

party conference meetings. Upon reconvening, there will be 2 minutes of debate on the Boxer amendment regarding pesticides, with a vote scheduled to occur at approximately 2:20 p.m. It is hoped that consideration of the Defense appropriations bill can be completed by this evening, and therefore Senators can expect votes throughout the afternoon.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will suspend, we will lay down the orders.

Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

#### THIS WEEK'S AGENDA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am happy to be in the Chamber this morning to address the issues that are going to be considered before the Congress this week.

One of the most important issues that I found in my home State of Illinois, and I think can be found in virtually every State in the Union, is the prescription drug benefit under Medicare. They are telling us, the people who do this for a living, that when they ask families across America what is one of the major issues you are going to look to when it comes to electing the President of the United States or electing a Member of Congress, one of the major issues that comes forward is the prescription drug benefit. It is understandable because the Medicare program, as good as it is—in fact, it has been there for 40 years as the health insurance program for the elderly and disabled—does not have a prescription drug benefit. You would not buy a health insurance plan for your family today that didn't include one because you never know when you are going to be subjected to an illness that a doctor will need to treat with an expensive prescription drug. They can become very expensive. It is not uncommon to spend \$50, \$100, even several hundred a month to maintain a certain drug that keeps you healthy.

When we constructed Medicare, we didn't put a prescription drug benefit in the plan. That was 40 years ago. Today, seniors are finding themselves extremely vulnerable. They will go to a doctor and say: I have a problem. The doctor says: I know just the thing; here is a prescription. They will find out they can't afford to fill the prescription. So a lot of seniors on limited, fixed incomes, make a hard choice and say, I may not be able to take this prescription or maybe I will fill it and only take half. The net result, of course, is that the senior doesn't get well, doesn't get strong. In fact, they can see their health deteriorate simply because they can't afford to fill their prescriptions.

The irony, of course, is that if a senior can't buy the drugs they need to stay healthy and they end up in the hospital, guess what. The taxpayers step in and say Medicare will pay for that. In other words, if someone gets sick because they don't have prescription drugs, we will pay for it. If seniors have to go to the hospital, taxpayers pay for it.

We on the Democratic side believe that we need to do two things. We need to put a prescription drug benefit in Medicare that gives to senior citizens and the disabled peace of mind that when they need these prescription drugs, they will have help in paying for them. That is something everyone expects from a health insurance plan. It should be the bottom line when it comes to Medicare, as well.

The Democratic side has been pushing this literally for years. We believe that is something this Congress should have done a long time ago. Sadly, we have had no cooperation, none whatever, from the Republican side of the aisle. They do not believe this is a critical and important issue. We have tried our very best to bring this issue to a vote on the floor. We have tried both in the House and the Senate. They have blocked us every single time.

Who would oppose a prescription drug benefit? On its face, why would anybody oppose that? It will help seniors. It will mean they will buy prescription drugs.

There is another issue. If we just passed a prescription drug benefit and did not address the pricing of drugs, the system would clearly go bankrupt in a hurry. In other words, if the drug companies can continue to raise their prices—as they are doing now almost on a monthly basis—and we say we will pay whatever they charge, no program will last.

We have to combine with the prescription drug benefit program a pricing program, as well. Americans know this. I go to senior citizen gatherings in my State and they understand what is going on in the world. They know if they happen to live in the northern part of the United States and can drive across the border into Canada, they can buy exactly the same drug—made in the United States, by the same com-

pany, subject to the same Federal inspection—for a fraction of the cost. What costs \$60 for a prescription in the United States costs \$6 in Canada because the Canadian Government has said to American drug companies: If you want to sell in our country, we are not going to let you run the prices up. There is a ceiling. You have to keep your prices under control. We will make sure you don't gouge the customers in Canada.

