

of the facts, to give the assurance that it will not happen again, and to place into the military such authorities as they need. I doubt if there is anything under statute law that needs to be added, but the authorities need to uphold those laws and regulations, and training should follow so that this will never be repeated.

Again, as we proceed over the next days and weeks, we must be mindful of the millions of men and women in uniform, past and present, who have honorably, with great sacrifice, defended the laws, rules, traditions, and values enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and in the American way of life. The actions of a few must not be allowed to tarnish that image.

Of course, I am very mindful of the fact that Memorial Day is in a few weeks, and we will dedicate a magnificent set of structures on our Mall to the men and women who served during World War II—some 16 million. I had the privilege of going down the other day with Senator Dole, a former colleague, whose wisdom and energies have contributed greatly to this magnificent memorial. As we walked there together with other Senators from this Chamber—totaling 7, who served in World War II—Senator Dole said that, yes, the monument stands as a symbol for the sacrifices of those in uniform, some 16 million, but he said it also stands as a monument and testimony of the homefront. Those of us who have memories of that period remember how well this country was unified. We had rationing; we had war production; we worked around the clock not only to supply and equip our troops but to provide equipment for our Allied forces. It was a magnificent chapter in American history. That cannot be tarnished by the actions of a few here.

There is clearly room for a constructive debate on how best to proceed in Iraq, but we must not allow recent events to obscure the overall stakes for our Nation and the world in this region. We must be unified in overall purpose that success in Iraq is essential and that we, the Congress, stand squarely behind our men and women in uniform.

Our troops in Iraq deserve this. They deserve the best support we can give them. To appear divided while our sons and daughters are in harm's way runs counter to the traditions of this Chamber. There should be debate, but let it be reasoned and measured, and focused on the way forward in this war on terrorism.

The brave young men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have answered their Nation's call to service. They deserve nothing less than our absolute, unwavering commitment to their success. Nothing less.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia for helping to explain to the world how sad all of us are about the developments in Iraq with the prisoners. I appreciate

the distinguished Senator, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, moving forward and asking Secretary Rumsfeld to come and testify in public. It is our hope that Secretary Rumsfeld will also brief the entire Senate, along with the distinguished committee. I appreciate the leadership of the Senator from Virginia very much.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank our colleague from Texas. Let me assure all that I have been in contact with Secretary Rumsfeld. There is no reluctance whatsoever on his part to come forward. He desires to do so, but I believe it should be following the Commander in Chief, the President, when he addresses indeed the Nation and the world in a short time.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Virginia and also agree that would be proper. The President should have the ability to represent the American people and the world. I know that he is going to do that in a very effective way. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Iowa to take the next 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

MEDICARE DISCOUNT CARD

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am going to address issues about the Medicare discount card, and I particularly want to respond to criticism that we heard yesterday from the other side.

Listening yesterday, as I did, and then listening today to the criticism about the high price of gasoline, I have come to the conclusion that over the last several days members of the other party have a guilt complex about some of the votes they have cast in recent months. For instance, only 13 out of 49 Democrats voted to break the filibuster on the national energy policy. If we had a national energy policy, they would not have any worry about high gasoline prices.

Then, of course, all but about 12 of them voted against the drug discount card to give seniors reasonably priced prescription drugs. So they come in and trash the bill we passed in a bipartisan way. I hope they realize they made big mistakes on some of their votes last year and suck it up and move on.

In regard to what was said yesterday about Medicare, first, yesterday was a very historic day for Medicare beneficiaries in my home State of Iowa and all the other 49 States. Before then, many beneficiaries paid some of the highest prices for drugs. Now they can begin shopping for a Medicare-approved discount card that will help them pay less, a lot less.

With discounts taking effect June 1, this program will provide Medicare beneficiaries with immediate savings on their medicines until the comprehensive Medicare drug benefit begins in 2006. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, beneficiaries will save \$4 billion to \$5

billion over the next year and a half on drugs. That is not chickenfeed. That is saving a lot of money for our seniors.

