

EC-8023. A communication from the Legal Advisor to the Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations: Arlington, The Dalles, Moro, Fossil, Astoria, Gladstone, Portland, Tillamook, Coos Bay, Springfield-Eugene, Manzanita, and Hermiston, Oregon; Covington, Trout Lake, Shoreline, Bellingham, Forks, Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Walla Walla, Kent, College Place, Long Beach, and Ilwaco, Washington" (MB Doc. No.) received on June 15, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8024. A communication from the Legal Advisor to the Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.622(b), Table of Allotments, DTV Broadcast Stations: Jackson, MS" (MM Doc. No. 01-43) received on June 15, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8025. A communication from the Legal Advisor to the Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.622(b), Table of Allotments, DTV Broadcast Stations: Anniston, AL" (MB Doc. No. 03-229) received on June 15, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8026. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, Wireline Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Dedicated Short-Range Communication Services in the 5.850-5.925 GHz Band" (5.9GHz Band) received on June 15, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8027. A communication from the Legal Advisor, Wireline Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Rules Governing the Amateur Radio Services" (FCC04-79) received on June 15, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. COCHRAN, from the Committee on Appropriations, without amendment:

S. 2537. An original bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 108-280).

By Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2013. A bill to amend section 119 of title 17, United States Code, to extend satellite home viewer provisions.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. SHELBY for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

*Alan Greenspan, of New York, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

By Mr. HATCH for the Committee on the Judiciary:

Henry W. Saad, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GRAHAM of Florida (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2535. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the medicare program by ensuring that appropriate preventive services are covered under such program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2536. A bill to enumerate the responsibilities of the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of the Department of Homeland Security, to require the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to designate a senior official to investigate civil rights complaints, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COCHRAN:

S. 2537. An original bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself and Mr. DODD):

S. 2538. A bill to provide a grant program to support the establishment and operation of Teachers Institutes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CAMPBELL (for himself, Mr. INOUE, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. SMITH):

S. 2539. A bill to amend the Tribally Controlled Colleges or University Assistance Act and the Higher Education Act to improve Tribal Colleges and Universities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 2540. A bill to protect educational FM radio stations providing public service broadcasting from commercial encroachment; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. McCAIN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. ALLEN):

S. 2541. A bill to reauthorize and restructure the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. EDWARDS):

S. 2542. A bill to provide for review of determinations on whether schools and local educational agencies made adequate yearly progress for the 2002-2003 school year taking into consideration subsequent regulations and guidance applicable to those determinations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THOMAS (for himself and Mr. BURNS):

S. 2543. A bill to establish a program and criteria for National Heritage Areas in the

United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 2544. A bill to provide for the certification of programs to provide uninsured employees of small businesses access to health coverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 2545. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act and title III of the Public Health Service Act to improve access to information about individuals' health care options and legal rights for care near the end of life, to promote advance care planning and decisionmaking so that individuals' wishes are known should they become unable to speak for themselves, to engage health care providers in disseminating information about and assisting in the preparation of advance directives, which include living wills and durable powers of attorney for health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 2546. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require pre-market consultation and approval with respect to genetically engineered foods, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. FRIST (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. Res. 382. A resolution authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Chamber of the United States Senate; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CAMPBELL (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. SMITH, Mr. REID, Mr. DAYTON, and Mr. DEWINE):

S. Con. Res. 119. A concurrent resolution recognizing that prevention of suicide is a compelling national priority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 640

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 640, a bill to amend subchapter III of chapter 83 and chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, to include Federal prosecutors within the definition of a law enforcement officer, and for other purposes.

S. 893

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 893, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to establish provisions with respect to religious accommodation in employment, and for other purposes.

S. 983

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 983, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make

grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

S. 1557

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1557, a bill to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Armenia.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. CAMPBELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to require the mandatory expensing of stock options granted to executive officers, and for other purposes.

S. 1916

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1916, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older, to provide for a one-year open season under that plan, and for other purposes.

S. 2158

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2158, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the supply of pancreatic islet cells for research, and to provide for better coordination of Federal efforts and information on islet cell transplantation.

S. 2176

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2176, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a program of research and development to advance high-end computing.

S. 2253

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2253, a bill to permit young adults to perform projects to prevent fire and suppress fires, and provide disaster relief, on public land through a Healthy Forest Youth Conservation Corps.

S. 2351

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2351, a bill to establish a Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services and a Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council, and for other purposes.

S. 2363

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to revise and extend the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

S. 2434

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Community to develop a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of a National Museum of the American Latino Community in Washington, D.C., and for other purposes.

S. 2447

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2447, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

S. 2474

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2474, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans during the period that a military reservist or national guardsman is called to active duty for an extended period, and for other purposes.

S. 2525

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2525, a bill to establish regional dairy marketing areas to stabilize the price of milk and support the income of dairy producers.

S. 2529

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2529, a bill to extend and modify the trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

S. CON. RES. 8

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 8, a concurrent resolution designating the second week in May each year as "National Visiting Nurse Association Week."

S. CON. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 75, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued to promote public awareness of Down syndrome.

S. CON. RES. 110

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 110, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress in support of the ongoing work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in combating anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, intolerance, and related violence.

S. RES. 311

At the request of Mr. BROWNBAC, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 311, a resolution calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 313

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 313, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate encouraging the active engagement of Americans in world affairs and urging the Secretary of State to coordinate with implementing partners in creating an online database of international exchange programs and related opportunities.

S. RES. 357

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 357, a resolution designating the week of August 8 through August 14, 2004, as "National Health Center Week."

