

end of it, you didn't feel good about it. He had a way of doing it without being mean, but when you heard him—and he never attacked anyone but he did it in terms of what they stood for, what they were saying—you heard it and you realized McCarthy was right. He had a refreshing and disarming way about him in his approach to politics. He made his point and he made it well.

I do not know if my friend from Minnesota repeated the quote that was attributed to him in the newspaper that I read the other day, which I thought was McCarthy at his best. He said one time that being a politician is sometimes like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to know how to play the game but dumb enough to think it's important.

Those of us who think all the things we do here are so grandiose should realize we pass on and others take our place. A lot of the things we do here, we may think are important and they are not that important.

So that was Gene McCarthy. He would say things that made you smile, made you think about things.

I say to my friend from Minnesota, I got out of the Navy in November of 1967 and I returned home to Iowa in 1968. At that point I was not active in politics. But like so many of my colleagues and friends in the Navy, I lost a lot of my friends in Vietnam. Slowly but surely over the 5 years that I was on active duty, I became convinced that the war in Vietnam should not go on, that it was wrong, that we ought to get out of there.

But, of course, I was in the Navy at the time. I couldn't say anything about it. I was a Navy person. So I thought, well, now that I am out maybe I can do something. I was looking for someone to give me advice. I was looking for someone out there who would stand up and take the lead on this—Gene McCarthy. Gene McCarthy was the first politician I ever met who wasn't afraid to say the "emperor has no clothes." And once he did that, people realized, you are right; that this war in Vietnam was nonsensical, that we ought to bring an end to it. He encouraged a lot of young people. And I can still remember, and I will bet the Senator from Minnesota has the same memory. I had one of those daisies on the trunk of my car, a blue and white daisy with "McCarthy" on it. That was in 1968.

I think he brought a lot of young people in and gave a lot of young people encouragement that they could change the system and that they could make a difference.

Through his later years I became a friend of Gene McCarthy. In fact, when I ran for President in 1991, he was running again. So we found ourselves running against each other.

As we were both fading and Bill Clinton was winning everything, he drew me aside one time and said: Do you ever wonder why we are still here and what we are doing?

I said: Yes; I do wonder that sometimes.

He said: Well, we are here because the liberal position needs to be enunciated and fought for regardless of who the nominee is.

I am paraphrasing, but that is the way I remember him saying that.

I just wanted to take the time to commiserate with my good friend, Senator DAYTON, about a wonderful human being, a truly remarkable U.S. Senator, one of the most intelligent individuals to ever grace the floor of the U.S. Senate, and to remember his legacy, the legacy of having the courage of your convictions, of standing up for what you think is right, and once in a while don't take ourselves too seriously.

That was the Gene McCarthy I knew and loved. We will remember him always.

I thank my colleague from Minnesota for taking the time today to remember our good friend and departed colleague.

Mr. DAYTON. I think Senator McCarthy would be very impressed with the extemporaneous eloquence of the Senator from Iowa and very appreciative of his kind words. Of course, Iowa has the first Presidential contest. Back in those days, I would have seen a lot more of Senator McCarthy.

Mr. HARKIN. He would have taken me to task for talking so long. He would have said: You could have said that in 2 minutes.

Mr. DAYTON. I thank my friend.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

RECONCILIATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I know that a motion to appoint conferees has not happened yet on the reconciliation bill, but I understand that the majority leader will sometime today be making that motion. It is a debatable motion, and obviously an amendable motion. I think there are maybe four or five different motions to instruct our conferees regarding the reconciliation bill.

I want to take the time now to talk about it, even though I have an amendment, but it is not timely to send the amendment to the desk. But I do want to talk about what that amendment will do and why I am going to be offering it.

Basically, it has to do with funding cuts for food assistance programs.

It has been a challenging year for all of us, especially here in the Senate. There have been many things upon which this Chamber disagreed. We have had some spirited debates and disagreements. The budget debate and ensuing reconciliation bill has been one of the most challenging of these debates.

But there are also times when agreement rather than discord characterize our proceedings.

While I disagreed with the underlying reconciliation bill passed by the Senate, I was pleased and proud of one of the sources of bipartisan agreement that we had both in committee and on the floor. It was the decision by the Senate not to cut food assistance programs for working Americans, for low-income working Americans.