We don't have a law such as that in the United States. Therefore, the seniors in this country pay top dollar for prescription drugs. People in Canada, people in Mexico, people in Europe, get the same drugs from the same companies at a deep discount. I might add, as well, in this country the health insurance companies bargain with the same drug companies, saying, if you want to have your drugs prescribed by our doctors in our plan, we will not let you keep raising the prices on them. Of course, that is part of the reality.

Every group in America has a price mechanism, a price competition, except for the most vulnerable in America—the senior citizens and the disabled on Medicare. They pay top dollar for prescription drugs. When they can't pay it and they can't fill the prescription, they can't maintain their health as they should.

We believe, on the Democratic side, that we need a prescription drug benefit plan. We need to also address the question of pricing to make sure these drugs are affordable, so that the drug companies treat Americans at least as fairly as they treat Canadians. I don't think that is unreasonable.

Many times, we taxpayers, through the National Institutes of Health, have put the money on the front side of research to find these drugs. The drug companies profit from the research, as they should, but they also have an obligation to the people of the United States to price these drugs fairly.

We have an obligation to create a prescription drug benefit under Medicare. But this has been a one-sided discussion to this date. The Democrats have pushed this plan, and the Republicans have resisted it.

Lo and behold, the people on the Republican side of the aisle have decided to start asking American families, what do they think is important? I have in my hand polling data provided to the Republican conference in the House of Representatives. They went on to find in the course of their polling that they have been dead wrong on this issue, that the American people consider this to be one of the most important issues in America today and in this election. The Republicans, in resisting the Democratic plan, have missed the most important issue for seniors and their families.

What are they proposing? They want to change it in a hurry. They don't want to come on board and work out a bipartisan plan based on what the Democrats have been pushing for, for

years. No. Their plan is to come forward with a so-called prescription drug plan that buys them enough time to get through the election, a plan that is a sham and a phony, a plan that does not address the real needs for prescription drug benefits for seniors. They are not offering prescription drugs. They are offering sugar pills. They are offering placebos. That will not keep America healthy.

As you read the things they have recommended to the people involved in this on the Republican side of the aisle, they say one of the things you have to do is make sure you keep talking about this issue, make sure you empathize and tell people how much you feel for this issue.

It isn't "feel good" politics that Americans need. They need results. They need a bipartisan plan that really does help seniors. In the next few days, if you see, as we expect, this presentation by the Republican leadership in Congress that they have finally discovered the prescription drug benefit issue and they have finally come up with a plan, you have an obligation, as I do, to ask them to prove it will work, prove it will make certain that senior citizens who need help in paying for prescription drugs get that assistance. Make certain it isn't a phony that is just buying time until the election.

If you hear the Republican leadership, new-found convert to this issue, coming up with rhetoric that we haven't heard for years, don't be surprised. Their polling data has told them they are dead wrong, the Democrats are right on this issue and the Republicans have missed the boat.

It is our obligation in Congress to work with those people who have been involved on this issue for years, to make certain that any prescription drug benefit plan is real, it addresses the needs of seniors and disabled across America, it is affordable, and it will work to maintain the quality of care we expect in this country.

These health care issues will turn out to be the biggest issue in this Presidential campaign. Yesterday, the Supreme Court decided again that managed care companies don't have an obligation to their patients to find out that they get the best quality care as doctors recommend. Their obligation is to profit and bottom line because of existing Federal law. On this case, as well, on prescription drug benefits, the families across America are the ones who are vulnerable.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?  
Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my friend for again putting this issue of prescription drugs into context.

I am sure my friend would agree it isn't unusual for political parties to take polls. However, I think what my friend is trying to say—and I hope every American can see this document I am holding in my hand, this poll. This so-called "research," done with

the Republicans over on the House side, is a document that says it all. It is the most cynical document I have ever seen since Newt Gingrich had the same thing done when he took over the House, when they told the Republicans what words to use, not what bills to pass, not what would make a good piece of legislation to help the millions of Americans who need help, no, but how to get them reelected and kowtow to their friends in the insurance business, the HMOs, and so on. If the American people could just read this document, things would change around here. I am hoping they will read this document.

