

National Black Police Association
 National League of Cities
 US Conference of Mayors
 National Association of Counties
 US Conference of Catholic Bishops
 National Education Association
 American Bar Association
 NAACP
 Americans for Gun Safety
 Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
 United with the Million Mom March
 Church Women United
 Episcopal Church, USA
 American Academy of Family Physicians
 American Public Health Association
 Family Violence Prevention Fund
 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 National Network to End Domestic Violence
 National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
 National Association of Social Workers
 Physicians for a Violence Free Society
 American Association of Suicidology
 Mothers Against Violence in America
 Child Welfare League of America
 Alliance for Justice

PHARMACEUTICAL MARKET ACCESS AND DRUG SAFETY ACT OF 2004

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S. 2328, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2004, and to explain my reasons for becoming a cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation, which was introduced by Senators DORGAN and SNOWE earlier this year. My decision to cosponsor this bill has come after serious and careful deliberation. I know that there are many who oppose the importation of prescription drugs, and I have carefully considered their arguments.

However, I have come to the conclusion that this bill can be helpful to ensuring that Americans have access to the drugs they need, with the peace of mind that the medications they are taking—or giving to a family member—are safe.

Mr. President, all of us are aware of the unfortunate news released over the last several weeks about the state of health care in our country. In many respects, we have the greatest health system in the world, but far too many Americans are unable to take advantage of this system. According to data released by the Census Bureau in August, 45 million Americans were without health insurance in 2003—an increase of 1.4 million over 2002. The primary reason for the continued increase in the number of uninsured is that employers are dropping their health coverage. That's right Mr. President, most of the newly-uninsured are working Americans.

Employers are not dropping health coverage out of malice they are doing so because they can no longer afford to provide this benefit. Year after year, health care costs increase by double digit percentages. The cost of employer-sponsored coverage increased by 14 percent in 2003. And year after year, the increase in the cost of prescription drugs stands out as a driver of the

overall cost increase. Over the last three years, drug costs have increased by over 50 percent.

Mr. President, I do not subscribe to or participate in the attacks on our prescription drug industry. The American drug industry is an extraordinary success story. As a result of the innovations that this industry has spawned, millions of lives have been improved and saved in our country and around the globe. Because of the importance of these medicines to our health and well-being, I have consistently supported sound public policies to help the industry to succeed.

These policies include authoring a successful statute to ensure that drug manufacturers receive appropriate incentives for ensuring that their products are safe and effective for children. I have also co-authored legislation to make sure that new drugs can more swiftly move through the approval pipeline and move quickly into the hands of the patients who need them. I have worked to create a fair balance between the need to protect drug patents for their full patent life, and the need to ensure that generic pharmaceuticals are able to come to market when that patent life has expired. I have always encouraged pharmaceutical research and development. I have also supported trade agreements to help open international markets for American pharmaceuticals. The American pharmaceutical industry is the best in the world, and it has succeeded, and will continue to succeed, in a competitive global environment.

Prescription drugs are an absolutely integral part of our health care system. I am proud that many of these medicines are made in my home state of Connecticut. But Mr. President, I am saddened that such a basic and necessary part of modern health care is becoming unaffordable for the average American—including many thousands of men, women, and children in Connecticut. Americans should not be put in the position of choosing whether to purchase groceries or medicine. And yet I have talked to far too many of my constituents who are faced with that choice every day.

We have an obligation to seek opportunities to lower drug costs. I was disappointed that such an opportunity was missed during our consideration of the Medicare Modernization Act. That law now prohibits the Federal government from using its purchasing power to bargain for lower drug prices. Such a measure is inconsistent with the economic principle of competition that is fundamental to our economy.

We are now faced with another opportunity to control prescription drug costs by allowing the importation of FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada and other industrialized nations. I have long taken the position that drug importation should only be allowed if we can ensure that it is safe. I do not want affordable medicines to come at the cost of quality and safety

for American consumers. I have looked at every importation proposal with these priorities in mind.

Mr. President, Senate bill 2328, while not perfect, is a sensible approach to the issue of drug importation. I believe that it addresses the safety concerns that have been raised in the past, and in my discussions with opponents of this bill, I have yet to hear an argument that makes me believe that the medicines imported under this bill would be unsafe. In fact, I believe that it has the potential to be significantly safer for American consumers than the status quo. Currently, an American can easily go on the Internet and order drugs from another country. But there is no guarantee that these drugs are safe, and no way to prevent these drugs from entering the country. We are being flooded with counterfeit and compromised medicines, and people are being hurt.

Under the Dorgan-Snowe bill, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would be given the authority and resources necessary to make drug importation a safe proposition. Importers would be required to register with the FDA, so Americans can know where it is safe to purchase imported medicines.

Mr. President, with the issue of safety addressed, this really becomes an issue about what is best and what is fair for American consumers. At the moment, Americans pay significantly more for prescription drugs than those in other industrialized nations. Based on that fact, it is my belief that we should work toward a more open global market for prescription drugs, just as we do for countless other products that we trade internationally.

As I mentioned earlier, I am confident that the American drug industry can compete with that of any other nation. I am committed to ensuring that this continues to be true. We should, in my view, take steps to bring about fairer trade, freer trade, and safer trade for prescription medicines. This legislation represents one such step.

I intend to continue to talk to all interested parties about this bill. If safety concerns should arise in the future that have not been previously considered, I will do everything in my power to address them with the sponsors of this legislation. But it is past time for us to do something about the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs, and I support this bill as a step in the right direction.

GARRETT LEE SMITH MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to Senator SMITH and his family, as yesterday marked the 1-year anniversary of Garrett's passing and today would have been his 23rd birthday. The Smith family has endured a terrible tragedy, but has taken their loss and their pain and committed themselves to raising public awareness about youth suicide and

the need for appropriate mental health services.

