

the fear of the discrimination, clearly they are not able to make informed health decisions for themselves.

In the past, Congress has taken on the battle against broad discrimination in all sorts of legislation. We think back to the 1964 Civil Rights Act; to 1990, the American with Disabilities Act; more recently to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Today, we extend those protections to citizens with genetic markers, a move that has the power, I would argue, to save lives.

As I have implied, this whole field of genetic research and testing will undoubtedly unleash thrilling advances and better health care. It will lead almost certainly to cures for diseases that we cannot even imagine can be cured today. The potential medical advances that emerge from our knowledge and our understanding and that definition of the human genome that was spelled out just a couple of months ago, I know will be more dramatic than the changes I have seen in over 20 years practicing medicine, that I witnessed in my own medical career. Clearly, there will be much more advancing and pioneering than my dad saw after 55 years practicing medicine from about the 1930s to the 1980s.

As we greet the future, the excitement, the thrill of discovering what emerges from this new body of information, this definition of the human genetic code, we have a responsibility in this body to protect our body politic. I am pleased by the progress we have made thus far.

I come to the floor to speak today because I have watched this debate, I have watched this discussion, and I have seen in a bipartisan way in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee tremendous progress being made this past week, and hopefully it can be made in the Senate as we look at discrimination in genetic testing.

I congratulate my colleagues on their persistence and dedication to the issue. It gives us an opportunity, in advance of there being a problem, in advance of the new genetic tests, to address that potential for discrimination which, in turn, if it occurred—and I believe there is a high likelihood unless we act—would be a disservice to mankind.

This legislation stands squarely on our time-tested civil rights laws establishing comprehensive, consistent, practical, reasonable, and fair protections. I strongly support this compromise bill. I am speaking today primarily because it is a compromise bill taking the very best out of the pieces of legislation that have been proposed in the past. I strongly support this compromise bill. I look forward to its swift passage.

EQUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I speak for a moment on the issue of equality in

health care and what I have personally been able to observe, which we as a body have tried to address—in fact, have taken some major steps forward—but which stands as a major challenge which I believe we can address in this body. That is the subject of health care disparities.

In the 21st century, Americans are among the healthiest, the longest living, and robust citizens in the history of the world. We have conquered diseases that were once untreatable. Our remarkable scientists continue to develop new drugs, therapies, treatments, and procedures that every day are bringing new hope and, indeed, saving the lives of millions around the country and millions around the world. We have much of which to be proud.

At the same time, there is something we should be ashamed of because despite the dazzling medical and social progress of the last century, there remains wide health disparities and inequalities between minority and non-minority citizens. I will cite a few examples. Infant mortality rates are twice as high among African Americans versus Whites. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Latino populations is four times higher. And the prevalence of AIDS among African Americans is nine times higher than among Whites. African-American children are twice as likely to have asthma. They are six times more likely to die from asthma than others. And mortality rates related to diabetes are more than twice as high among African Americans and Native Americans.

The question is, why? We have made progress in understanding why, but we cannot answer that question. Why? Even when we control our access to medical services and we control for other socioeconomic factors, Americans from minority backgrounds still receive unequal care. They suffer lower quality care and, consequently, worse health outcomes. That is the challenge. The response to that challenge is we can eliminate that. We can reverse these health care disparities.

Progress has been made in recent years to close the health gap between minority and White patients. We are boosting Federal research into the cause of health disparities. We are identifying barriers to care in our communities. We are expanding the number of health professionals who have a strong commitment to the needs of minority and underserved patients. Much more, however, needs to be done.

That is why I am proposing the Health Care Gap Act of 2003. This legislation, which I plan to introduce later this year, builds on successful prior legislation to ultimately eliminate such disparities in health care. This legislation will address key areas necessary to close the health care gap in America. These include expanding access to quality health care, improving national leadership and coordination, increasing the diversity of health professionals, promoting more aggressive

professional education, promoting research to identify sources of racial and ethnic disparities, identifying promising interventions, and improving and expanding programs to prevent, too manage, and to treat diseases and conditions that disproportionately impact minority and underserved populations. As I mentioned in the data I quoted, these include asthma, they include HIV/AIDS, prostate cancer, and other types of cancer.