I ask unanimous consent to have this document printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[A Presentation to the House Republican Conference, June 8, 2000]

**A PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN FOR STRONGER MEDICARE**

(By Glen Bolger, Public Opinion Strategies)

**PASSING A BILL IS A POLITICAL IMPERATIVE**

Prescription drug coverage is one of the Democrats' "Four Corners: offense for winning back the House—along with health care, education, and Social Security.

We have a good messages on the other issues.

It is imperative that Republicans hang together on this issue and pass a bill. It is helpful if we can be bi-partisan in our approach.

On a list of 18 issues that might decide how people plan to vote for president, "helping elderly Americans get access to prescription drugs" might appear to be a mid-tier issue as "only" 73% say it is one of the most important/very important in deciding how they might vote.

However, the issue has enormous appeal for Democrat candidates:

Democrats enjoy a huge generic advantage as the party best perceived as being able to handle this issue.

The prescription drug issue allows the Democrats to not only mobilize key sub-groups that are part of their political base, but the issue also is of importance to key sub-groups who are "up for grabs" in the 2000 election.

Of course, chief among these "up for grab" sub-groups are seniors who rank this issue in the top three or four that they say will determine their vote.

*Top issues for the 2000 Presidential election*

	<i>Percent</i>
Preserving Social Security and Medicare .....	83
Stopping insurance companies from making health care decisions .....	82
Improving the quality of public education .....	81
The economy and jobs .....	80
Keeping students safe .....	76
Crime and illegal drugs .....	76
Controlling federal spending .....	76
Improving the access to affordable health care .....	76
Restoring respect to the office of president .....	73
Helping elderly Americans get access to affordable prescription drugs .....	73
Pushing for higher academic standards .....	73
Keeping taxes lower .....	66
Reducing the power of big money in Washington .....	61

*Top issues for the 2000 Presidential election—Continued*

	<i>Percent</i>
The environment .....	59
Guns .....	54
Dealing with moral values .....	54
Defending America's interests around the world .....	51
Abortion .....	38

The issue of "helping elderly Americans get access to affordable prescription drugs" favors the Democrats because the issue is very important to their core base as well as to groups that are "up for grabs" to both parties (swing voters).

**TOP SUB-GROUPS ON ISSUE**

Core Democratic Base	"Up For Grabs" Voters
HS or Less	Rural Residents.
Women Less Than College	Rural Women.
Conservative Democrats	White Women.
Moderate/Liberal Democrats	South Residents.
Clinton '96 Voters	New England Residents.
Urban Residents	Women.
Urban Women	Working Women.
Democrats	Homemakers.
African Americans	Age 55-64.
Environmentalists	Age 65+.
Not on the Internet	Women 18-34
	60+ Retired Women.

**DEMOCRATS HAVE A CLEAR ADVANTAGE ON THESE ISSUES**

[... tell me if you think as President ... the Republican candidates or the Democratic candidates would do a better job of handling this issue, or if there is no difference between them on this particular issue]

Issue	In percent	
	Republican-Democrat	Difference score
Improving the quality of public education .....	33-39	-6
Reducing the power of big money in Washington .....	25-37	-12
Stopping insurance companies from making health care decisions .....	21-41	-20
Preserving Social Security & Medicare .....	26-47	-21
The environment .....	18-48	-30
Helping elderly Americans get access to affordable prescription drugs .....	20-53	-33
Improving the access to affordable health care .....	19-53	-34

**FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS**

Seniors trust Medicare. They don't believe it is in financial danger—they perceive that claim to simply be a scare tactic.

Democrats will want to position Republicans as allied with the pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies against senior citizens. That's a positioning you need to aggressively reject.