Senator SMITH has also worked tirelessly these past few months to move the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. During a time of partisanship and divisiveness, a majority of members in the House and Senate have been able to set aside those differences to help expeditiously move this important legislation.

I have had the honor and pleasure of working with my colleague from Oregon on this very personal tribute since the beginning. As my colleagues may recall, this legislation is comprised of two separate legislative initiatives that were introduced earlier this year, the Youth Suicide Early Intervention and Prevention Expansion Act, sponsored by Senators DODD and DEWINE and the Campus Care and Counseling Act, which I introduced along with Senator DEWINE.

The legislation takes a comprehensive approach to the increasing problem of suicide among our youth as well as providing additional resources to our Nation's colleges and universities as they struggle to offer the kinds of support students need to grow and achieve academically as well as personally. Information, outreach and access to mental and behavioral health services is becoming an increasingly important part of that equation.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act contains many important provisions that I hope will help to stem the growing numbers of youth suicides in this country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide and self-inflicted injuries remain a pressing public health concern. We hope this legislation will help to change this by enabling States, local communities and institutions of higher education to implement effective youth suicide prevention and intervention strategies.

Two months ago, a unanimous Senate passed the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. Since that time, the bill has undergone what I would consider to be considerable changes to address concerns raised by Energy and Commerce Chairman Barton and others.

I have always been willing to entertain and accommodate issues that have been raised that have related to the substance of this bill. I am deeply concerned, however, by the insistence of some in the other body to inject partisan ideology in this bill.

Just prior to the August recess, a few members of the other body scuttled movement on the bill when they insisted on adding language that would create a new parental consent standard, layered onto one that has been in law, under the General Education Provisions Act, GEPA, which was recently updated as part of the No Child Left Behind Act.

While the majority has made it clear they will not abide changes in other parts of the No Child Left Behind Act, even common sense fixes that school

administrators, principals, teachers, and parents have been called for, they insisted on language—which could prevent the very young people we are trying to help from accessing the mental health services they need.

We worked in good faith over the past month to come up with a compromise, and while the language has improved from the version initially proposed, it still raises some fundamental concerns.

I am appreciative of the efforts of Senator SMITH to add a clarification that the language has no impact on the No Child Left Behind Act. Unfortunately, the language does not include a similar assurance on the standards for parental notice and consent included under sections 444 and 445 of the General Education Provisions Act.

As a result, we have created a different standard for assessments, programs, and services in elementary and secondary schools relating to youth suicide, as compared to other health and mental health assessments, programs, and services that occur in our schools. Not only does this language set a new precedent, we are adding a confusing and burdensome layer of requirements on school personnel at a time when they are struggling to meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act and trying to do the best they can to help our young people.

However, in recognizing how important the overall bill is to our Nation's young people and college students, and the commitment of the Senator from Oregon to address this language in the future, I support passage of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. I praise my colleagues in both Chambers for their continued diligence on this bill and appreciate the willingness of the majority and minority leaders to set aside time so that this important piece of legislation can finally move to the President's desk.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF SUMMIT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ASHLAND, KY

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today with great pride to ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to one of Kentucky's fine elementary schools, Summit Elementary of Ashland, KY. On June 22, 2004, the Schools of Distinction Awards program gave Summit Elementary an Award of Distinction for their dedication to excellence in education.

The Schools of Distinction Awards program was created by Intel Corporation, Scholastic Inc., and the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Foundation, to recognize the finest K through 12 schools in the United States. Winners of the program's awards are selected based on their implementation of creative programs that foster improvement in education.

Summit Elementary School received the award for its practice of involving the parents of schoolchildren in the educational process. As the father of nine children, I am aware of the great importance of parental involvement in education. It can't be overestimated. It is a motivator to the children, a guidance to the teachers and a helping hand to all involved. I believe that any school which recognizes the need for parental involvement is on the right track and certainly deserves a School of Distinction Award.

In closing, I thank, not only Summit Elementary, but the parents, teachers, and students of this fine institution. The effort they have all put into ensuring that the future of America is bright is a blessing on us all.●

COMMEMORATING LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF MICHIGAN FOR 70 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I, along with my esteemed colleague Senator STABENOW, congratulate Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, LSSM, on its 70th anniversary. We are delighted to recognize LSSM's impressive history of compassion and good will in Michigan. We would also like to recognize and honor LSSM's staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts and outstanding commitment to helping those in need.

LSSM's legacy of service dates back to the early years of the 20th century when the Lutheran churches in Detroit formed the Missionsbund, a society dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance in Detroit. The Lutheran Inner Mission League of Greater Detroit grew out of this effort and was soon thereafter called the Lutheran Charities and formally incorporated in 1934. Under the leadership of its first executive director, the Rev. Carl E. Schaffnit, its efforts included child welfare work, a settlement house, and services to the elderly. By 1959 Lutheran Charities gained a new name, the Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, and has since expanded its mission to serve others in the name of faith with 80 programs in 44 cities throughout Michigan's lower peninsula.

Over 20,000 people from diverse backgrounds feel the warm embrace of LSSM on an annual basis by utilizing the many services it has to offer. LSSM's excellence can be seen by the success of its programs in the realm of foster care, adoption, childcare, subsidized housing, nursing homes, community centers, and services to the homeless, refugees, and persons with developmental disabilities. Its efforts to preserve and enhance human dignity across Michigan have created hope for so many. We share this organization's vision for a community that upholds human dignity, decries complacency and affirms equality and justice. We are sure that our Senate colleagues will join us in offering our heartfelt