countless meetings with Senators Danforth, Biden, Kennedy, Hatch, Thurmond, and Dole, both with and without Judge Thomas and Bush White House officials. I haven’t written about any of it, nor will I. Suffice it to say, when the personal attacks started, and things spun out of control, it wasn’t anyone’s finest hour.

I hadn’t heard from Joe Biden for more than thirty years, when I received a letter from him last year. The letter wasn’t about politics. He wrote me as one man who had lost his wife and child in a terrible accident to another man who had lost his wife and nearly lost a child in a terrible accident. It was a deeply personal letter; I am hoping he will not mind if I quote parts of what he wrote to me and my boys.

“Jonathan, I am holding you close as someone who knows what it is like to grieve the loss of a spouse – your partner, your rock, and your best friend. Judah and Elijah, I know how hard it is for sons to lose their mother. Though the grieving process never truly ends, I hope you can find comfort in what will never be lost: the love you had for her and the love she had for you.

“I know that Dana inspired so many by the power of her example, always standing up for the dignity and respect of people here at home and around the world. Her compassion, wisdom, and guidance brought light to countless lives. As you reflect on the memories you shared with her, know that her legacy lives on through the hope she brought to so many, the goodness she brought to the world, and all of you.

“I know that the weeks and months after losing a loved one are never easy. Keep leaning on one another and holding each other close. It will take time, but the love you shared with Dana will become a source of strength. May it help you find purpose in living lives worthy of her and all that she meant. I promise you the day will come when the memory of Dana brings a smile to your lips before it brings a tear to your eye. My prayer for you is that this day comes sooner rather than later.”

That day has yet to come for me or for my sons, but I cherish the prayer.

When I write this weekly column, though it may not always appear to be the case, I pull my punches. I try to stick to policies, not politics. Government decisions affect our business, and while there are no doubt those who use government for good, there still are those who use government power for retribution. I have seen politics up close. It isn't for me.

I wrote today's column simply to share what I have known of Joe Biden, which is that he is a good and decent man. I have read his letter over and over and his words have brought me comfort. I am glad he was our president when Ukraine and Israel were attacked, and I also am glad he is not running for re-election. I wish him all the best.

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