Upset seniors don't believe politicians (especially Republicans) understand how important and concerning this issue is to them. Message: "I care" (but say it better than that). It is more important to communicate that you have a plan as it is to communicate what is in the plan.

**KEY POINTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS**

The main concern seniors have with a prescription drug plan is the impact on cost. Many seniors know the medicinal equivalent of HMO horror stories—they know other seniors who have to choose between paying for food or for prescription drugs.

"Republicans aren't doing anything to help seniors."

Seniors like the idea of a voluntary plan, and do NOT want to lose their own plan. They also want to have choices.

Catastrophic coverage is very important to communicate. Even seniors who currently have a good plan are worried about what might happen down the road.

**DEMOCRATIC ATTACK MESSAGES**

We tested multiple messages for the Democrats to attack Republicans on this issue. Here are the most salient attack messages:

"Republicans are putting more seniors into HMOs. HMOs provide terrible care, and this isn't fair to seniors."

"Republicans are in the back pocket of HMOs, insurance companies, and pharmaceutical companies. Republicans are out to protect these special interests, not the real interests of senior citizens."

Don't ignore these charges.

#### MESSAGES TO ATTACK DEMOCRATS

The Democrat plan has some potentially fatal weaknesses:

It is politicians and Washington bureaucrats setting drug prices.

It is a one-size-fits-all plan that is too restrictive, too confusing, and puts the politicians and Washington bureaucrats in control.

It will take most seniors out of the good private drug coverage they have today.

#### PHRASES THAT WORK

Too many senior citizens are forced to choose between putting food on the table and being able to afford the prescription drugs they need to stay alive. In our great nation, this is morally wrong.

We must take action to strengthen Medicare by providing prescription drug coverage for all seniors so nobody gets left behind.

While ensuring that all Medicare recipients have access to prescription drug coverage, we must make sure that our senior citizens also maintain control over their health care choices.

We should not force seniors into a federal government-run, one-size-fits-all prescription drug plan that's too restrictive, too confusing, and allows politicians and Washington bureaucrats to make medical decisions.

Our plan gives all seniors the right to choose an affordable prescription drug benefit that best fits their own health care needs.

Our plan protects low-income seniors by giving them prescription drug coverage, and offers ALL other seniors a number of affordable options to best meet their needs and protect them from financial ruin.

By making it available to everyone, we're making sure that no senior citizen or disabled American falls through the cracks.

Because our plan is voluntary, we protect seniors already satisfied with their current prescription drug benefit by allowing them to keep what they have, while expanding coverage to those who need it.

We will not force senior citizens out of the good private coverage they currently enjoy—that's why our plan gives individuals the power to decide what's best for them.

A stronger Medicare with prescription drug coverage is a promise of health security and financial security for older Americans and we're working to ensure that promise is kept. America's seniors deserve no less.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask my friend if he has read the page that says "Focus group findings." Again, focus groups aren't unusual. You bring people together and ask them to respond. I ask my friend about a couple of these points.

They say: Upset seniors don't believe politicians, especially Republicans. They don't believe that, especially Republicans, understand how important and concerning this issue of prescription drugs is to them.

This pollster, I am sure, made a lot of money to produce this document for my friends on the other side says. The pollster says:

Message: I care.

That is the message he wants Republicans to make:

I care (but say it better than that). I care (but say it better than that).

Then he says:

It is more important to communicate that you have a plan as it is to communicate what is in the plan.

What I want to say to my friend is this. After reading this, I expect they are going to come up with some phony deal that looks like a prescription drug plan. My friend has made a point: If that plan does nothing to make these prescription drugs affordable, what does it do for our people other than turn them off?

I say to my friend, he knows people in this country are going to Canada to get prescription drugs. He discussed that. I know some are going on the Internet and trying to get drugs from Mexico, prescription drugs, because they cannot afford them here.