Last weekend, I have the privilege, as so many Members—in fact, many Members departed an hour or so ago to deliver commencement speeches at high schools, elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and graduate schools all over the country.

I had the privilege last week of speaking at two commencement ceremonies. One was for the School of Medicine at Morehouse College in Atlanta, and also the George Washington School of Medicine here in the Washington area. In my address, I challenged these hard-working and young people—our future doctors, our future health professionals, our scientists—to become active, to actively shape and mold our profession. I told them that in this day and time in the field of medicine, we simply can no longer, as health professionals, solely practice medicine. They must lead in medicine. The same is true of us.

This bill on health care disparities, this legislation which will be introduced later this year, will do just that. In the Senate, we must help to create a medical system that treats all patients equitably. Our national creed, that all are created equal, dictates that we must.

HONORING BOB HOPE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I take a moment to honor a great American who is celebrating his 100th birthday. Bob Hope was born one of six boys in a London suburb on May 29, 1903. His family made their way to America when he was 3, and they settled in Cleveland, OH. We can only be grateful to the Hope family for making that journey.

Growing up, Bob Hope was a shoeshine boy, butcher's mate, stock boy, newspaper boy, golf caddie, shoe salesman, and even a prizefighter—all of these things before he became one of America's most beloved and successful entertainers.

As a performer, Bob Hope had the rare and miraculous gift of being able to touch our common humanity. His famous road pictures with Big Crosby and Dorothy Lamour were the quintessential expressions of the adventure of being an American.

But he is most loved, of course, for the thousands of hours and millions, literally millions of miles he spent in selfless devotion to our troops. World War II, South Korea, Vietnam, from the Far East to Northern Africa, the Indonesian peninsula to the heart of

Europe, in refugee camps, on Air Force bases, Navy ships, jungles, forward bases, demilitarized zones, Bob Hope went wherever we needed him, and he conveyed to our troops the commitment and love of the American people.

The front rows would be filled with soldiers injured in battle, limbs destroyed, bodies wrapped in bandages. And he would manage to make them laugh. He was able, for those moments while he was on stage, giving his best to our best, to lift those young men and women out of their war-torn bodies and help them forget the fatigue, the fear, and the loneliness of battle.

Bob Hope is a giant. Bob Hope is a national treasure. We will never, ever forget his service to the United States of America.

Happy birthday, Mr. Hope.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

STATE AID MEDICAID TEMPORARY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, one of the many interesting challenges this Congress will face is that of fundamental Medicaid reform. The President unveiled an innovative and exciting proposal earlier this year, and the budget that we adopted in April anticipates Congressional action by creating a reserve fund of resources for modernizing Medicaid.

Of course, the jobs and growth package presently before us contains a temporary state aid program of \$20 billion. Under this interim plan, up to \$10 billion will flow through the Medicaid program over the next 18 months. This time-limited spending, proposed in the Senate by Senators COLLINS and NELSON, as well as Senator ROCKEFELLER, is provisional, lasting only until September 30, 2004. Further, Mr. President, my three colleagues entered a colloquy in the RECORD on May 14, 2003, to that effect. The language that passed the Senate, and the language contained in the conference report, clearly states that the program itself is repealed in 2004. The Senate sponsors of this provision have acknowledged that the program is not to be permanent, and both the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, and the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator NICKLES, agree that this program is to last no longer than September 30, 2004. As the program unfolds, based on the commitment of its sponsors and the chairmen, I will be monitoring to ensure that the program is indeed transient, and will work with colleagues to keep it temporary.

Further, in no way does this provision in the state aid package obstruct the opportunity provided in the budget resolution for the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Energy and

Commerce Committee to move ahead on Medicaid modernization. Since the administration detailed its plan, various committees in the House and Senate have explored its features, and Medicaid modernization that enhances flexibility and responsiveness is a goal many share as we move into the 21st century. I look forward to the creativity and ingenuity of the chairmen of the relevant committees, Senator GRASSLEY and Mr. TAUZIN, as they move forward in the coming weeks and months.

