

The hospital provided me with a binder full of paperwork that was completed, in this case, for a total hip replacement procedure on an elderly patient. As you can see, Mr. President, this 72 page binder is full of more than 50 forms that either the hospital or the patient and their family were required to complete, some time multiple times, in order to for the patient to receive treatment.

This is a big enough challenge for large hospital groups, but for small providers like Marietta Memorial with just 204 beds and 90 physicians, this paperwork and regulatory demand can be crippling.

For this reason, I worked with the task force to include in our reform package ways to limit bureaucratic demands. We believe that this could save our Nation approximately \$47 billion without risking patient safety, privacy or the quality of health care.

In addition, the task force found that there were ways to increase hospital's and provider's use of technology to lower their costs and eliminate duplicative test and procedures. Fortunately, President Bush has taken a huge step forward in this area and has created a new position at the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate the Nation's health information technology efforts. I am pleased that Secretary Thompson recognized the importance of and the immediate need to develop standards that help to create electronic medical records and other technology efforts.

I have no doubt these standards when implemented will help improve quality and cost efficiency of care and will eventually help hospitals, especially smaller hospitals like Marietta Memorial, reduce duplicative costs and services to their patients and improve the quality of the care they can provide.

These are only some of the ways we can act immediately to put an end to the increase in health care costs and reduce the number of Americans that find themselves without quality health care coverage.

However, these are steps that will only provide interim relief.

Like I said, health care reform has always been one of my top priorities and I have been studying this issue for some time. In the past 2 years, I have met with experts and other interested parties to get the full picture of the state of health care in the United States and learn about possible efforts for reform. I have discussed reform proposals with individuals as diverse as former Ohio Congressman Bill Gradison to John Sweeney, President of the AFLCIO to Dr. Donald Palmisano, President of the American Medical Association, to Stuart Butler with the Heritage Foundation.

And over the past year and a half, I have been traveling throughout my State of Ohio and have held 14 roundtables to specifically discuss health care reform with employers and employees, business and labor leaders, the uninsured and the underinsured.

In fact, in Ohio I have even formed my own health care task force made up of representatives from physician and other provider groups, small and large employers, labor, policy experts, and others who have an interest in reforming our current health care environment. Together we have analyzed a variety of popular health care reform proposals to increase access to health insurance coverage. And what I have heard even from my most conservative friends—is that this health care system is broken.

People are telling me we need to think about plowing new ground. I agree and believe we have to reevaluate the way we are spending the \$1.6 trillion that is dedicated to health care in this country. We need to look at the big picture and determine how we can realign our system to more efficiently provide quality health care that maintains choices and responsibility for consumers.

This, of course, will not happen overnight and, as a result, I am encouraged by and supportive of some of the interim and immediate solutions proposed by the Senate Task Force. My colleagues and I have taken a step in the right direction toward identifying immediate changes that will bring down the prices people are paying for their health care today, help those who have insurance retain it at reasonable rates, and expand access to affordable insurance for those who are currently uninsured and underinsured.

Should I have the opportunity to serve my fellow Ohioans for an additional 6 years, reforming our Nation's health care system will be my highest priority.

ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS ACT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am proud today to cosponsor S. 2411, the Assistance to Firefighters Act of 2004. This legislation, introduced by my colleagues Senators DODD and DEWINE, would reauthorize the FIRE Act grant program through 2010, as well as make a number of improvements to the existing program. This legislation will improve the ability of firefighters across to the country to do their jobs more safely and effectively.

Four years ago, I was proud to be an original cosponsor of the Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement (FIRE) Act, which has generated nearly \$2 billion in grants since the program was enacted. It has provided critical dollars enabling fire departments to pay for the purchase of new equipment, to better train their personnel, and to establish fire prevention campaigns. Although this is a notable step forward, in West Virginia, and throughout the country, fire departments remain seriously underfunded. I hope my colleagues will agree that much more needs to be done before we can feel comfortable about the level of preparedness of our firefighters.

In West Virginia, almost every single one of our approximately 460 fire departments is undermanned and without the necessary equipment they need to do their jobs. I worry, as I'm sure many of my colleagues do, that communities could find themselves in the unacceptable position of being ill-prepared to respond to an emergency. Very few towns and cities in West Virginia can afford to hire and train more firefighters, or to purchase new firefighting equipment without additional Federal assistance.

