

I am delighted, through the leadership of Senator INHOFE and the cooperation and leadership of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Senator JEFFORDS, Senator BAUCUS, Senator REID, who worked very closely with me on the last highway bill, we brought our section to the floor as well as the sections from the other committees. We look forward as soon as we can to going back to work on it. We would ask any of our colleagues who have amendments, particularly to our section, you have had a chance to look at it, we have had a chance to work on it. I hope we can move quickly because the time will be short and the bill is important.

With that, I thank the chairman of our committee and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Missouri. He has worked tirelessly, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation of the Environment and Public Works Committee. You always hear that working with Senators is like herding cats. I think we have learned that on this bill. It is very difficult. Of course, by the very nature of the Senate, one person can hold things up. But I don't think there is anything this year we are going to be dealing with that is more important than our highway reauthorization bill.

Last year we passed a good bill out of committee. We were unable to get it out of conference last year. This year I am sure that situation will change.

As we work on it this week, I agree it is an ambitious schedule to get it done, but I am anticipating we are going to have to at some point file cloture. I would certainly tell any of the staff and Members who might be listening that we are open for business. We now have the substitute amendment on the floor so we know what we are working with. We would ask them to bring their amendments down. We can't do anything with an amendment unless we see it, unless we have it before us.

I know what is going to happen if we don't do that. When we come up against some deadlines, trying to get this passed out of here at the end of the week, people are going to be saying they didn't have time. You have time now. We are waiting for you. We want you to bring them down.

The substitute amendment we adopted has some changes in it. We did increase some highway funding by \$8.9 billion. That would be the highway funding portion. That was over the EPW bill that we passed out of the committee that we chair. And it includes a 5.1-percent increase in both the apportioned and allocated programs. It also includes the minimum rate of return for donor States to 91 percent and working up to 92 percent. This is not as ambitious as it was last year, but last year we were dealing with a bill that was \$318 billion over a 6-year period. This is going to be about

251 over the remaining 5 years of the 6-year reauthorization.

Last year's bill, the donee status was improved more dramatically so that for States such as my State of Oklahoma and the State of the Presiding Officer, we would have that up to a minimum of 95 percent. That means we would get back at least 95 percent of that which is collected in our respective States. We can't quite do that with the smaller amount, but certainly it is enhanced a little bit with the amendment we just agreed to consider.

So we have a lot in here, and they are going to be a part of this bill. Again, the only thing that needs to be done right now is for amendments to be brought to the floor. By the way, Senator BOND is right when he says there are a lot of Members who are not happy, and they won't have enough money in their States. I am not happy about the amount of money in Oklahoma. There was a lot of compromising over a 3-year period to get us where we are today. However, if you are not happy, offer an amendment. We will consider it and we will vote on it. That is what the process is all about.

We have a lot to be done in the next 4 days. We expect that we are going to be doing it. We are encouraging people to come down with their amendments.

I chair the EPW committee, but we also have some titles in here by the Banking Committee, the Commerce Committee, and the Finance Committee. We have been talking to those chairmen. I believe they are ready. So we could entertain amendments on any of these sections or any of the titles of the bill.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go into a period of morning business with each Senator permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT ROBERT J. "JASON" GORE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a fellow Iowan who has fallen in service to his country. SGT. Robert J. "Jason" Gore of Nevada, IA, was killed on April 21, when insurgents shot down his helicopter. Jason had already completed one tour in Iraq before he began his tour as a security guard for Blackwater USA. He was only 23 years old and is survived by a mother, father, brother, and grandparents.

Jason grew in Nevada, IA, and chose to attend St. John's Northwestern Military Academy for his last 2 years of high school. Sergeant Gore excelled there in academics, athletics, and leadership, and he was described as a kind young man with a purpose-driven life and a great enthusiasm for the opportunity to serve in the military.

Sergeant Gore's patriotism for his country and zeal for life must be recognized and appreciated today and in days to come. In his honor, I urge all Americans to contemplate their love for this great country and to think about the patriotic ideals which Jason held in such high esteem. In memory of his life and his great sacrifice so willingly made, we are called to rekindle in ourselves the fiery devotion and enthusiasm of SGT. Robert J. Gore. I offer my condolences to the family and friends of Jason who have felt this loss most deeply. Today, their son, brother, grandson, and friend stands as a beacon of enduring patriotism, deserving of emulation by all Americans.