ALEUTIAN ISLAND VETERANS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, as Memorial Day approaches, our Nation reflects upon the courage and heroism of our Armed Forces. During this time of reflection, I hope the Congress and the Nation remember those who defended Alaska during World War II.

The Aleutian Islands were a key part of our victory in World War II. The battle fought at Dutch Harbor contributed indirectly to our success at Midway, and the fight to reclaim Attu and Kiska deprived the Japanese of a base from which to raid Alaska and limit North Pacific operations. The geography, weather, and location of the islands made these missions particularly dangerous and difficult, and the members of the military who served there deserve special recognition.

The Voice of Anchorage Times recently reported that these veterans will be traveling back to Alaska this month. I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Voice of the Times, May 4, 2003]

THOSE ALEUTIAN ISLAND VETERANS ARE BACK
(By William J. Tobin)

Once again, as regular as the return of the long days of summer, a six-man contingent of veterans of the Thousand Mile War are back in town, preparing to leave tomorrow afternoon for Kodiak, the first stop on a journey to revisit the battlegrounds of Attu, where U.S. forces fought Japanese invaders in 1943. The 60th anniversary reunion is being led by Al King of Sunrise, Fla., who keeps Aleutian Island vets in touch with each other through his Willawaw Letter—a periodic newsletter packed with names and addresses of those who served here back in those days. Each issue also is filled with personal stories and photos provided by Willawaw warriors sharing their war stories with their fellow vets. Part of the reunion ritual again will be breakfast tomorrow morning at Gwennies Old Alaska Restaurant on Spenard Road, close by their Anchorage headquarters, the Puffin Inn.

Veterans who fought with the 11th Air Force during the Aleutian campaign and members of "Americans Home from Siberia" will hold their annual reunion later this year in a spot a bit more tourist friendly than Attu. They're going to get together at the Riviera Resort and Racquet Club at Palm Spring, Calif., for a four-day Halloween weekend beginning Oct. 30. The "Home from Siberia" fliers include members of the Doolittle Raiders, the 20th Air Force and Fleet Air Wing 4, all of whom shared in the aerial battles of World War II. Herman Thompson of Talkeetna, secretary of the national 11th Air Force Association, is the reunion treas-

urer. He's collecting the \$110-a-person registration fees that cover a Friday luncheon at the Desert Willows Country Club and a Palm Springs celebrity tour, a Saturday tour of the Palm Spring Air Museum and an evening banquet at the Riviera. Thompson's phone number, for those seeking more information, is (907) 733-2626.

MEMORIAL DAY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, as we reflect upon this Memorial Day, Americans throughout the country should take time to remember all the brave men and women who gave their lives in the defense of freedom and to preserve the liberties we cherish in this great Nation. We must never forget our fallen heroes, and we should continue to praise them for their service and commitment to country.

This year, in particular, we must be ever reverent because America lost some of her greatest sons and daughters in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Those who died did so in the defense of America from her enemies and to deliver downtrodden nations from the oppression of tyrants. I am both grateful and sorrowful this Memorial Day.

I want to express my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who only recently gave their lives fighting on behalf of the United States. My words cannot erase your pain, but please know my prayers are with you during this most difficult time.

It is said of those who fought in wars to defend America that "All gave some and some gave all." On this Memorial Day, I hope every American will pay tribute to those who gave all.

IN TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL LEROY BARNIDGE, JR.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, our Nation's Air Force will soon lose one of its exceptional leaders, MG Leroy Barnidge, Jr., who is retiring in the next few weeks after 32 years of outstanding service to this country.

Many in Congress have become acquainted with General Barnidge due to his service since 2001 as director of the Air Force Office of Legislative Liaison. I have had the great pleasure of meeting and working with Leroy much longer, due to his two tours of duty at Ellsworth Air Force Base, the last as base commander from August 1995 to February 1997.

There is no finer gentleman, nor one with a better sense of humor or more likable personality than Leroy Barnidge. As commander of the largest military installation in South Dakota, Leroy impressed me with his candor, his integrity, and his competence. Knowing and working with him has always been a joy, and Leroy will be missed not only in the Air Force but also by many of us in the Congress.