

January 1, 2006, and it is a voluntary program.

We will issue a prescription drug card which will be offered to beneficiaries from January 1, 2004, through at least January 1, 2006, 6 months after the prescription drug benefit plan is implemented. The prescription drug plan will be implemented on January 1, 2004.

The drug benefit with the Medicare Part D is a Medicare Program. At least two stand-alone drug plans must be offered in each region. All Medicare beneficiaries will be able to participate. Those who remain in traditional Medicare will have a drug benefit equal to those who go into the new Medicare Advantage Program, formerly known as Medicare+Choice. Beneficiaries will be offered either standard drug coverage or drug coverage that is an actuarial equivalent to the standard drug plan. Either drug plan will be available to those remaining in traditional Medicare or those who begin the Medicare Advantage Program, this new program.

The national average of monthly premiums for the drug benefit will be \$35 per month in 2006. All drug plans will have mandatory deductibles and beneficiary out-of-pocket cost-sharing limits.

Every beneficiary will have a choice between three prescription drug plans. The Medicare Advantage Program will offer either a PPO option or an HMO option. A stand-alone drug benefit will be offered to beneficiaries remaining in traditional Medicare. A maximum of three Medicare Advantage PPO plans will be offered per region. They will compete for the opportunity and the privilege of serving the people in that particular region. Health and Human Services will certify all of these drug plans before they are offered to Medicare beneficiaries. In any event, they will be offered to all Medicare beneficiaries, seniors and disabled.

I was a member of the tripartisan group last year that put forth the tripartisan plan. Had we not done that, we wouldn't be as far along today as we are. I have to say I was proud to be a member of that tripartisan plan, along with Senators GRASSLEY, SNOWE, BREAUX, and JEFFORDS. There were five of us. We took on that assignment, and we came up with a lot of ideas that have been improved upon in this bill. This was a very important bill.

There is no easy solution in these areas. In spite of the desire of some to have simple private sector solutions, those are not in the cards with the votes we have in the Senate today or in the near future, I have to say as well.

This bill is as close as we can go towards having two completely different but nevertheless useful options: traditional Medicare for those who do not want to leave, but this new Medicare Advantage for those who really want to try something different where they may have advantageous benefits over time.

We believe the competition fostered by this bill is going to be good competi-

tion, that it should help to keep costs down. But, most importantly, we believe all seniors should have a right to prescription drug benefits, and this plan will give it to them.

We will have lots of crying and moaning and groaning about different ideas around here, some of which I might like just as much as what we have in here, but we could not get them done. So we have come together in the art of the doable to get a bill that literally gives both sides of these options a chance to be able to excel and do better for our senior citizens. That is important. That is real important. This bill is important. It is the first time in history we have done this. Frankly, a \$400 billion bill over 10 years is a very important bill that will do an awful lot of good for our seniors and for those who really are hard up in our society and for those who have to do without food or split their pills or do any number of things in order to be able to get the medications they need.

I am proud of this bill. Each one of us probably could, if we were dictators, come up with what we think might even be a better bill. But, fortunately, that isn't the way this representative republic works. We have to work within the framework of the Congress. Sometimes that is a messy, mixed up, sometimes very inefficient method of legislating, but, in the end, this country has survived because we have the greatest form of government in the history of the world. And this process, as sloppy as it might be from time to time is bringing about a bill that will do an awful lot of good for an awful lot of seniors in our society at a time when they need it the most.

I just hope we can reduce the number of amendments and get this bill passed as soon as we can, get together with the House in a conference, and, of course, come up with a final package that, hopefully, will even be improved that will take us throughout this next century in a way that will protect our seniors and those who have suffered for want of pharmaceutical prescription drugs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 173 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I note the presence of the Senator from Kentucky. I ask unanimous consent to engage him in a 2- or 3-minute dialog.