CARE COORDINATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to call the attention of my colleagues to the important issue of improving the coordination of health care for the Nation's senior citizens. As we all know, large numbers of senior citizens receive health care and treatment from several different physicians. In fact, more than half the patients with serious chronic conditions have three or more different physicians.

Too often, a physician seen by a patient is not aware of the tests and prescriptions that other physicians have ordered for the same patient. The result is that the patient receives care that is often duplicative, and may actually be harmful.

We need new ideas on improving care coordination for patients—particularly for senior citizens.

The Boston Globe recently published a thoughtful article by Lois Quam, CEO of the Ovations division of UnitedHealth Group, describing new initiatives to improve the quality of health services provided to senior citizens. It includes a number of worthwhile recommendations, and I urge my colleagues to take the time to read it carefully. We can clearly do better, much better, in this important area of health care.

I ask unanimous consent that the article "Rx For Medicare" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Globe, Mar. 11, 2005]

RX FOR MEDICARE

(By Lois Quam)

Social Security reform will dominate politics and be the subject of much debate for months to come. However, failure to address rising healthcare costs, by changing the way Medicaid and Medicare-funded care is delivered, could undermine efforts to ensure financial security for many retirees.

Over the next 75 years, the government is expected to pay more than \$27 trillion in healthcare benefits promised to seniors seven times its Social Security obligations for that period. Further, a recent analysis by Urban Institute researchers suggests that by 2040, typical seniors might have to spend approximately one-fifth of their Social Security benefits on Medicare premiums.

Simply cutting funds for federal healthcare programs would be shortsighted and potentially devastating to millions of older Americans, including more than 960,000 in Massachusetts. A better way to control costs while improving the quality of healthcare is to rethink the traditional models for delivering care.

Chronically ill patients with five or more medical conditions made up only 20 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries in 2004 but accounted for more than two-thirds of the program's \$302 billion in costs. In any single year, such patients are likely to fill up to 20 separate prescriptions, visit emergency rooms a dozen times or more, and require hospitalization at least five times. Too often these patients must make sense of an array of confusing, even conflicting, information. This fragmentation of care can lead to poor health outcomes that are unnecessarily costly and draining for patients and physicians alike. We can reduce this burden by organizing our resources more efficiently and effectively.

The traditional Medicare and Medicaid fee-for-service systems are structured primarily to provide acute care, not to meet the needs of the chronically ill. These latter patients require comprehensive management of their health, emphasizing coordination of multiple treatments, health maintenance, and prevention of disease. While there has not been any effort to implement a care model of this kind on a national scale, many smaller programs have already demonstrated this approach's value in reducing costs and improving care.

For example, On Lok SeniorHealth, a community-based organization in San Francisco, provides seniors with a complete program of health services preventive, acute, and rehabilitative care along with home healthcare, social services, and such personal assistance as meal delivery, transportation, and help with prescriptions. On Lok's patients report better overall health and fewer acute-care needs and hospitalizations than comparable groups of Medicare beneficiaries.

I have also seen the impact of this care model at my own company. Our Evercare plans identify the most costly, at-risk patients and deliver care within a system of careful monitoring and management. At the heart of this system are practitioners who coordinate multiple services, facilitate communication between providers and patients, and ensure integration of treatments.

Evercare is also working with Massachusetts to ensure this kind of care is brought to seniors living in nursing homes, as well as to home-based elderly and disabled. The Massachusetts Senior Care Options program provides enrollees with hands-on medical care coordination as well as home care support services, such as outfitting the home for special needs, housekeeping, transportation to physicians' offices, and meals.

Again, there is evidence that the model can reduce costly, redundant services while improving patient care. Federally commissioned studies of Evercare programs in several states showed that they slashed hospitalizations in half while gaining a 97 percent satisfaction rating from participating families. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services point to Evercare as the model for the Special Needs Plans included in the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. In Texas, another program using this model saved more than \$100 million in two years and improved seniors' access to services.