Older Americans and individuals with disabilities can choose a card that gets them the lowest prices on drugs they need.

Finding the best card could not be simpler. Contrary to what one of the Senators told us yesterday about how complicated this process is, they are hoping the seniors, whom they consider their political property, will believe them that it is complicated and they will not bother to look at it because it is too complicated. Do the seniors of America need to have Democrats scare them more?

This is how simple it is: Call 1-800-MEDICARE any time, 24 hours a day. They can call their State Health Insurance Information Program, SHIP as it is called, and get counselors at the local level. Most of them are very well-trained volunteers to help seniors decide. They can go online themselves if they want to, or with a family member, to compare prices offered by different cards.

They can find low or no-cost cards that include their neighborhood pharmacies, all by making one telephone call any time in a 24-hour day to a 1-800-MEDICARE number.

Using their Medicare-approved drug discount card, beneficiaries will save at least 10 to 25 percent on the cost of their drugs.

Like the drug benefit itself, the Medicare-approved drug discount card targets assistance to those most in need. Beneficiaries with low incomes, that is less than \$12,600 for an individual and \$16,900 for a married couple, will qualify for a \$600 credit this year, another new \$600 credit next year. If there are two in the family, that is \$1,200 this year and \$1,200 next year. If they do not carry it all this year, it can carry over to next year. If they do not use it all up before the new insurance program for prescription drugs is put in place, they can carry it over into 2006 until it is used up.

Some people have said these cards will not offer good discounts. That is what we heard yesterday. So I did some checking. To give an example, let us take a woman enrolled in Medicare in the largest city close to my farm, in Iowa, with an income of \$12,000 a year. Let us call her Helen, to be short. Helen needs to fill prescriptions for Celebrex, Norvasc, and Zocor. With no discounts, she would pay \$7,297 at her local pharmacies for these drugs from June of this year until the end of 2005. Helen goes to this pharmacy because she knows and trusts this pharmacy. She does not want to order her drugs through the mail.

With a basic discount card offered by this legislation, she would save \$1,213—that is 17 percent—off of her drugs. Now the \$1,200 by itself is a pretty big savings, but that is like giving her the drugstore.com price at her local pharmacy.

Helen has a fixed income of \$1,000 a month. This means she also qualifies for the transitional assistance and does not have to pay an enrollment fee. By applying for the card and qualifying for the \$600 credit, she also learns she is eligible for other assistance programs, such as those offered by drug manufacturers. With the \$600 on her card in both 2004 and 2005, combined with these additional discounts, she will save \$6,894.

I will repeat that because that is very significant. She will be saving almost \$6,900 off of her drug bill. That is a 95-percent savings for her.

I ask the people who were criticizing this program yesterday if they consider that chickenfeed. For someone living on a fixed income, what a relief that is going to be. About a third of her income will be freed up for other priorities.

Since enrollment began Monday, May 3, we have heard some Members come to this Chamber to criticize the drug discount card. That is a shame. The discount card program will mean real savings for beneficiaries, especially with low incomes. Seniors have been waiting a long time to get relief from high prescription drug costs. This legislation delivers that relief.

I know this is an election year, but this is not the time or the issue to play politics at their expense and to scare the seniors of America. More than 300 organizations—I wish these people on the other side of the aisle would put this in their pipe and smoke it—endorse this legislation. They will say this drug discount card is a first step toward making drugs more affordable for all Medicare beneficiaries.

The president of the National Council on Aging described the new Medicare law as the single most important opportunity to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries to have emerged in the past 35 years.

This is what the president, Robert Hayes, said:

(Low-income) people should run—not walk to sign up.

This is especially true for the estimated 4.3 million low-income beneficiaries who will see immediate relief with a combined \$1,200 this year and the next which they can use to buy their lifesaving prescription drugs.

What I find alarming is that some would try to score political points rather than help low-income beneficiaries get some much needed help with their drugs. So my colleagues voted against this bill last year. Suck it up and move on.