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry considered such cuts. In fact, the President's budget included a proposal to cut the Food Stamp Program by nearly \$600 million. But after careful examination of the Food Stamp Program, after deliberation in the committee, both Republicans and Democrats decided against any cuts to the Food Stamp Program.

I commend today, as I did at that time, our chairman, Senator CHAMBLISS, for listening carefully to committee members' concerns by looking at this and for his conscientious decision not to include any such cuts in the committee-passed measure.

I commend as well many members of both parties who have objected to cutting food assistance programs through the reconciliation process.

There are many reasons food stamp cuts should not be enacted.

First, the Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense in the United States against hunger and food insecurity, providing food assistance to nearly 25 million Americans. It is also one of our largest child nutrition programs. Eighty percent of food stamp benefits—over \$23 billion in 2005—go to families with children.

Another reason cutting food assistance is not appropriate is because the need is growing and not diminishing.

Just recently, a U.S. Agriculture Department study found that 38.2 million people lived in households that were food insecure in 2004, and that the number increased by nearly 2 million between 2003 and 2004.

Since 1999, the number of individuals classified by USDA as food insecure rose by 7 million people. These are significant numbers.

That any American should live in the shadow of hunger at the dawn of the 21st century is shocking and embarrassing. That the number has increased dramatically in the past 5 years is unacceptable.

We have also been reminded of another reason we shouldn't have food stamp cuts. We have been reminded by the numerous hurricanes and disasters this fall of the tremendous role that the Food Stamp Program plays in times of emergency. The Food Stamp Program rapidly provided emergency food assistance to approximately 2.2 million individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, allowing victims to obtain food assistance within days.

Finally, the Senate Agriculture Committee chose not to cut the Food

Stamp Program because there is not much to cut. It operates efficiently and effectively.

For 5 years in a row, the error rate in the Food Stamp Program has declined to consecutive all-time lows.

Frankly, if there were fraud, waste, and abuse to go after, I would be the first in line to do so.

I say that because I have been on this Agriculture Committee in both the House and the Senate—this marks my 30th year. We have gone through a lot in the Food Stamp Program in that time. We have cut and trimmed. We have gone from food stamps to an electronic benefits card to cut down on fraud, waste, and abuse. It has worked well.

We have a program that by any measurement operates efficiently.

The farm bill we passed in 2002 included a major reform to the quality control system. Just last year, Congress made improvements to Federal child nutrition programs. Again, because of this bipartisan approach, which I believe kind of goes back to the Dole-McGovern years when they forged an alliance to ensure we had a bipartisan agreement on the Food Stamp Program, we have a sound, efficiently, effectively run program. There just is not any—I would not say there isn't any, but to go after what little abuse there may be would cost more than what is happening. We have tightened down on this program over the last 30 years. There is not much fraud, waste, and abuse to go after, so if Congress wants to make any cuts in the Food Stamp Program, they have to go after benefits.

I am pleased to say that was not an option either in the Senate Agriculture Committee or that the Senate wanted to consider.

However, not so across the Capitol. The House of Representatives passed a reconciliation bill that makes significant cuts to the Food Stamp Program of approximately \$700 million. According to CBO, the Food Stamp Program cuts contained in the House reconciliation bill would eliminate food stamp benefits for at least 250,000 individuals. These are mainly working families with children and legal immigrants.

Right now in the Food Stamp Program, if you are a legal immigrant—forget about illegal immigrants; illegal immigrants have no access to the Food Stamp Program. I hear that all the time, but they have no access to it and they cannot get an electronic benefit card. But a legal immigrant must be here 5 years before that person can qualify for food stamps. That is the law right now. Now, they still have to meet standards. In other words, they still have to meet the standards of anyone else to be eligible, such as income standards, asset standards, and work requirements. They still have to meet these standards. Even if they meet these standards, they still have to wait 5 years.

The House extended it to 7 years. These are legal immigrants. These are

people we want here. What does the sign on the Statue of Liberty say? Give me your tired, your poor. A lot of these people are tired, they are poor, but they are here to build a better life. They are working, they are legal, and their kids are in school here. Yet we want to make it even tougher.