The long-term survival of Medicaid and Medicare may depend on the wide adoption of this approach, whether it is offered by private companies such as Ovations or not-for-profit programs like On Lok. We have an opportunity to do so for the chronically ill within the framework of the Medicare Mod-

ernization Act's Special Needs plans. However, both the public and private sectors need to do a much better job of analyzing the effectiveness of alternative-care models and applying evidence-based lessons on a nationwide basis.

By working together, public and private leaders have the opportunity to improve the quality of life for more than 41 million older Americans and conserve Medicare resources. This issue also affects younger generations, who must have the security of knowing that their parents, and then they themselves, will be well cared for as they age. But we need to move quickly, beginning this year. If we wait until Washington deals with Social Security and other issues on its agenda, we may simply run out of time.

NOMINATION OF JOHN BOLTON

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of John Bolton, the President's nominee for U.S. representative to the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador.

The President, together with his principal Cabinet officers, has put together an extraordinary national security team. John Bolton will be a valuable addition to this team.

The President and his Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, have expressed their confidence that John Bolton has the experience and skills to represent the United States at the United Nations and to carry out the President's priorities to strengthen and reform the U.N. I concur in the confidence they placed in the nominee.

John Bolton has had a long and distinguished career in public service and in the private sector. Most recently, he has served for the past 4 years as the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs. In that capacity, Secretary Bolton worked to build a coalition of over 60 countries to help combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction through the Proliferation Security Initiative, PSI. He was a leader in creating the G8 Global Partnership to, in effect, "multilateralize" the Nunn-Lugar nuclear threat reduction concept by inviting other nations to join the United States in helping to eliminate and safeguard dangerous weapons and technologies which remain in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Previously, John Bolton has served as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, as an Assistant Attorney General in the Department of Justice, and many years ago he held several senior positions in the Agency for International Development. He has also had a distinguished legal career in the private sector.

Mr. Bolton has at times advocated or represented controversial positions which have sparked controversy. But he has done so with a frankness and assertiveness that demonstrate his strongly held beliefs. As this committee, and later the full Senate, considers this nomination, we should keep in mind the words of Secretary Rice: "The President and I have asked John Bolton to do this work because he

knows how to get things done. He is a tough-minded diplomat, he has a strong record of success and he has a proven track record of effective multilateralism . . . John, you have my confidence and that of the President."

Given the enormity of problems facing the U.N. today, we have an obligation to send a strong-minded individual to help constructively to solve these problems and to regain the confidence of the American people in the continuing need for the U.N.

I share the President's and the Secretary's expectation that John Bolton will faithfully represent the United States' interests and enthusiastically advance the President's goal of making the United Nations a stronger, more effective international organization.

PRAYER AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, last Thursday was designated as a National Day of Prayer. I began the day at a prayer breakfast with the people of Tangipahoa, LA, whose school board was recently the subject of a Federal court ruling against prayer at board meetings.

This February 24 ruling, by U.S. District Court Judge Ginger Berrigan of New Orleans, was filed by an unnamed individual with the backing of the American Civil Liberties Union. The purpose of the lawsuit was to stop prayers at Tangipahoa Parish School Board meetings.

In her ruling against the school board, Judge Berrigan said:

[i]n officially promoting a religious practice at its governmental meetings, the board is doing what its schools and teachers cannot do, favor religion over non-religion and endorse particular religious faiths.

If this ruling stands, school boards in other parts of Louisiana as well as school boards across the country could be subjected to similar lawsuits.

Many have joined me in criticizing this February 24 ruling, including the Democratic Governor of Louisiana, Kathleen Blanco, who called for the school board to appeal the decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. As stated by Governor Blanco:

I believe that such prayers are entirely appropriate, constitutional, and in keeping with a practice in our nation that dates back to the Continental Congress.

I could not agree more with that statement, and I am delighted that the school board on May 1, 2005 voted unanimously to appeal the district court's ruling.

To me, this February 24 ruling seems like another attempt by Federal courts to legislate from the bench—especially when you consider that other law-making bodies are allowed to hold prayer. Here in the Senate, we routinely open with a prayer, as does the U.S. House of Representatives and as do State legislatures across the Nation.

In 1983, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in the case of *Marsh v. Chambers*, that