I will bet most of my colleagues would be surprised at the number of volunteers who currently make up the majority of our Nation's fire service. Volunteers compose nearly 75 percent of all firefighters nationwide. That percentage is much higher in rural States like West Virginia, where 95 percent of our firefighting personnel are volunteers. We rely on firefighters in most communities to assist us not only to put out fires, but also in cases of natural disasters, car accidents, hazardous material spills, and this mostly volunteer fire service would be called upon to respond to any acts of terrorism that might occur. Additional firefighters are needed, as well as an immediate infusion of new and better equipment so that they can do their jobs more effectively. Currently there are not enough portable radios or breathing apparatus equipment, and many departments lack the resources needed for proper vehicle maintenance. Reauthorizing the FIRE Act grant program will allow fire departments to hire more full-time personnel and further alleviate the costs of maintaining up-to-date equipment and training.

After 4 years, there are many facets of the program that need updating to reflect the learning process both Congress and the Fire Service we have undergone. This bill would make several improvements to the existing law that reflect the changing nature of the world we live in today and acknowledge that there are better and more efficient ways to administer the program. The measure would align the FIRE Act with new standards in Federal emergency management put in place since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. It also lowers the matching funds requirement by a third for fire departments serving communities of 50,000 residents, and cut requirements in half for communities of 20,000 people or fewer, in order to lessen current budget strains. It would also open up funding to non-profit Emergency Medical Service units not affiliated with fire departments. Right now, only EMS units attached to fire departments are eligible for funding. This provision in particular will improve the safety and security of West Virginians, where many of our EJMS units are independent of the local fire department.

I agree with the statements that have been made by virtually every Member of Congress that the world we

live in today sits in stark contrast to that of the one we knew prior to the tragedies of September 11, 2001. Probably no group knows this better than the dedicated firefighters who place themselves in harm's way every time they respond to a call. Fortunately, we have an opportunity here to demonstrate that we recognize the importance of the work these firefighters do, and help them to protect us by quickly enacting this bill.

The Assistance to Firefighters Act of 2004 would translate directly into saved lives and will increase the safety of West Virginians and Americans in communities across this country. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

MUTUAL FUND REFORM ACT OF 2004

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague from Illinois, Senator FITZGERALD, and several other members of the Senate in sponsoring S. 2059, the Mutual Fund Reform Act of 2004.

Mutual funds traditionally have been seen as safe havens for long-term investments. This perception of mutual funds as secure investment vehicles has certainly contributed to the industry's growth. Two decades ago, the mutual fund industry was relatively small; only a small percentage of Americans invested in mutual funds, and the assets of the industry were \$115 billion. Today, the mutual fund industry has \$7.5 trillion in assets, over 90 million investors, and more than 10,000 funds.

Unfortunately, as the industry has grown, some mutual fund managers and boards of directors have ignored their most basic role as fiduciaries. Recent State and Federal investigations have revealed trading irregularities at several of funds, including many that are well known. These scandals have shed light on the disregard shown by many mutual fund managers and directors for the individuals who invest their hard-earned money in mutual funds. They have also drawn attention to inflated mutual fund fees that often are not in the best interests of mutual fund shareholders and too frequently are not properly disclosed to such shareholders.

The Mutual Fund Reform Act would improve the integrity of the mutual fund industry by restoring investors' trust in the mutual fund managers and boards that are responsible for investing much of our citizens' household, college, and retirement savings. Most importantly, the act would strengthen the governance of mutual funds by, among other things, ensuring that mutual fund company boards would be truly independent and empowered. In addition, the act would establish disclosure requirements designed to provide mutual fund investors with a clearer picture of fund management and fund fees.

I thank Senator FITZGERALD for introducing this important bill, and I

urge my colleagues to support this legislation in order to further encourage investor confidence in the mutual fund industry and in our capital markets.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

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

WHY WE'RE IN IRAQ

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I recently wrote a guest column on "Why We're in Iraq" for The State in Columbia, SC. I want to share it with my colleagues, and ask that the May 7 article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows.

"WHY WE'RE IN IRAQ"

(By Ernest F. Hollings)

With 760 dead in Iraq and more than 3,000 maimed for life, folks continue to argue over why we are in Iraq—and how to get out.

Now everyone knows what was not the cause of this war. Even President Bush acknowledges that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11. Listing the 45 countries where al Qaeda was operating on Sept. 11 (70 cells in the United States), the State Department did not list Iraq.

