

millions of children all over this country affordable health care.

Instead, the President sought a funding level that would result in 1 million American children losing—losing—their health insurance.

So where would their families go to get these children health care if they don't have access to this insurance under the President's proposal? Well, before an audience in Cleveland on July 10, the President of the United States revealed his approach:

People have access to health care in America—

He said.

After all, you just go to an emergency room.

So that is it.

Tax cuts for billionaires that explode our national debt and leave future generations on the hook to pay for it—that is a big priority for President Bush. Billions for Blackwater, for an endless war with no plan to end it, for no-bid contracts for Halliburton—that is a big priority for President Bush.

But health care for children and their struggling working-class families, all paid for in the budget after hard-working bipartisan compromise? Nope. That is not a priority. That is a veto.

And the kids? "Send them to the emergency room," he says.

I am ashamed of the President's decision. His veto was unnecessary. It was wrong. It is now up to Congress to make it right. I ask my colleagues to override the President's veto of children's health insurance.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to commend the Senator from Rhode Island for voicing his concerns about the veto of the children's health bill that is so important to so many children, and I appreciate his strong statement.

I think yesterday was a sad day for all Americans. For reasons I can't comprehend, President Bush yesterday decided to veto our bipartisan effort to invest in health care for the Nation's children. With no fanfare, behind closed doors, when no one was looking, the President put his personal politics ahead of increased investment in our most precious asset, our children.

I was so proud last week when, with bipartisan support in good margins in both Houses of Congress, we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program. That bill is an example of how Government ought to work.

Leaders in the House and in the Senate, both Republicans and Democrats, worked together to find a compromise that could work for everyone at the

table. Nobody got everything they wanted, but the final product was worthy of support and pride on all sides.

I had hoped that after seeing the tremendous work that went into this compromise the President would think of the kids in every State of the Union who needed basic health care and reconsider his position.

I had hoped he would think about the families who are struggling to make ends meet and reconsider his position.

I had hoped that in the end he would reconsider his plan to say no to our children and to our families. But yesterday those hopes were dashed.

All children should be able to see a doctor when they are sick, and all children should be able to get the medicine they need to make them better. When a child gets a cut that requires stitches or comes down with a fever or an earache or with any other imaginable problem, they ought to be able to get help, period.

Unfortunately, as we all know, today in America—the richest and most successful country ever—that is not the case. In fact, millions of American children do not have health insurance, which means millions of American kids cannot see a doctor when they are sick, and millions of American children don't get the medicine they need to help them get better.

It doesn't matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat, whether you are a progressive or conservative, I believe making sure our children get health care is the moral thing to do.

This veto that the President penned yesterday has real and serious impact on many families in my State and across the country. Because President Bush vetoed that bill, 3.8 million uninsured children are going to continue to live without coverage. Let me say that again. President Bush told 3.8 million children in America they cannot have health care. To me, that is just shameful.

When I came to the floor a couple of weeks ago to talk about this important bill, I told the story of a woman in my State, Sydney DeBord, who lives in Yakima, WA. She is a young girl who has cystic fibrosis. Her mom wrote to me to tell me how important this children's health insurance program was to her family. She said it allowed her daughter, Sydney, to get and extend her life, and it allowed her to live her very tough life to the fullest. I want to quote again from that letter because I believe she speaks for those more than 3 million children and their families on this dark day.

Ms. DeBord said:

I know for a fact that without this bit of assistance her life would end much sooner due to the inability to afford quality health care for her. As her parent, it frightens me to even think some day she may be without health care coverage if programs like CHIP are no longer available.

Today, I share Ms. DeBord's fears, and all other parents do as well.

We have another chance. The President doesn't have the final say on this

one. Right now, Members of the House of Representatives are working to find the votes to override this veto, perhaps, and hopefully end the fears of Ms. DeBord and millions of moms just like her. They need a few more votes. If they get a few more votes, we can tell the President that investing in families and investing in America is a priority of the men and women of this Congress no matter how many vetoes he sends our way.

It is very troubling to me that the President continues to ignore the wishes of the American public. The American people and the vast majority of Congress want to expand stem cell research to find cures for diseases affecting so many in our Nation. The President says no.

The American people and the vast majority of Congress want to change course in Iraq and bring our troops home safely. The President says no.

The American people and the vast majority of Congress want investment in roads, bridges, medical research, and education. The President says no.