The ultimate question, after making my comments, is this. This document goes through the fact that the Democrats are doing really well on these issues. Do you know why? Because the American people know we have a real plan on this. They don't think we are perfect because nobody is perfect, but we have a plan on this. The Republicans know they are going to lose this election unless they get a plan. So they tell their people to use certain expressions.

Can my friend share with us some of his expressions? It says: How to talk about this issue. Our friends on the other side are told how to talk about the issue, what expressions to say in addition to "I care." Maybe my friend will share some of that with the people?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to. I say to the Senator from California, this is not unusual. I don't want to mislead people. Democrats take polls as well. We took polls years ago and found out that families really cared about the issue, and we came up with a plan, and literally for years we have been trying to bring this issue to a vote in the Senate and House of Representatives. The Republican leadership has stopped us. They stopped us because the drug companies want to continue to make the money from the seniors and others across this country who pay top dollar for their prescription drugs.

So as we pushed this, year after year, we could never find cooperation on the Republican side of the aisle. The death-bed conversion we are witnessing here now reflects the fact that an election is looming and the Republicans understand they are in a bad position. They have taken a position that is unpopular, unwise, and just plain wrong.

Take a look at some of the polling data: Preserving Social Security and Medicare is the top issue in the Presidential election campaign.

Stopping insurance companies from making health care decisions is the No. 2 issue in the Presidential campaign, according to Republican polls.

They have been on the wrong side on both of these. In addition, the No. 2 issue for the Republicans in terms of the Presidential election is helping el-

derly Americans get access to affordable prescription drugs. Now that they realize they are wrong on the issue and it is going to be a major issue in every campaign, they are rushing to come up with a strategy.

The American people don't want a political strategy; They want a law passed that will help these families. They understand these seniors go into their pharmacies on a daily basis and make a life-and-death decision about filling a prescription drug. The Republicans have said in this polling document that they have to attack the Democrats. That is part of this. Say you have a plan, even though you don't tell people what it is, and then turn around and attack the Democrats. Say it is politicians and Washington bureaucrats who are trying to set drug prices.

That language is straight out of the pharmaceutical companies' own platform on this issue. They don't want to have their prices affected. When the prices are in any way controlled or regulated, you have a Canadian situation where Canadian citizens pay a fraction of what we pay in the United States for the same drugs. So create this image, according to the Republican strategy, in the minds of Americans, that anytime we talk about pricing, it is just too much of Washington bureaucrats and politicians.

Then they say attack the Democrats plan as a

a one-size-fits-all plan that is too restrictive, too confusing, and puts the Washington bureaucrats in control."

The one-size-fits-all language is because the Democrats believe this should be a universal plan so people really have a chance to receive help in paying for prescription drugs. You will find the Republican plan cuts off people at levels where, frankly, they are vulnerable and cannot afford to pay for prescription drugs. It also says: Attack the Democrats and say most seniors will be taken "out of the good private drug coverage they have today."

Let me concede something. About a third of seniors do have good private drug coverage, a third have mediocre coverage, and a third have no protection at all. I think we can take that into account. But the bottom line is, if you happen to be a fortunate senior because, for example, you worked for a company with a union that gave you good health care benefits when you retired, that is good for you. I have met those folks. But so many others, two out of three, do not have that benefit. We want to make sure everybody in America is protected. Take a close look, a careful look, at the Republican alternative. You are going to find they leave literally millions of seniors behind.

The drug companies want it that way. They don't want prices affected. They don't want a major plan. They believe they can create some kind of insurance protection for the seniors. I can tell you pointblank, insurance

company executives have met with us and said already the Republican proposal will not work. That is the bottom line.

Mrs. BOXER. Will my friend yield further?

Mr. DURBIN. I will be happy to yield.

Mrs. BOXER. The other interesting number here is that the Republicans have found out, much to their chagrin, that Democrats have a 34-percent advantage—in the Republicans' own poll here—on improving the access to affordable health care and a 33-percent advantage on prescription drugs. So they take this information but they don't say, You know what, the Democrats are right on these issues. Let's go over to their side of the aisle. Let's call on President Clinton. He has been talking about protecting Medicare and so has Vice President GORE, and prescription drugs. Let's work together now.

