

one of the most basic in our nature. With this in mind, it is my pleasure to join Senators MOYNIHAN, JEFFORDS, and KENNEDY to introduce legislation that while simple in purpose will be infinite in application and influence. Our objective? To help people with disabilities go to work.

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. That law made an important statement about this nation's commitment to independence and opportunity for people with disabilities. Since then, barriers that had made some of even the simplest daily tasks difficult or even impossible have been lifted. Millions of Americans have gone back to work or found their daily chores to be more accessible—easier to address and accomplish.

Despite these successes and the progress that has been made in the ensuing eight years, there are still serious obstacles for too many people with disabilities—obstacles that stand in the way of their realizing the most basic and important opportunity of getting a job.

With this legislation, we begin to address some of the remaining impediments to employment for people with disabilities. These include the lack of access to health insurance and fundamental job assistance.

At a hearing held by the Finance Committee last July, witness after witness testified about the importance of health insurance for people with disabilities trying to enter the workforce. Jeff Bangsberg of the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities put it best when he said that “having appropriate, affordable health care is a critical factor in decisions people with disabilities make about working. Many individuals are afraid to work because they can't afford to lose access to continued Medicaid coverage.”

The simple fact, Mr. President, is that people with disabilities are often presented with a Catch-22 between working and losing their Medicaid or Medicare. This is a choice they should not have to make. But even modest earnings can result in a loss of eligibility for Medicaid or Medicare. Without health insurance, medical treatment often becomes prohibitively expensive for individuals with disabilities, and without medical treatment it becomes impossible for many to work.

My constituents in Delaware have made it clear that lack of access to health insurance is a real and seemingly insurmountable barrier to employment. Larry Henderson, Chair of Delaware's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, supports our bill “because it does not penalize persons with disabilities for working in that it allows for continued access to health care.”

Our bill is designed to empower States to break this cycle of uncertainty by making it possible for people with disabilities who choose to work to do so without jeopardizing health insurance access.

We do this by creating two new Medicaid options. The first option builds on a change enacted in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). That law allows States to permit people with disabilities to buy-in to Medicaid who would otherwise be eligible except that they earned too much. The new change would eliminate the income cap on this buy-in option.

The second Medicaid change would make it possible for States to permit a similar Medicaid buy-in option for individuals with a severe, medically determinable impairment who would otherwise lose eligibility because of medical improvement.

Let me also note that both Medicaid expansions would be voluntary on the part of each State.

Under both options, States would be able to set their own cost-sharing requirements for people with disabilities who enroll. States could require individuals buying into the program to pay 100 percent of premium costs in order to participate. The bill also extends Medicare Part A coverage for a ten-year trial period for individuals on SSDI who return to work.

In addition to these health coverage innovations, the bill also provides a user-friendly, public-private approach to job placement. Because of a new, innovative payment system, vocational rehabilitation agencies will be rewarded for helping people remain on the job, not just getting a job.

Mr. President, this combination of health care and job assistance will help disabled Americans succeed in the work place. And our society will be enriched by unleashing the creativity and industry of people with disabilities eager to go to work.

I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation. And it is my intention to hole a hearing on the bill in the Finance Committee next week and mark it up later this spring.●

BATTLESHIP “MISSOURI” MEMORIAL

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today because this is a special day in our nation's history. On this day in 1944, Harry S. Truman, a proud Missourian and U.S. Senator at the time, authorized the christening of the U.S.S. *Missouri*. The *Missouri* is this country's last and most celebrated battleship. Senator Truman's 19-year old daughter, Margaret, christened this great battleship and sent the “Mighty Mo” and her crew on missions for our Armed Forces in World War II, the Korean War, and Operations Desert Storm—a time of service spanning nearly half a century. Today she begins a new era of service as a memorial to educate and remind new generations of Americans about the great sacrifices and even greater victories that have occurred during her military service. She is a symbol of American triumph and spirit as she majestically stands watch over the U.S.S. *Arizona* memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Today, in this unstable world, we should re-commit ourselves to honoring lasting symbols of unity and dedication. The 900-foot Battleship *Missouri* is one such symbol. This era of patriotism, sacrifice, bravery, and duty will not be forgotten, and in fact must be revered, remembered, and taught to our children and grandchildren.