The American people and the vast majority of Congress want to provide health care for our young children today. The President says no.

So we need a few more Republicans to join us and to join the American people in telling the President he is wrong and he cannot stand in the way of progress for our young kids. I hope the disappointment felt by kids and their families today is going to be washed away in the weeks to come by another bipartisan show of support for this outstanding and critical health care program in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATOR DOMENICI'S RETIREMENT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, we have all seen the news that our friend and colleague, PETE DOMENICI, is planning to announce today that he will retire from the Senate at the conclusion of his term. Senator DOMENICI called me yesterday afternoon to tell me of this decision. My reaction was one of surprise first, and then that gave way to admiration and appreciation for this man's decision to conclude his distinguished career of public service on his own terms.

He and his wife Nancy are traveling to Albuquerque this morning for the announcement this afternoon. This is a great gesture to the people of New Mexico, and in New Mexico the Domenicis will be greeted with the affection and respect which they richly deserve.

When I arrived in the Senate in 1983, PETE DOMENICI was then a 10-year veteran of this place, and he was here to welcome me at that time. In his 34 years in the Senate, PETE has earned a reputation as a fierce and effective champion for New Mexico. While he and I have not agreed on some issues, I have never questioned his commitment to do what he believed was right for our State and for this country.

Today, and during his entire Senate career, PETE has achieved what all of us try to achieve; that is, to be effective in getting results in Washington, while also staying close to the people who have sent us here to represent them.

PETE and I, of course, have worked together on many issues and projects, but our most productive collaboration has been on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. For the last few years, he has been the most senior Republican, and I have been the most senior Democrat. In the last Congress, when PETE was chairman of the committee and I was the ranking Democrat, we were able to secure passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. PETE deserves substantial credit for the passage of that important legislation.

Senator DOMENICI's announcement today is not, I am glad to say, that he is leaving the Senate at this time. His announcement will be that he will serve out his term, but he will not stand for reelection to another term. He has assured me that he expects the remaining 15 months of his service in the Senate to be productive and, knowing PETE, I am sure they will be.

There will be time later for valedictories. For today, we will listen to Senator DOMENICI's announcement and send our thanks and best wishes to him and to Nancy.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to one of our most distinguished Senior Senators, and a personal friend of mine, PETE DOMENICI of New Mexico, who yesterday announced he will retire at the end of this Congress.

The son of Italian immigrants, Senator DOMENICI has accomplished many things in his long and distinguished career. Growing up in Albuquerque, he worked in his father's wholesale grocery business. After earning a degree in education from the University of New Mexico in 1954, he pitched for the Albuquerque Dukes, a farm club of the old Brooklyn Dodgers. He left baseball to be a teacher, and then earned a law degree in 1958.

Senator DOMENICI's life of public service began in 1966, when he was elected to the Albuquerque City Commission. In 1972, he was elected to the United States Senate, where he has served with dedication and distinction ever since. PETE DOMENICI was my home State Senator when I clerked for the New Mexico Supreme Court. At the time, I never thought that one day I would have the privilege of calling myself a colleague of Senator DOMENICI.

PETE has been a tireless champion for the public land states of the West. He understands the challenges facing an arid climate, including water resources management in the face of drought and the conflicts over water allocation, as well as public lands management and issues relating to resource extraction, forest health and grazing.

PETE has worked tirelessly to ensure that our Nation has the energy resources it will need to meet the growing demand well into the 21st century. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provides the incentives and the Federal support required to meet these future energy needs. It also encourages energy efficiency and conservation, as well as the development of clean, non-emitting resources.

When I was first elected to the Senate, I served on the Budget Committee, which was then chaired by PETE DOMENICI. I could not have asked for a better mentor on the complex issues related to the Federal budget process. I also served on the Energy Committee, where PETE has been both Chairman and Ranking Member.

Senator DOMENICI has also been a stalwart leader and champion in the battle to provide persons with mental illness equal access to health care services. In 1996, Senator DOMENICI teamed with then-Senator Paul Wellstone to pass the first Federal law intended to help persons with mental illness acquire protections and access to care.

Fortunately, Senator DOMENICI understood that more could and should be done. So it was with pleasure I was able to work with him to craft S. 558, the Mental Health Parity Act of 2007, which has passed the Senate. This bill will help ensure that insurance companies begin treating illnesses of the mind on the same level as illnesses of the body.