The second thing they did is they changed the system whereby States have said, Okay, if you qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, then you automatically qualify for food stamps. It makes sense. In the 1990s we made a change to allow the States to align their programs. If you qualified for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, then you used to have to go to another office to qualify for food stamps. It was twice the paperwork, twice the administrative burdens. We said, Why go through all of that? So we made a change that streamlined the program.

The House takes that out. The House bill takes a step backward from welfare reform. We put this in there for welfare reform back in the 1990s; they take a step backward. We tried to change it so we would move low-income families from welfare to work.

One of the provisions was to provide allow TANF recipients to automatically qualify for food stamps. The House now takes that away. It makes no sense. In fact, it will increase the burden on States. They will have to spend more money, and we will probably have to take people that now qualify off the food stamp rolls. These are low-income people who work and make money who now qualify because they qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Yet these are the very people for whom we want to build a bridge. We want to get them off welfare and get them to work. A lot of times, part of that bridge is food stamps and making sure families have enough food to eat.

So all of the cuts the House made retreat from the bipartisan agreements Congress made in recent years to streamline and make the Food Stamp Program more effective and to make welfare reform work.

When the majority leader makes his motion to instruct conferees, I will be back in the Senate to offer a motion to instruct conferees on the reconciliation conference committee to reject cuts to Federal food assistance programs. I might add that we should have a lot of bipartisan support. Senator SMITH of Oregon and I are joining together to offer this amendment to instruct.

There was also a letter written by a number of Republican Senators recently asking that we not make cuts in the Food Stamp Program. I hope we can have a strong vote on this. We should have a recorded vote. I will ask for a recorded vote to send a strong signal to the House of Representatives that the Senate will not accept their food stamp cuts. By voting for this motion to instruct, the Senate can show

that it stands side by side with working families, that we do not want to retreat from welfare reform. We do not want to retreat from the changes we have made to make this program meaningful and effective.

I will offer that motion at some point, I hope today—whenever the majority leader makes a motion to instruct the conferees.

LIHEAP

There are a couple of other items on which there will be motions made. There will be a motion offered by Senators COLLINS and REED, again, to instruct conferees to add \$2.92 billion in funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. That is the amount required to bring LIHEAP up to its authorized level.

The House reconciliation bill provides an additional \$1 billion for LIHEAP. Unfortunately, because of the way the program works, my home state of Iowa would not receive additional funding under the House bill. My State of Iowa gets pretty darn cold, I can tell you. Last weekend I was out there, and it was 6 above zero.

In contrast, the level of funding provided in the Reed-Collins amendment provides an additional \$24 million for LIHEAP in Iowa, money that I can say is desperately needed.

Last weekend when I was out there, I met with some families who have applied and have been qualified for LIHEAP. There was one woman with two children who lives in a rented house. She gets no child support from her husband. She works full time every day. The kids go to school. She has a low-income job. She qualified for LIHEAP at \$319.

I mentioned that later on to someone, that I met this person who qualified for \$319 LIHEAP. This individual said to me: Well, that is pretty good; that will take care of her heating bills for the month. But it is \$319 for the year. A year. For Iowa, that means you have to buy heat in October, November, December, January, February, March, April—6, 7 months. That is \$319 to help pay heating for 7 months. This individual thought that was for 1 month. I said: No, no, that is \$319 for the year. And the price of natural gas—we heat with natural gas in Iowa—has gone up 40 percent in the last year. This program is desperately needed.

According to the Hawkeye Area Community Assistance Program in southeast Iowa, LIHEAP funds are likely to run out in mid-January, one of the coldest months of the year. Last week, I held a discussion in Spencer, IA, to hear firsthand from some citizens. Again, I want to tell you, these people are not just concerned about the high cost of home heating; they are in panic.

Now, because of a State law, they are not going to have utilities cut off. But in order to qualify and pay their bills, they may have to cut other necessities, such as medical care, prescription drugs, clothes, other things.

