

BYRON DORGAN WILL NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION

✖ Just before the holiday, Democratic leaders forced Senator Byron Dorgan to forgo a key policy initiative—drug reimportation—so as to push through a stinker of a health care reform bill. And while he says his decision “does not relate to any dissatisfaction that I have about serving in the Senate,” over the holiday he decided not to run for re-election.

Although I still have a passion for public service and enjoy my work in the Senate, I have other interests and I have other things I would like to pursue outside of public life. I have written two books and have an invitation from a publisher to write two more books. I would like to do some teaching and would also like to work on energy policy in the private sector.

So, over this holiday season, I have come to the conclusion, with the support of my family, that I will not be seeking another term in the U.S. Senate in 2010. It is a hard decision to make after thirty years in the Congress, but I believe it is the right time for me to pursue these other interests.

Let me be clear that this decision does not relate to any dissatisfaction that I have about serving in the Senate. Yes, I wish there was less rancor and more bipartisanship in the U.S. Senate these days. But still, it is a great privilege to serve and I have the utmost respect for all of the men and women with whom I serve.

It has been a special privilege to serve with Senator Conrad and Congressman Pomeroy, who do an outstanding job for

our state. And although he inherited an economy in serious trouble, I remain confident that President Obama is making the right decisions to put our country back on track. Further, my decision has no relationship to the prospect of a difficult election contest this year. Frankly, I think if I had decided to run for another term in the Senate I would be reelected.

But I feel that after serving 30 years, I want to make time for some other priorities. And making a commitment to serve in the Senate for the next seven years does not seem like the right decision for me.

This is a huge loss for Democrats—first and foremost because Dorgan is one of the good guys, largely uncorrupted by the nastiness of DC. In addition, it is almost sure to be a loss for Democrats, as Republican Governor John Hoeven would win this election in a landslide, if he chooses to enter it.

Senator Dorgan, thank you for your service. But you will be missed.