AMENDMENT NO. 3171

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3171 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3235

At the request of Mr. BROWNBAC, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. MILLER) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3235 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities

of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3264

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3264 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3315

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3315 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3352

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3352 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3355

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3355 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3368

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3368 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropria-

tions for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3379

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3379 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3384

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3384 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3397

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3397 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3427

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3427 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3434

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) were

added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3434 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3440

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3440 proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3441

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3441 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3442

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3442 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3443

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3443 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3444

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3444 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe

personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3445

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3445 intended to be proposed to S. 2400, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Services, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED
BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRAHAM of Florida (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2535. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the medicare program by ensuring that appropriate preventive services are covered under such program; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I am very pleased to introduce the Medicare Preventive Services Coverage Act of 2004, and to be joined by Senator RICHARD DURBIN.

This legislation would change the basic charter of Medicare to one that not only diagnoses and treats, but also prevents illness.

On July 30, 1965, Medicare was created under title 18 of the Social Security Act to provide health insurance coverage for the elderly.

The coverage provided through the program was limited to diagnostic and treatment services that were considered reasonable and necessary.

There was little demand to cover preventive services under Medicare or any other health plan at that time because we were not yet cognizant of the vital role of prevention on the health and quality of human life.

The basic charter of Medicare reflects this lack of understanding.

However, since Medicare's inception, we have learned a lot about the enormous burden of chronic disease on our Nation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, more than 1.7 million Americans die of a chronic disease each year, accounting for about 70 percent of all deaths.

Not only does chronic disease lead to a majority of deaths and disabilities in America, it also accounts for about 75 percent of health care costs each year, placing a huge economic demand on our Nation.

Medicare bears a lion's share of this cost. In 2003, Medicare spent nearly \$7,000 per beneficiary; much of this cost is attributable to treating chronic illnesses.

The percentage of the population over age 65 has increased dramatically and will continue to do so. This will place an even greater economic burden on Medicare.

What is the bottom line? In short, Medicare cannot afford this spiraling cost.

The good news is that we now have decades of research demonstrating that although chronic diseases are the most common and costly of all health problems, they are also the most preventable.

For example, according to the CDC regular eye exams and timely treatment could prevent up to 90 percent of diabetes related blindness.

Eye chart screening for visual acuity is currently recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force, USPSTF, but is not covered by Medicare.

The impact of prevention on chronic disease is well known by the President's Secretary for Health and Human Services.

HHS Secretary Thompson said in September 2003:

There is clear evidence that the costs of chronic conditions are enormous, as are the potential savings from preventing them, even if there may not always be agreement on the exact amounts of these cost savings.

He goes on to say:

... the Nation simply cannot afford not to step up efforts to reverse the growing prevalence of chronic disorders. Resources and energy need to be marshaled in all sectors and at all levels of society.

Partnership for Prevention, a Washington, DC, think tank on health policy takes Thompson's comments one step further. A recent Partnership report makes the following logical assumption:

As the primary source of health insurance coverage for millions of older Americans and persons with permanent disabilities, Medicare has the potential to have a substantial impact on the health of beneficiaries by promoting and covering cost-effective preventive services.

Congress has added coverage for some preventive services over the last two decades, including the flu vaccine, mammograms, and cancer screening.

As HHS does not have the authority to add preventive services to Medicare—despite the growing body of evidence that has proved their efficacy—these benefits were only added to Medicare because of congressional action.

The benefits that Congress have added are extremely important, and I am glad that we have taken the steps to make them available to our seniors.

However, the congressional process is slow, and subject to political winds and influences that are not always based purely in science.

The legislation I am introducing would change the basic charter of Medicare from a program focused on diagnosing and treating illnesses to one that also prevents illnesses by giving the Department of Health and Human Services the authority to make coverage decisions for preventive services.

Why change the current system of passing legislation each time we want to add coverage of preventive service to Medicare? There are some very logical reasons.

The reliance on Congress to cover preventive services has resulted in: Coverage for only half of clinical preventive services that experts recommend for the 65+ age group; coverage that not only fails to keep up with changes in scientific evidence but is often in consistent with authoritative recommendations; a confusing array of cost sharing requirements across covered preventive services; and lack of coverage of some preventive services that provide great health benefits in favor of others that do not meet current evidence standards as a result of vocal advocacy groups.

Luckily, the fundamental reform of the program that I am proposing does not require extensive statutory or bureaucratic change.

Medicare already has a process in place for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make coverage decisions on diagnostic, treatment, and durable medical equipment options.

My bill would authorize the Secretary to make coverage decisions on preventive services using that same process, based on the recommendations of the federally-convened United States Preventive Services Task Force, USPSTF, and other groups.

This authorization would not entail dramatic new administrative expenses or a major reorganization of CMS coverage processes and staff.

My legislation would put preventive services on an equal footing with diagnostic and treatment services by allowing the Secretary to make coverage decisions for all services needed to prevent, diagnose, and treat illness.

Providing beneficiaries with the most cost-effective and current preventive services should no longer require an "Act of Congress."

It should, instead, require the insight of the experts in the field, and be based on the same careful process HHS is currently using.

Let us untie their hands and improve the lives of our Medicare beneficiaries by building coverage of preventive services into the currently established coverage decision process.

This legislation is supported by the following groups: American College of Preventive Medicine; HealthPartners; Deafness Research Foundation; Partnership for Prevention; American Dietetic Association; American Public Health Association; Families USA; American Physical Therapy Association; American Academy of Family Physicians; United Cerebral Palsy Association; National Mental Health Association; Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and the Emergency Department Practice Management Association.

If Medicare were created today, it would certainly not exclude coverage of preventive services.

Today we know how important preventive services are; they save money and lives. Let us give Medicare the authority to do its job.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this important piece of legislation.