One of the women I spoke with is on disability. She is on an "even pay" program. This is where you pay the same amount every month so you do not get hit with a big bill in the wintertime. Last year, with LIHEAP assistance, she paid 9 percent of her income on heat—9 percent for heat. This year she figures it will be about 13 percent. Her "even pay" monthly bill—get this—last year was \$39 a month. This year it is \$68 a month, a 75-percent increase. This is a person with a disability, living alone, trying to heat her house.

For another woman, her even-pay bill was \$72 a month last year. This year it is \$84 a month. The testimony I listened to from these women is backed up by hard data. According to a statewide Iowa survey, more than 20 percent of households receiving LIHEAP report going without needed medical care or prescription drugs—1 out of 5. More than 10 percent reported going without food in order to pay their heating bill. And I can tell you the numbers are going to skyrocket this winter.

Last winter, about 86,000 Iowa households received an average of \$317 in LIHEAP assistance. Keep in mind that is for the year. Most years, everyone who applies gets some level of assistance. But this year we are not so certain of that.

Community services agencies are being deluged with calls from panicked senior citizens and others who simply do not know how they are going to stay warm. Many have had their utilities cut off and they cannot make the past-due payments to get them turned back on. Others are being threatened with cutoffs just as we head into winter.

Of course, the catch-22 situation most people do not understand is that you cannot qualify for LIHEAP if your gas or electricity has been cut off. Let's say you did not make your payments this summer, so they did not connect you back up. You cannot qualify for LIHEAP now.

The other thing is a lot of low-income families who live in a small town or rural area, such as I do, heat their home using propane. I have a propane tank outside my house. That is how we heat our houses in small towns. Well, when they deliver propane, you pay for the whole thing at one time. That is unlike natural gas, for which once you have it coming in, they cannot cut you off. If you cannot pay your propane bill, you do not get it delivered. That hurts poor people in small towns such as mine. That is another thing we have to remember as to people who live in small towns and communities who heat their homes with propane.

We can do better. We need to boost the LIHEAP funding. I hope the motion that will be offered by Senator COLLINS and Senator REED to instruct the conferees to add \$2.92 billion in funding for LIHEAP will again be supported by an overwhelming majority of the Senate.

Mr. President, there is one last one. A motion will be offered by Senator KOHL to instruct conferees to reject

cuts in the Child Support Enforcement Program. Again, in the Senate last month when we debated the reconciliation bill, I offered a sense-of-the-Senate amendment opposing the House's drastic plan to gut the successful child support program—a \$4.9 billion cut. The Senate accepted it on a voice vote, which around here is tantamount to unanimously accepting something.

It is not right, it is not ethical, it is not moral to cut a program that gave crucial funds to over 17 million children last year. But the bill approved by the House would slash funding for child support enforcement efforts by 40 percent over the next 10 years.

Again, CBO estimates that as a result of these cuts, more than \$24 billion in delinquent payments will go uncollected in the next 10 years. This is money that goes directly to feed and clothe children. The biggest negative impacts will be felt by children living in poverty and children in low-income households. In my home State of Iowa, it is estimated that collections will drop by more than a third in the first year.

Now, keep in mind, this is not Government money going out for child support. This is the Government money we send out to States to help them collect child support from deadbeat dads. I think that is something we all support. Yet if you take away the funding that helps them go out and collect it, CBO estimates \$24 billion will go uncollected in the next 10 years.

For families in poverty who receive child support, those payments account for an average of 30 percent of their income.

Why is the House doing this? Why would the House want to pull the rug out from underneath our efforts to collect child support payments—child support payments that benefit the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, neglected children in our society? Well, they are doing it in order to make room for yet another \$60 billion in tax cuts—tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit our wealthiest citizens.

Child support payments helped lift more than 1 million Americans out of poverty in 2002. As a result of what the House did, many of these people—and these are mostly children—will go back into poverty. This is cruel. It is counterproductive. Talk about penny wise and pound foolish. Because you take this away, these families will fall back into poverty. They then will end up on food stamps, Medicaid, TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, other forms of public assistance—unless you cut those, too. And guess what. The House bill cuts food stamps, cuts Medicaid, disconnects the food stamps from the TANF program. Think about what the House is doing here.

According to the Office of Management and Budget, for every \$1 we spend on child support, \$4.38 is recovered for families in child support payments. Not a bad deal. The President even praised this program.