I also want to acknowledge his work to help protect Federal programs serving our citizens who battle mental illness. He has, over the years, authored and supported policies improving Medicare and Medicaid for persons living with these diseases. His compassion and leadership will be greatly missed by the mental health community, and I personally will miss his insight and knowledge in the U.S. Senate.

In closing, let me wish you and your wife Nancy the very best on your retirement and return to your beloved State, New Mexico.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is with sadness that I speak about my friend, the senior Senator from New Mexico, PETE DOMENICI, who will announce later today he will not seek a seventh term and will return, instead, to his beloved New Mexico at the end of this Congress.

PETE was born to Alda and Cherubino Domenici, and he has never forgotten where he came from and what he was sent here to do by the people of his State. He grew up learning about the value of hard work as an employee

each afternoon in his father's wholesale grocery business while attending school in Albuquerque during the day. At the University of New Mexico, PETE found an early calling for public service and earned a degree in education. He was a remarkable athlete as well and became a pitcher, briefly, for the Albuquerque Dukes, the farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and then taught math at junior high school while he earned his law degree.

In 1966, PETE was elected to the Albuquerque City Commission, where he served until he was elected to the Senate in 1972. He is now the longest serving Senator in New Mexico history. For some 35 years, he has been an outstanding colleague, admired and respected by all of us on both sides of the aisle.

PETE will be remembered by all Americans as a brilliant and tireless champion for the rights of those with mental illness. His tenacity and commitment led, in 1996, to the passage of the first legislation to end discrimination against people with mental illness. More than anyone, PETE understood that such discrimination prevented vast numbers of people with mental illness from receiving the care and treatment and, frequently, the cure they deserved. Over the past 5 years, I have had the privilege of working closely with PETE to improve that original legislation. His passion and perseverance to achieve full equality in the covering of mental and physical illness has never wavered. The recent Senate passage of the Mental Health Parity Act is a tribute to PETE and the result of his extraordinary dedication and ability.

I am sure PETE and Nancy thought long and hard about the decision to retire from the Senate and that it wasn't an easy choice to make. But I know they will have much more time to spend with their eight children and the wonderful people and breathtaking mountains of New Mexico. We are fortunate that we will have at least another year to work together on the issues we care so deeply about.

As we prepare to say farewell to our great friend, I am reminded of the lines of the New Mexico State song:

O, Fair New Mexico,
We love, we love you so,
Our hearts with pride o'flow,
No matter where we go.
O, Fair New Mexico.

No matter where PETE goes, we will always love and respect him, miss his leadership, his statesmanship and, most of all, his friendship.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to proceed on my leader time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

BURMA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have come to the floor every day this week to highlight the plight of the Burmese citizens who have bravely protested for democratic reform. I have also tried to focus attention on the brutal actions that the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC, has taken to crack down on its own people.

The whole world watched with horror as Buddhist monks, armed with nothing but prayers for peace, met uniformed thugs armed with rifles sent to do their Government's bidding. Untold numbers have been slaughtered, more are unjustly imprisoned, and the Burmese citizens who are left are afraid to step outside of their homes. The SPDC's swift and barbaric punishment of the Burmese people seems like a relic from another era. But what we have seen on our television sets is all too real.

I thank my fellow Senators for shining a spotlight on the actions of the SPDC this week to reveal them for the despots they are.

I was encouraged when, on Monday, my colleagues adopted a sense-of-the-Senate resolution we offered with Senator KERRY condemning the SPDC for its violent crackdown against the peaceful protesters. And yesterday, Senators BOXER and MURKOWSKI gave a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs on the atrocities in Burma. I appreciated the opportunity to be over there and testify at that hearing, along with others. Democratic reform in Burma is an issue that has received far too little interest for a very long time. But the strong bipartisan support in Congress is encouraging.

To see significant change in Burma, ultimately the U.N. Security Council will have to enact meaningful sanctions on the SPDC. Only then will the Government be pressured to move toward peaceful reconciliation. And for the U.N. Security Council to move, China must be persuaded to move. Many changes need to happen in Burma, but until they do, I will continue to act and to advocate on behalf of the Burmese people on the Senate floor.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Republicans and Democrats have been debating all year long about the troops. This has not been a debate about who wants to bring them home. Frankly, all of us want to bring them home. It has been a debate about whom do you trust to decide when these troops come

home, about who has the authority and judgment to make decisions about how to protect our national security interests in the Persian Gulf. Republicans think it should be the Commander in Chief in consultation with his commanders on the ground. We don't think our foreign policy should be drafted by MoveOn.org or CODEPINK.