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

RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to note that, thanks to the efforts of millions of people all over the world, ASEAN, in a radical departure from their previous practice, has called for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. I thank the Senator for his sponsorship of the legislation that I think may have had some beneficial effect. We obviously don't know all the factors that went into it, except to note also that people all over the world have been aroused on behalf of this great and truly good person. I thank the Senator from Kentucky for his efforts on her behalf.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank the Senator from Arizona. I think he is the only person I know who has actually been in the presence of Suu Kyi. I am sure the Senator shares my view that the mere act of letting her out is a long way from where the two of us hope they will end up.

What the junta needs to do is a lot more than simply end the house arrest, but give her and her duly elected party an opportunity to assume the power that they won 13 years ago in an honest election. So it is a step in the right direction. I am sure my friend from Arizona agrees that we have a long way to go.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I was just going to wrap up. I see my friend from Alaska here. How long does the Senator expect to speak?

Mr. STEVENS. I really could not say.

Mr. MCCONNELL. May I do the wrap-up and then allow the Senator from Alaska to make his comments? The wrap-up is rather short, I believe.

Mr. STEVENS. May I inquire, did the Senator from Kentucky just cosponsor that amendment?

Mr. MCCONNELL. No. Mr. President, I did not cosponsor the amendment. We were just talking about Burma. Senator MCCAIN and I were talking about Burma. The expression on the face of the Senator from Alaska was one of alarm. I want to reassure him that I certainly did not cosponsor the resolution.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

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

LET'S NOT FORGET CAMBODIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Secretary of State Colin Powell is in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for an annual ASEAN meeting. There are many issues he needs to pursue with ASEAN members, including, most urgently, support for the struggle for freedom in Burma.

Also pressing is the fate of democracy in Cambodia. Secretary Powell

must be clear to all Cambodian democrats that the United States stands firmly and publicly with them in our common cause of democracy and the rule of law. Secretary Powell should make it a point to meet with the democrats during his short stay in Phnom Penh.

It is in America's national interest, and that of Cambodia, that new leadership—firmly committed to transparency, accountability and justice—is elected in upcoming parliamentary elections next month.

The ruling Cambodian People's Party, CPP, and its earlier manifestations have had an opportunity—nearly a quarter of a century—to develop that country. Their records is unimpressive, at best. Crimes are committed with impunity, corruption is endemic and extends to the highest office, and lawlessness provides a breeding ground for terrorism and other criminal activities.

Under CPP Prime Minister Hun Sen's leadership, opposition rallies have been attacked by grenade-throwing terrorists, a coalition government disintegrated in a coup d'etat, and government-paid gangsters, the Pagoda Boys, caused \$50 million worth of damage in anti-Thai riots that were fueled by Hun Sen's reckless nationalistic comments.

Secretary Powell should temper his comments praising the Cambodian Government for cracking down on terrorism. The reason terrorists are on Cambodian soil is because of the very lawlessness perpetuated by the CPP. Hun Sen has swatted a few flies recently, but is directly responsible for leaving the screen door wide open. A more serious response to terrorism in the region is freedom and the rule of law for the Cambodian people.

While in Phnom Penh, Secretary Powell must push for free and fair elections in July. Opposition parties must not be denied access to media or the ability to conduct rallies, demonstrations, and other forms of free expression. Secretary Powell must make clear to Hun Sen that a single, additional political killing is one too many, and that the election will be judged by international standards—which, contrary to the Prime Minister's thinking, is not reserved only for sports competition.

Let me close by saying that it has come to my attention that the ASEAN meeting is taking place at the Intercontinental Hotel, which is owned by Theng Bunma—a suspected Cambodian drug king pin and self-described financier of the 1997 coup. This epitomizes all that is wrong in Cambodia today.

Mr. President, I ask that a letter from Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy to Secretary Powell calling for Suu Kyi's immediate release be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA,
June 13, 2002.

COLIN L. POWELL,
Secretary of State,
U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC.
c/o HE Mr. CHARLES RAY,
U.S. Ambassador,
U.S. Embassy, Phnom-Penh, Cambodia.

