

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

the practice of opening legislative sessions with prayer has become part of the fabric of our society. To invoke divine guidance on a public body entrusted with making the laws is not a violation of the Establishment Clause, but rather is simply an acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the American people, said the Court.

Voluntary prayer in elected bodies should not be limited to prayer in State legislatures and Congress. School boards are deliberative bodies of adults. They are similar to a legislature in that they are elected by the people, act in the public interest, and are open to the public for voluntary attendance.

And let's not forget that this Nation was founded on the principle of freedom of religion. Not freedom from religion but freedom of religion. The Framers intended that the U.S. Constitution would bar the Government from enacting any law that favors one religious denomination over another, not prevent any mention of religion or reference to God in civic dialogue. The Framers recognized that freedom to practice religion and to express religious thought is a fundamental and alienable right belonging to all Americans.

The ACLU, which backed this lawsuit against the school board, has criticized those of us who have called for the school board to appeal the district court ruling. I do not share the ACLU's opinion, and more importantly, the people of Louisiana do not share the ACLU's opinion.

It is a fact that Americans often turn to their elected officials for relief, especially after being rebuffed by courts. As stated by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service:

With regard to religious liberty, the origin and growth of an individual's right to believe or not believe, and the safeguarding of that right, have occurred almost entirely outside the courtroom. The regular political process has protected the religious freedom of minorities as well as and often better than the courts.

In short, it is not unusual for Congress to advance religious liberty beyond what is available from the judiciary.

On April 29 I introduced a resolution, S. Res. 132, expressing the United States Senate's support for the practice of prayer at the beginning of school board meetings. U.S. Congressman BOBBY JINDAL has introduced a similar measure in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. DEMINT for their cosponsorship of S. Res. 132. I urge my other colleagues to support this resolution, which recognizes that prayer before school board meetings is a protected act in accordance with fundamental principles upon which this Nation was founded.

SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE GUN STORAGE LEGISLATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, two separate accidental shootings in Detroit on April 22 of this year left one 13-year-old boy dead and a 9-year-old boy critically wounded. These tragedies should remind us again that much more must be done to prevent access to guns by children.

According to published reports, both of these shootings involved children playing with guns inside their own homes. In both cases, the guns accidentally discharged and shot the victim in the head. In reference to the accidental shooting of the 9-year-old boy, Lieutenant James Tolbert of the Detroit Police Department commented, "This is an unfortunate and needless incident that would have been prevented if people would make sure that a weapon in the home is secure and out of reach." In addition, Lieutenant Tolbert suggested that similar shootings could be prevented through the use of trigger locks or the storage of ammunition separate from the gun.

Recent research supports Lieutenant Tolbert's suggestions. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the application of responsible gun storage measures can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional shooting or suicide by minors using a gun. According to the study, when ammunition in the home is locked up, the risk of such injuries is reduced by 61 percent. Simply storing ammunition separately from the gun reduces such occurrences by more than 50 percent.

According to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, teenagers and children are involved in more than 10,000 accidental shootings in which close to 800 people die each year. Reducing the number of accidental shootings involving children and teenagers requires that commonsense gun storage measures be adopted.

During the 108th Congress, I joined with 69 of my colleagues in voting for Senator BOXER's trigger lock amendment. Senator BOXER's amendment would have required that all handguns sold by a dealer come with a child safety device, such as a lock, a lock box, or technology built into the gun itself that would increase the security of the weapon while in storage. Although the underlying gun industry immunity bill to which this amendment was attached was later defeated, the support for Senator BOXER's proposal is clear.

Requiring that guns be stored in a responsible manner could have prevented many of the accidental shootings we have seen in Detroit and around the country. I am hopeful that Congress will work to limit children's access to guns so that fewer families will have to endure the loss of their child because of a preventable accident.

HONORING IOWA FINALISTS WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION NATIONAL COMPETITION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the students from Central Academy in Des Moines, IA who recently participated in the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution national finals in Washington, DC. The annual competition is the culmination of the students' extensive study of the American system of constitutional democracy. The team from Central Academy won the State competition, earning the honor of representing Iowa in the national finals from April 30 through May 2, 2005. I am also proud to say that they won a unit award for their impressive performance on unit 3.

Unfortunately, I was in Iowa during the national finals this year so I was unable to meet with the students from Iowa as I customarily do. However, I am always impressed by how knowledgeable and politically astute the students are who have been through this program and I understand this year's group of students was no exception. I know Iowans can be very proud to have had them representing Iowa.

The We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program is run by the Center for Civic Education with the help of federal funding. The program provides an excellent curriculum and valuable professional development opportunities for teachers, giving students a solid grounding in the history, philosophy, and practice of our American system of constitutional democracy. The result is young people who are more politically aware, more engaged, and more equipped to be good citizens.

In closing, I would like to recognize the Central Academy students who participated in this program, Emily Burney, Julia Busiek, Kate Conlow, Tim Di Iulio, Jon Hill, Lisa Jefferson, Alix Liftka-Reselman, Phillip Miller, Ben Miller-Todd, David Nolan, Caroline Rendon, Andrew Tatge, Erin Turner, Emily Varn, and their teacher, Michael Schaffer. They can all be very proud of their knowledge and accomplishments. I would also like to recognize the We the People district coordinator, Ivette Bender, and the state coordinator for Iowa, Linda Martin, for their hard work and dedication to the We the People program.

NOMINATION OF STEVEN JOHNSON TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I would like to briefly discuss my vote in favor of cloture on the nomination of Stephen Johnson to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency EPA. I have always believed that the President should be granted significant deference in selecting his