They don't do that. They set out a document here that instead of saying: We just found out President Clinton is right; We just found out the Democrats have been right; We have just found out that AL GORE is right when he says we need a Medicare lockbox. So maybe they cross the aisle? Maybe they come over here and visit us, we join hands, and go down the aisle together here and cast some votes for the people for a change? No. That is not the way they see it.

They get this information and they basically do what my friend suggested. They are going to use the right words. They are going to attack us, they are going to scare people, and they are going to go home and say they have done something.

I hope every American family can see this document today. In a way, I feel badly about it because it will build cynicism, but I will say this: The information in this document could be used to do the right thing. It is quite unfortunate that our friends on the other side of the aisle, instead of taking this information, recognizing they are wrong and joining us and President Clinton and Vice President GORE, they are going to create a sham plan for prescription drugs. They are going to say they are protecting Medicare while doing nothing. Sadly, the American people will lose, unless they make some changes around here.

I thank my friend.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to my friend from California, this phrase says it all. This is the advice given by the pollsters and consultants for the Republican leadership when it comes to the prescription drug issue. It has already been made part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, but it is there for the world to see, and I want to quote one line and one line only to tell you what the bottom line message is:

It is more important to communicate that you have a plan as it is to communicate what is in the plan.

If you talk about the cynicism people feel about politicians and campaigns, that hits the nail on the head. In other

words, don't describe it, don't tell people what it is going to do for families across America, just tell them you care, tell them you have a plan. That is the thing I think turns people off the most.

If the Republicans have a better idea, for goodness' sake, come forward with it. Let's debate it. That is what this is supposed to be about.

We have a plan. We are willing to debate it. We are willing to stand up for it on the floor. I believe in it. I will campaign for it in Illinois and any other place. But to come up with an idea, a few words to try to gloss over this so people forget before the election what this is about, is really a mistake.

Here is something else I want to note in the Republican consultants' document to the Congressional Republican leadership:

Prescription drug coverage is one of the Democrats' "Four Corners: offense for winning back the House—along with health care, education and Social Security.

That is a quote directly. Yes, it is true. I would say that pollster has really hit the nail on the head. This is exactly what we are trying to do. We are trying to focus this election campaign, not on negative slam ads, not on personal attacks, but on four basic issues. For goodness' sake, we are willing to stand up and say this is what our vision of America will be. We look at this country and we feel blessed. We live in one of the greatest nations in the history of the world.

We feel doubly blessed that we are living in such good times for most Americans. This is a period of economic prosperity unparalleled in our history. One cannot find this long a string of good economic progress in the history of the United States.

Who can take credit for it? First and foremost, Americans and families can take credit for it because they work hard every day. They start the businesses. They teach the kids. Those things have paid off. That is where the credit belongs, first and foremost.

From a policy viewpoint, credit also has to be given to those people who make good decisions when it comes to our economy. We made a good decision in the Senate and in the House as well in 1993 when President Clinton said: The first thing we will do is reduce the deficit. Once we bring that deficit under control, we think the economy will move forward.

We could not get a single Republican in the House or the Senate to vote with us on that. Only the Democrats voted for it and Vice President GORE, sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair, cast the tie-breaking vote to reduce the deficit and move us forward. And it worked.

Critics on the other side of the aisle, a Republican Senator from Texas, said this was going to create an economic disaster for America. He has a little egg on his face today because for 7 years it has created just the opposite: economic prosperity. That was a good decision.

Tough decisions from the Federal Reserve Board regarding interest rates, for example, have kept inflation under control.

We are moving forward. We believe on the Democratic side that we cannot stand back and say we deserve election and reelection because of all the good things we did in the past. That is not good enough. If any party deserves election or reelection, it is because they learned the lessons of history and they have a vision of the future.