Richard Clarke, in "Against All Enemies," tells how the United States had not received any threat of terrorism for 10 years from Saddam at the time of our invasion. On page 231, John McLaughlin of the CIA verifies this to Paul Wolfowitz. In 1993 President Clinton responded to Saddam's attempt on the life of President George Herbert Walker Bush by putting a missile down Saddam's intelligence headquarters in Baghdad. Not a big kill, but Saddam got the message: Monkey around with the United States and a missile lands on his head.

Of course there were no weapons of mass destruction. Israel's intelligence, Mossad, knows what's going on in Iraq. It is the best. It has to know; Israel's survival depends on knowing. Israel long since would have taken us to the weapons of mass destruction if there were any, or if they had been removed. With Iraq no threat, why invade a sovereign country? The answer: President Bush's policy to secure Israel.

Led by Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and Charles Krauthammer, for years there has been a domino school of thought that the way to guarantee Israel's security is to spread democracy in the area. Wolfowitz wrote: "The United States may not be able to lead countries through the door of democracy, but where that door is locked shut by a totalitarian deadbolt, American power may be the only way to open it up." And on another occasion: Iraq as "the first Arab democracy . . . would cast a very large shadow, starting with Syria and Iran but across the whole Arab world."

Three weeks before invasion President Bush stated: "A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example for freedom for other nations in the region."

Every president since 1947 has made a futile attempt to help Israel negotiate peace. But no leadership has surfaced among the Palestinians that can make a binding agreement. President Bush realized his chances at negotiation were no better. He came to office imbued with one thought—re-election. Bush felt tax cuts would hold his crowd together and spreading democracy in the Mideast to secure Israel would take the Jewish vote from the Democrats.

You don't come to town and announce your Israel policy is to invade Iraq. But George W. Bush, as stated by former Secretary Paul O'Neill and others, started laying the groundwork to invade Iraq days after inauguration. And, without any Iraq connection to 9/11, within weeks he had the Pentagon outlining a plan to invade Iraq. He was determined.

President Bush thought taking Iraq would be easy. Wolfowitz said it would take only seven days. Cheney believed we would be greeted as liberators. But Cheney's man, Ahmed Chalabi, made a mess of the de-Baathification of Iraq by dismissing Republican Guard leadership and Sunni leaders, who soon joined with the insurgents.

Worst of all, we tried to secure Iraq with too few troops. In 1966 in South Vietnam with a population of 16.5 million, Gen. William C. Westmoreland with 535,000 U.S. troops was still asking for more. In Iraq with a population of 24.6 million, Gen. John Abizaid with only 135,000 troops can barely secure the troops, much less the country. If the troops are there to fight, they are too few. If there to die, they are too many.

To secure Iraq we need more troops at least 100,000 more. The only way to get the United Nations back in Iraq is to make the country secure. Once back, the French, Germans and others will join with the United Nations to take over.

With President Bush's domino policy in the Mideast gone awry, he keeps shouting "War on Terror." Terrorism is a method, not a war. We don't call the Crimean War, with the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Cavalry War. Or World War II the Blitzkrieg War. There is terrorism in Ireland against the Brits. There is terrorism in India and in Pakistan. In the Mideast, terrorism is a separate problem to be defeated by diplomacy and negotiation, not militarily.

Here, might does not make right—right makes might. Acting militarily, we have created more terrorism than we have eliminated.

BOYD STEWART: IN MEMORIAM

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I honor and share with my colleagues the memory of a very special man, Boyd Stewart of Marin County, who died April 17, 2004. He was 101 years old.

Boyd Stewart was born at the Old Cottage Hospital in San Rafael in 1903. He grew up in a time when students rode horses to school. His family ran a cattle ranch in Nicasio and then moved it to Olema while Boyd was growing up. After 3 years at Stanford University, he came back to the ranch when his father passed away and managed it for the rest of his adult life.

Boyd Stewart deeply felt the need to preserve open space for future generations, and he knew it could be done in a way that was compatible with agriculture. He was instrumental in the creation of Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Concerned about the loss of farmland to urban development, in the 1960s he advocated the controversial idea that the Federal Government buy West Marin ranches for inclusion in the park and lease them back to the ranchers. His family's ranch transferred ownership to the National Park Service in 1970. For decades he remained committed to his