Reforms have made the program effective. Since 1996, there has been an 82-percent increase in collections. With the House cut, deadbeat parents get off, kids suffer, and the goal of self-sufficiency becomes less attainable for more custodial parents trying to stay off of welfare.

Cutting this program is outrageous. I urge my colleagues again to send a loud and clear message to the House and the American people that the Senate will not accept these cuts in the Child Support Enforcement Program.

Again, I wanted to talk about those three. Now I will offer one motion with Senator SMITH. Senator KOHL is going to offer another. Senator REED of Rhode Island and Senator COLLINS will be offering another.

Last evening, we met, conferees met on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill. As you know, the Senate passed their version. The conference was abysmal in that the House insisted on all their provisions. It went back to the House. The House defeated it. So we went back to conference again last night.

I pointed out that there are three avenues of cuts that are going to hurt low-income families right before Christmas, at least Christmas to those of us who are of the Christian faith. Think about what is happening right before Christmas.

We are going to cut programs for some of the most vulnerable of our citizens in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill. We are cutting Head Start. We are cutting assistance programs in health. We are cutting programs such as LIHEAP that give people a little hope that they will have enough money to pay their fuel bills. We have all these cuts coming in the Labor-HHS bill.

But that is not the end of it. We now have this reconciliation bill that is going to cut the very things I talked about—the child support enforcement program, Medicaid, food stamp cuts. So we are going to whack the poor right before Christmas with the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. We give them another backhand in the reconciliation bill, if we take what the House has. And then there is one more coming. It is my understanding that the DOD appropriations bill will have a 1-percent across-the-board cut in these discretionary programs, another cut to the most vulnerable of our citizens.

So right before Christmas, we say to the poor in this country, to the low-income families working and struggling to pay their heating bills, keep their families together, trying to make it through the winter: Hang your stockings. And guess what this Congress is going to put in them. Three lumps of coal.

That is what we are doing to the poor. I can't believe we are doing this right before Christmas. Yet right before Christmas, we are going to try to enact a tax cut of which over 50 percent goes to people making over \$1 million. If my figures are right, I think

less than 7 percent of the money in the tax cuts goes to people making less than \$50,000 a year. Ninety percent goes to people making over \$100,000 a year. The most vulnerable people work for the minimum wage, people who are making 8 bucks an hour. Guess what that is a year? That is 16,000 bucks a year. Try feeding two or three kids on that.

I don't understand how we can do this at this time of year. I don't understand how we can do it at any time of year. But you would think now our consciences would bother us in making these kinds of cuts. It is almost as if this Congress is trying to rewrite Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol." Remember Scrooge in the "Christmas Carol" has a change of heart at the end and sees clearly what the spirit of Christmas is all about. It is as if this Congress is rewriting Charles Dickens' tale and Scrooge does not have a change of heart right before Christmas. It is as if this Congress, if we proceed down this path—and it looks as though that is where we are headed—truly will be the Scrooge who is stealing the food from young kids, taking away hope that low-income families have, destroying the hope a lot of low-income families have. All for more tax cuts for some of the most privileged people.

We all have friends, a lot of friends who make a lot of money. I don't hear them clamoring for these tax cuts. In fact, what I hear them saying is: Why are you doing this? Why don't you take care of the business of the country? Why don't you do something about education and health care and getting people out of poverty and getting people jobs and getting people work? That would be a better use than giving the rich a few more dollars with which to buy another diamond or a wristwatch that costs \$25,000. I saw a wristwatch advertised in the paper for \$25,000. Why would anyone buy a wristwatch for \$25,000. All it does is tell the time.

I have a watch. It might have cost me about 75 bucks. I have had it for 10 years. I had it repaired once.

I don't mind if people who have a lot of money want to spend it that way. But why are we cutting the taxes for these people and then, to make it up, cutting food stamps? It would be one thing if you could say with a straight face: We have to do it to cut the deficit. But guess what. Under this reconciliation bill the deficit goes up, not down. So with the tax cut we get a bigger deficit. And then we are still cutting food stamps, Medicaid, LIHEAP, and a number of other programs that are out there that help low-income people.