For the United States, World War II began with a surprise attack on the naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It finally ended on the decks of the “Mighty Mo” on September 2, 1945. On that day, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, and Chester Nimitz, Fleet Admiral of the U.S. Navy, signed the Instrument of Surrender on behalf of the Allied Powers and the United States. It is a moment that will now forever be immortalized to America and citizens of the world.

Most importantly, we need to remember that the “Mighty Mo” would not have played such an important role without the brave and true service of America's servicemen and their families. These men risked their lives at great personal sacrifice, all in the name of our country. They are the backbone of the great history of the U.S.S. *Missouri*. Many of these veterans are from the State of Missouri, including Seaman John C. Truman, the nephew of our 33rd president.

Today, January 29, 1999, is yet another significant day in the service of the U.S.S. *Missouri*—for today she opens permanently to the public as the Battleship Missouri Memorial. I urge all Missourians and all Americans to go see this great ship and experience her glorious history firsthand. I thank the U.S. Navy and the U.S.S. Missouri Memorial Association for creating such a special memorial for the world to enjoy for generations to come.

Congratulations to all involved for getting this memorial up and running. Congratulations to my friend Senator DANIEL INOUE, who has been personally involved in this project. Finally, congratulations to the U.S. Navy, the people of Hawaii, the people of Missouri, and all Americans who now have the opportunity to visit and experience a crucial part of our great state's heritage.●

NATIONAL APPRECIATION DAY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

● Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, today I want to recognize National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools, a day to acknowledge the important and valuable contributions Catholic schools make to our nation's children, to local communities, and to the nation. Nationally, there are over 7.6 million students in 8,200 Catholic schools. In my home state of Illinois, there are over 215,000 students in 598 Catholic schools. In addition, I am a product of Catholic education, having attended Catholic schools for both elementary and high school.

Last year, 40 Catholic secondary schools were awarded the Excellence in Education Award, the nation's highest honor in education, by the U.S. Department of Education. In my home state, Boyland Catholic High School in Rockford, Illinois, was awarded the Excellence in Education Award for outstanding educational achievement.

Two students from St. Patrick School in Ottawa, Illinois, Justyna and Alexandra Ratajczak, wrote me about how much they enjoy going to Catholic school. Justyna wrote that St. Patrick School "is like a second home for me and I can not imagine my world without it." This girl's love of school testifies to the fact that Catholic schools are doing something right. Mr. President, I applaud Catholic schools and all their outstanding teachers for their high success rate among students and thank them for their important contribution to educating America's youth.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. BRAD PARKHURST, RECIPIENT OF THE 1998 MERRIMACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge and commend Mr. Brad Parkhurst. Brad was recently awarded the President's Award from the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce.

Brad has worked at Public Service of New Hampshire since 1974. During that time, he has held positions in Generation, Distribution and Marketing. He has worked since 1981 in the Marketing Support Department developing innovative ideas to unique consumer situations.

Brad has illustrious credentials as a member of the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce. He serves on the Board of Directors, is Chairman for the "Swing into Spring" Consumer Expo and has solicited sponsors for Consumer Expos.

Brad is also very involved in professional organizations. He serves as Associate Member Director and Chairman of the Associates Council of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of New Hampshire. He is a member of the Building and Association Planning Committees and the Manchester Area Home Builders Association. He received the "Associate of the Year" award from the Home Builders and Remodelers Association in 1994 and 1996. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Home Builders located in Washington, D.C.

Along with his professional credentials, Brad is also highly active in the community. He has been the treasurer of four non-profit organizations. He is an active member and Mission Director for the Merrimack Community Christian Church. He is the Director and Treasurer of Love Through Faith Ministries International, an organization that assists the poorest nations in the world. This past spring Brad and his

wife Roxanne led a team to Guinea-Bissau to spend two weeks teaching and training the local population.