I was personally involved in the negotiations last year. I can tell my colleagues that during the Medicare conference, both Republicans and Democrats—that is bipartisan—strongly supported the creation of a drug discount card.

While some would like people to believe otherwise, this Medicare-approved drug discount card is a good deal. Since January of this year, I have

held 39 town meetings throughout Iowa to tell my constituents about this drug discount card program and what it does. As Members of Congress, we should use this opportunity to educate beneficiaries and to tell them about the \$600 credit. I am concerned about a political environment that confuses and misleads Medicare beneficiaries and that in the end causes more harm than good. They deserve better than that.

I want to address a couple of criticisms that people have been making. First, some have said that prices are going to change every week. Drug card sponsors can only increase the price if there is a change in the sponsor's cost. Card sponsors can lower prices at any time, which will have a positive impact.

I have been assured that CMS will aggressively monitor the prices charged by card sponsors to make sure that they treat beneficiaries fairly.

CMS will track any changes made in drug prices and complaints received by 1-800-MEDICARE and other sources. They also will "mystery shop" to make sure that sponsors are not falsely advertising.

If CMS finds that a card sponsor is taking advantage of seniors, they can freeze enrollment, impose fines or kick the sponsor out of the program entirely.

Lastly, some have been saying that prices on the Medicare Web site are inaccurate. CMS has assured me that the prices are the right ones. Prices on the Web site are the best prices that the cards can guarantee. So they cannot be higher, but they could be lower.

I said this last week and I will say it again: We should move on and not lose sight of what really matters. And that is helping beneficiaries like Helen from Waterloo and the millions like her get drugs at lower prices. The bottom line is that the discount card program is a really good deal for our Nation's Medicare beneficiaries.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. How much time do we have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes 40 seconds.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I would like to be notified when I have used 2 minutes and 40 seconds, after which I am going to yield the final 5 minutes to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Iowa for talking about the Medicare discount drug card. I think it is so important that seniors know they can easily compare prices; they can determine which is the best card for them. This is going to help anyone who does not have other coverage.

I hope our seniors know they can call 1-800-MEDICARE and get further information. If they call their local Medicare office, the Medicare people are

going to be very accommodating. I am appreciative that the Senator from Iowa clarified that because all the rhetoric we are hearing could scare our seniors.

PASSING THE ENERGY BILL

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I want to address the energy issue. I heard Senators on the floor earlier today talking about the high price of gasoline, as if it is the President's fault. I would remind everyone we have an energy bill we are two votes short of having cloture to pass. We passed it in the Senate. We passed it in the House. We have 58 votes to move it forward and we can't get the 60 votes it takes to break a filibuster. I ask the Senators who are concerned about high energy prices if they would consider voting to get the energy conference report agreed to so the President can sign it because it is a bill that will provide incentives for exploring, incentives for creating new energy resources, incentives for bringing Alaska gas down—which will be a huge help toward self-sufficiency in our country. It has incentives for renewable fuel, for the kind of fuel that will be burning clean, such as nuclear powerplants, and to have clean coal-burning and other new technologies.

There is so much in the Energy bill that would bring our country into self-sufficiency and we can't get the Energy bill passed. I think Congress should take the responsibility to see this bill goes through. We have tried to pass an energy bill for 10 years and we need to do it. We need to take control ourselves. It is time for us to do this for the American people. The high price of gasoline is set at our feet, and we can do something about it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

PRISONERS IN IRAQ

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, the world has witnessed something in the last few weeks about the treatment of prisoners in Iraq that does not represent what America is all about. It doesn't represent our cause. It doesn't represent our mission. It doesn't represent our hopes and dreams for the Iraqi people and for all of us—ultimately for democracy in Iraq.

I applaud the President of the United States for his speaking out, condemning without qualification what has occurred. He, as I understand it, went forth to speak to the Arab world, face to face, the leader of the free world speaking to the Arab world to let them know this is not what America is all about. I think that is important. We all, at every level, have to reject it. Those who are responsible at every level have to be held to account. I know the Commander in Chief will do that.

As we deal with this terrible situation, I hope we do not lose focus on our