I hope at this time of year especially we will think long and hard about what we are doing around here and that we will come to our senses. The Senate has acted well. We acted in a good, bipartisan fashion to do these things. I hope tomorrow when we vote on the various motions to instruct, we will have that same bipartisan approach as

we had before. Hopefully, there will be a new spirit across the Capitol in that House Members will agree to go along with the Senate provisions and not cut food stamps and LIHEAP and the child support enforcement program, among a number of others.

We await the majority leader making his motion. Until that point, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to advise the American public. We just heard a very eloquent talk by the Senator from Iowa on the motion he plans to offer to instruct conferees on food stamps, but I think it is very important that the American people recognize that 1 out of every 19 people in this country who receive food stamps receive them illegally. In other words, they are not eligible.

In this motion to instruct, it states in No. 5:

The Food Stamp Program operates efficiently and effectively with its error rate at an all-time low.

It is at an all-time low. It is 6.64 percent. In other words, 1 out of 14 who are getting food stamps have an error associated with what they are receiving, or 1 out of 15 or 16. But in terms of overpayments, 5.5 percent of the money spent, \$1.6 billion, is spent on food stamps to people who don't qualify.

An easy way for us to control food stamps is to make the error rate less—in other words, to do a better job—instead of to gloss over and say we don't have a problem here and it is running efficiently and effectively. Anybody else in their own personal budget, if they were paying out 5.5 percent more than what they should be, would be quick to change that.

The Federal financial management oversight subcommittee which I chair had a hearing this year. It is true, they have reduced the error rate some. But a 6.9-percent overall error rate is unacceptable, and a 5.5-percent overpayment rate is highly unacceptable. In a time of tremendous budget deficits, in a time of war, and a time of natural disasters that have hit us greater than we have ever seen, accepting 5.5 percent and saying we can't do better is unacceptable. It is unacceptable by everybody who lives by a budget out there who is an American citizen. For us to have a motion to instruct to say that is good, that is effective, that is efficient, it is not the truth.

We need to be cognizant of the fact that we have a long way to go to help those people who need us with food but at the same time to not help those peo-

ple who are cheating the system, who are squandering money that would otherwise go to people who have needs when those people who don't have needs are stealing from the system. I think it is important for the record to reflect that.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this budget is about choices. We in Congress can choose to protect Medicaid, the Federal safety net for over 50 million Americans, by supporting the Baucus motion to instruct.

Or we can turn our backs on the millions of working families who would otherwise be uninsured without the Federal guarantee of Medicaid benefits by giving States the green light to charge more in monthly premiums than are charged in monthly premiums under Medicare; by allowing Medicaid cost-sharing that can grow six times faster than wages; by permitting States to provide fewer Medicaid benefits to recipients in rural areas than those offered to recipients in urban areas; and by asking hospitals, pharmacists, and other health care providers to continue to participate in the Medicaid program even if they cannot cover their costs.

If the Senate recedes to the House on Medicaid, then we will begin to undo one of the most important social programs of our time. And people and health care providers in our respective States will suffer greatly. In West Virginia, nearly 20 percent of our State's population—over 350,000 people—depend on Medicaid for access to health care.

Not only is it unfair to consider such draconian changes to the Medicaid Program in the context of meeting an arbitrary budget number, it is also unwarranted.

Some of my colleagues have argued that Congress must reduce spending in Medicaid in order to decrease the Federal deficit. I would remind my colleagues that this budget does not decrease the Federal deficit. Instead, this budget could increase the Federal deficit by \$10 to \$20 billion over the next 5 years. And that is not even considering the cost of adding more tax cuts.

Even more important is the fact that there are other options on the table besides Medicaid that provide more than enough savings to meet the \$10 billion budget target set by Congress. Reducing Medicare overpayments to HMOs saves nearly \$12 billion over 5 years alone.

America has a moral obligation to take care of its most vulnerable citizens. Programs that help low-income working families improve their lot in life should be the last resort when it comes to balancing the budget.

Not supporting this motion to instruct fails our Nation's pregnant women, children, the elderly, and the disabled.

I urge my colleagues to support this motion to instruct. The quality of life of 50 million Americans depends, on it.