The vision tells us to take the surplus we are generating in our Treasury and pay down the national debt, a debt of almost \$6 trillion that cost us taxpayers \$1 billion a day in interest payments. That is right, the payroll taxes they are taking out of your paycheck and taking away from businesses and families across America to the tune of \$1 billion a day do not educate a kid, they do not buy anything to enhance the security of America. That money is used exclusively to pay interest on old debt.

Think about it. We are paying interest on the debt for things we bought years ago that we have already built and maybe have used. We on the Democratic side believe that the fiscally prudent thing to do, the responsible thing to do is to take our surplus and reduce that \$6 trillion debt. I want to say to my kids and my grandson: The best legacy I can leave you is less of an American debt so that you do not have to carry my burdens into your generation.

I believe that makes sense, and that is what Vice President GORE has stood for: To reduce America's national debt and to strengthen Social Security and Medicare as we do that to make sure those two systems are there for years to come.

If we just stop at that point, we would not be doing enough. We have to have a vision for this next century and ask, What decisions can we make as leaders of Government in Washington today to create opportunities for tomorrow?

It comes down to the four basic issues already identified by the Democrats and acknowledged by the Republicans.

First, health care in America. It is disgraceful in America that we still have tens of millions of people who have no health insurance. Think about their vulnerability: an accident, an illness, and all the plans they have made for their life just fall apart. They have medical bills they cannot possibly pay. People are in a vulnerable position because we have not addressed health care in America. We believe we need to address health care when it comes to not only coverage of health insurance but prescription drug benefits for the elderly and disabled under Medicare and, most basically to make sure medical decisions are made by doctors and not by insurance companies.

Yesterday, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in an important

case involving an HMO, a managed care company, in my State of Illinois at the Carle Clinic. A woman called the Carle Clinic in Bloomington, IL, and reported she was having pains in her stomach. They said: We would like to examine you. Why don't you come in in 8 days.

Before she could go to the clinic her appendix burst, and she went through a terrible situation and a terrible recuperation in the hospital.

She came to learn that this plan, as so many other managed care plans, actually rewarded doctors financially if they showed more profit for the company as opposed to providing quality health care. The bottom line was making money. The bottom line said let the lady wait at home for 8 days and see if she still complains instead of bringing her into the office for an examination.

She sued them. She said: I thought I could trust you. I thought that was the bottom line when it comes to the health insurance company. The bottom line was profit, and it was made at my expense. I paid for it in a hospital stay.

The Supreme Court said: You cannot do anything about it. Congress passed legislation that said managed care companies can do that and you cannot sue them. Your right against these companies is extremely limited. That is a Federal decision.

That is a decision that should be changed. That is one Democrats have pushed for on Capitol Hill for years and the Republican leadership has blocked it. These insurance companies are making big dollars. They are big special interest groups. They are big players on the Washington political scene. They do not want anybody changing these rules. That is why they have resisted, and that is why we have done literally nothing in the Senate and the House to deal with these abuses.

Education: Can anyone think of anything in the 21st century more important than education in America? I cannot. We are going to have a debate in the near future on trade. It is a hot issue. There are many who believe globalization and free trade are part of America's future, part of the future of the world. To resist trade is to resist gravity: It is going to happen.

The question is, How will we respond to it? Many workers are concerned that if there is expanded trade, they might lose their jobs. Companies will take their plants and move them overseas, and folks who have good jobs today will not have them tomorrow. Shouldn't we as a nation acknowledge that, whether the jobs are lost to trade or technology? Shouldn't we be putting in place transition training and education so workers do not have to fear this inevitable change in the economy?

We are not hearing any suggestions on this from the Republican side. They do not believe there should be a Federal role when it comes to education and training. They talk about it being State and local. It has been histori-

cally, but we have had Federal leadership that has made a difference on these issues. We believe on the Democratic side we should continue to do that.