Once again, I would like to congratulate Brad Parkhurst on receiving the President's Award from the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Senate.●

HARTFORD JOB CORPS CENTER

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I recognize Hartford, Connecticut's selection as a site for a Job Corps Center. The Department of Labor recently announced that Connecticut's capital city was one of four locations selected nationwide. Many years of planning have gone into Hartford's bid and the new Center enjoys the enthusiastic support of leaders in government, business, education and job training. The selection is testimony to the commitment of the Hartford community to our most disadvantaged young people, and that is why I endorsed the city's strong proposal.

In 1995, the Department of Labor had requested proposals for Job Corps Center sites and Hartford's joint application with the city of Bloomfield was regarded highly. Unfortunately, the funding for proposed new Centers was rescinded in the middle of the review process and no new Job Corps Centers were selected. But Hartford, Connecticut residents did not give up and the Department of Labor vowed to honor its commitment to new Centers in the future.

Hartford, Connecticut is a thriving business and cultural center, headquarters to major insurance and financial centers and home to renowned theater and art museums. It is situated on the banks of the historic Connecticut River which was heralded as an American Heritage River last year. Hartford is now embarking on a major waterfront residential, recreational and workplace development plan.

The city's overall unemployment rate is at 2.9 percent, but the unemployment rate for youth ages 16-19 is much higher. Despite Connecticut's economic recovery, too many young people are being left out of a job market that demands high-level skills. Hartford has many of the problems facing other large cities, including abandoned industrial sites, crumbling schools and double-digit high school dropout rates. At one Hartford high school, the dropout rate was more than 50 percent last year. That statistic is unacceptable and why I support the need for a Job Corp Center in Hartford. It will make a critical difference in the lives of so many at-risk youth.

Job Corps has been providing education and training for disadvantaged youth for more than 34 years. The program is so successful because it is a voluntary year-round program offering education, training and support services, including meals, child care and counseling. It maintains a zero tolerance for drugs and violence.

Hartford is poised to undergo an economic revitalization and the Job Corps Center is a true investment in our most under-served youth. The city of Hartford and the state of Connecticut have committed \$4 million toward the total development cost of \$11.5 million and the Hartford Housing authority is contributing the site, valued at \$420,000. The Center will be located on 12 acres in the Charter Oak Business Park being developed by the Housing Authority on the site of the former Charter Oak Terrace public housing project.

When completed in 2000, the Hartford center will serve more than 200 non-residential students each year in basic education and vocational training programs and provide on-site child care. Many organizations have pledged resources to ensure the success of the Center and most important of all, employers stand ready to hire young people who complete the Job Corps program.

Mr. President, I congratulate the City of Hartford and I commend the Department of Labor for their selection.●

WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

● Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of legislation introduced last week by Senators JEFFORDS, KENNEDY, ROTH, and MOYNIHAN. I commend my colleagues for their dedication to improving the way federal programs serve persons with disabilities. Continuing my support for this effort from last Congress, I am glad to announce that I joined my colleagues as an original co-sponsor this year of S. 331, The Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

This bill addresses one of the great tragedies of our current disability system, a system that forces many people with disabilities to choose between working and maintaining access to necessary health benefits. This was never the intention of these programs. It is critical that we act now to overturn today's policies of disincentives towards work and replace them with thoughtful, targeted incentives that will enable many individuals with disabilities to return to work.

Over the years I have heard from Iowans who have been forced to leave the work force because of a disability. While they remain disabled and still require ongoing health benefits, they are eager to return to work. However, because of the risk of losing critical health benefits covered by Medicare and Medicaid, too many capable individuals are deterred from entering or re-entering the work force.

It is essential that our public disability programs encourage, not discourage, employment. This legislation tackles the risks and uncertainties disabled individuals face when trying to return to work. For individuals eligible for the Supplemental Security Income