However, on one thing we have almost all agreed: When we have forces in the field, we ought to fund them. Once they are over there, you do not leave them guessing about whether they are going to eat or be clothed or have the equipment they need to do their jobs, and you don't leave their replacement units wondering whether they will be trained or equipped.

In the heat of the first Iraq debate, we passed by a strong bipartisan vote of 82 to 16 the Gregg resolution expressing the sense of Congress that no funds should be cut off or even reduced for troops in the field which would result in undermining their safety or their ability to complete their mission. We passed, by an overwhelming 96-to-2 vote, the Murray resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that no action should be taken to undermine the safety of the Armed Forces of the United States or impact their ability to complete their missions. And we repeatedly rejected the Feingold amendment as recently as yesterday, once again, that would cut off funds for the troops after a date certain next June regardless of whether they have completed their mission.

Under the Feingold amendment, which forbids U.S. troops from fighting anyone but al-Qaida and its affiliates, we would have to deploy a brigade of lawyers to interview the enemy, and we would lose the ability to gather the kind of intelligence from Iraqis themselves—intelligence that has been an invaluable component of the Petraeus plan so far. The Iraqi people are talking to us now because they feel safer having U.S. troops around. Pulling those troops out of the neighborhoods and replacing them with snipers in helicopters would cut us off from the very people who are helping us find the targets in the first place.

This Senate has argued for months about Iraq, but on this one point almost all of us have agreed again and again and again: You don't cut funds to troops who are already in the field. Yet now it seems even that may be about to change.

All last year, the Democrats complained that the President was hiding his spending requests for the war by leaving them out of the Defense spending bill and putting them into a supplemental instead. So earlier this year, he responded to those criticisms in good faith by making his request in concert with the DOD appropriations bill. He said we would need about \$150 billion for 2008.

The majority has been sitting on this request for 8 months, and now they have made a conscious decision to

leave it out of the Defense spending bill altogether. Some of them are arguing that the Defense Department has the legal authority to sustain the war on its own. That is right, they could do that, but what the Defense Department cannot do is plan ahead without a future spending commitment from this Congress. They cannot plan for training, equipment, feeding, or protecting our troops until they know the money will be there beyond the immediate future, and they cannot plan to be ready for any other operations that might arise outside of the current conflicts. This is no way to run a Defense Department, it is no way to treat the troops, and it is entirely inconsistent with the expressions of support for the troops that we registered with the Gregg and Murray resolutions and which we reaffirmed repeatedly, including yesterday, by rejecting the Feingold amendment.

All summer, America and its allies waited for GEN David Petraeus to come to the Hill and tell us about the prospects in Iraq. We were encouraged when he told us the military objectives of his strategy were in large measure being met. We were proud when he told us that in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat, coalition and Iraqi security forces had achieved real progress toward achieving their goals, in large part because they dealt what he described as a "significant blow"—a significant blow—to al-Qaida.

General Petraeus recommended that as a result of these early successes, we can begin to draw down our troops beginning this year. That drawdown has already begun. Last month, the Marine Expeditionary Unit that was deployed as part of the surge left Iraq after a job well done. A combat brigade team will leave in mid-December, with four others and two surge marine battalions to follow in the first half of next year. This was General Petraeus's cautious but expert plan for building on the successes we have made in Iraq. The President accepted that plan, and a majority of Americans, including a majority of Democrats, if we are to believe the polls, think it is a good idea.

We have a new strategy in Iraq, according to the general in charge. It is working, and we owe it to the men and women in the field, first of all, to keep a commitment we have already made to fund them while they are carrying out that strategy. We cannot, we must not close this session without providing the funding these troops need.

We also owe it to them to bring them home in a way that reflects the best judgment of their commanders. General Petraeus gave us a rare and valuable glimpse into the minds of our soldiers and marines when he testified on Capitol Hill last month. General Petraeus said:

None of us want to stay in Iraq forever. We all want to come home. We all have days of frustration and all the rest of that. But what we want to do is come home the right way, having added to the heritage of our services,