I will tell my colleagues about another related issue. We know from the best companies in America that the single biggest problem they have today is not estate taxes; it is not a tax burden under the code. The single biggest problem they have today is jobs they cannot fill with skilled workers.

I hear that in Illinois everywhere I go. I was in Itasca yesterday with the Chamber of Commerce. That is their concern as well. We have to acknowledge the fact there are good paying jobs unfilled in America because we do not have skilled workers to fill them.

What do we do about it? Wait for the market to create an answer? I hope we will do more. In 1957, when the Russians launched Sputnik and we were afraid we were going to lose the space race, this Congress responded and said: We will respond as a nation. We will create the National Defense Education Act. We are going to encourage young people to get a college education to be scientists, to be engineers, to compete with the Russians. We did it. It was an investment that paid off handsomely. We created an engine for growth in the American economy that not only made certain the private sector had the people they needed but also sent a man to the Moon and so many other achievements unparalleled in the history of the world.

Why are we not doing the same thing today? Why are we not acknowledging we need to make an investment at the Federal level to help pay for college education so kids have a chance to become tomorrow's scientists and engineers, leaders of the 21st century so we do not have to import computer experts from India and Pakistan?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I am going to take 15 minutes of the time set aside for the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to address the issue of Social Security. Last week I got up toward the end of our time and did not have a chance to talk about the issue, but I briefly mentioned my strong admiration and support for Gov. George W. Bush's courageous and bold proposal in offering to the American public an opportunity to meet the Social Security crisis head on and deal with it in a responsible way through investment as a way to try to bridge the gap that now exists in the Social Security system—

“the gap” meaning not enough money coming in to pay benefits down the road once the baby boom generation begins to retire.

I have been out for the past 4 years talking about this issue and have talked in front of every conceivable group you can imagine. Yesterday I was in Harrisburg, PA, talking to the State AARP about Social Security and the importance of having politicians face up to the issue and explain to the American public how we are going to fix the problem.

The problem is very simple. Right now, there are about 3.3 people working for every retiree on Social Security. Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system. So those 3.3 working people have to pay enough in Social Security tax to pay for the benefits to that 1 retiree.

Just to give you a comparison, back in 1950 we had 17 workers paying into the system for every 1 retiree. That is why, in 1950, we had a payroll tax of 2 percent on the first \$3,000 you earned, because there were 17 people paying and you could pay a relatively low rate of taxation to pay for the benefits. Now you pay 12.4 percent of every dollar you earn, up to, I believe it is, \$72,000.

So it is a dramatic increase in taxes that has occurred because we went from 17 workers to every 1 retiree to 3.3 workers to every 1 retiree. In the next 20 years, we will go from 3.3 workers to every 1 retiree, to around 2 workers or maybe even a little less than 2 workers to every 1 retiree.

It is pretty obvious what is going to have to happen. We are going to have to make a change in the system because the current flow of revenue from 3.3 workers to support 1 retiree will be dramatically reduced when you only have 2 workers. You cannot keep the current rate of taxation and support that 1 retiree.

So the question is, What do we do about it? Do we wait, knowing it is going to happen? Everybody who is going to be working 20 years from now has been born, and everybody who is going to retire in 20 years from now has been born. So we know what the demographics are going to look like. The question is, What are we going to do about it?

There are three things you can do to fix the Social Security problem and only three things. There are only three things you can do.

No. 1, you can do what we have done 20-some times in the past; that is, increase taxes, from what started out as 2 percent on the first \$3,000 to now 12.4 percent on up to \$70,000 of income. So you can increase taxes.

The second thing you can do is reduce benefits. We have done that in the past, too. We raised the retirement age. We adjusted some of the benefit numbers. You can reduce benefits.

How much would we have to do of either raising taxes or cutting benefits? According to the Social Security trustees, the actuaries there, we are looking at a payroll tax increase, if we wait 15