DEAR SECRETARY POWELL: I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for your statement calling for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and increased pressure on Burma's military junta. The struggle led by Suu Kyi is an inspiration to all those who live in fear under repressive regimes, and to those who fight everyday for freedom and democracy. I proudly join you in the call for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and hope that you will use the opportunity of your visit to Cambodia for the ASEAN Regional Forum to press for an end to the suffering of the Burmese people.

The fate of Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's democracy is indelibly linked to the future success of the ASEAN region. The transition from communism and military dictatorship to democracy would bring untold political, economic and cultural benefits to one of the most diverse and potentially dynamic regions in the world. In this context your statement that those who oppress democracy must not be allowed to prevail has particular resonance.

In Cambodia, we are struggling to end endemic poverty, reduce appalling illiteracy rates and to provide basic nutritional needs to our children. This struggle is made all the more difficult by a government more committed to consolidating its own power than to the welfare of its people. While offering a facade of progress and stability to donors and the international community, the government has used fear and violence to support a lucrative patronage system, exploit our natural resources and suppress opposition voices. It was just today that the latest victim, a garment worker protesting low wages and poor factory conditions, was shot and killed by government riot police as they cracked down on a peaceful demonstration.

Unlike in Burma, the Cambodian people will have the opportunity to go to the polls in July to change their leadership. They must be allowed to do so in an environment free from fear and intimidation. But already we have seen that the current government is willing to sue the tools of fear and violence to suppress the Cambodian people's desire for freedom and democracy. This year's electoral process is already flawed by biased elections commission, restrictions on voter registration, restrictive media access and ongoing intimidation of opposition activists. The potential for democracy in Cambodia is being thwarted by this government and it must realize that, "its actions will not be allowed to stand."

As you prepare to participate in the ASEAN Regional Forum in Phnom Penh next week, I trust that you will continue to provide a strong and leading voice for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. At the same time, I ask that you use the same strong voice to advocate for credible elections in Cambodia—elections that reflect the true will of the Cambodian people.

Sincerely,

SAM RAINSY,
Leader of Parliamentary Opposition,
Kingdom of Cambodia.

UNITED SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the United Services Organization for

two vivid recent examples of the legendary support and assistance that it provides for the families of members of our Armed Forces when their loved ones are serving away from home.

The USO is rightly renowned for the joy, the comfort, and the happiness it has brought to our troops and their families over the years. It is truly an American treasure, as it has shown once again in its extraordinary support for two Massachusetts families during the recent war in Iraq.

Under the leadership of executive director Alice Harkins, the USO of New England came to the aid of Sergeant Vanessa Turner who became critically ill in Iraq while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Upon the onset of her illness, SGT Turner was flown back to Germany and to the community she left. Sergeant Turner's 15-year-old daughter Brittany was left in Germany while her mother was deployed to Iraq. Brittany remained strong, finishing the school year while visiting her mother in the hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. SGT Turner's family in Roxbury, MA, was desperate to fly to her bedside and to comfort Brittany. The USO of New England came to the rescue, arranging for SGT Turner's mother, sister, and brother to fly to Landstuhl, Germany. According to Alice Harkins, this was "an easy request. Their children are our responsibility; if the service members know that the community is taking care of their children, then they can relax."

In the second case, the Armours family in Athol, MA, was devastated to learn that Specialist Jamvis Armours had been critically wounded in Iraq and had been flown to the Washington Hospital Center in Washington, DC. Problems arose in getting SP Armours' wife and children to the hospital. Again, the USO came to the rescue. They assisted the family financially and emotionally, and Alice Harkins actually drove from Boston toward Athol to see them and to ensure that they had all they needed for the trip. Going the extra mile is what makes the USO so widely admired throughout our country and by all the members of our Armed Forces wherever they serve.

I commend the USO of New England in all it does so well, and for demonstrating in these two cases that its helping hand is always there when its help is needed most.

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

● Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, since its inception, the United Service Organization what we all know as the USO has worked to bring a piece of home to the members of our armed forces wherever they may find themselves. From Bob Hope's legendary tours to the latest cyber-canteens that allow service members to stay in contact with family and friends via email, the USO works tirelessly to provide simple pleasures to those who venture into harm's way.