

which is here on the floor of the Senate.

AMENDMENT NO. 1183, AS MODIFIED

I ask unanimous consent that the Clinton amendment, No. 1183, be modified with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows.

On page 260, line 13, strike "567,000" and insert "480,000".

On page 260, line 19, strike "127,000" and insert "40,000".

On page 269, line 18, insert "or the child or spouse of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence" after "United States".

On page 269, line 22, insert "or lawful permanent resident" after "citizen".

On page 269, line 23, insert "or lawful permanent resident" after "citizen".

On page 269, line 23, insert "or lawful permanent resident's" after "citizen's".

On page 269, line 24, insert "or lawful permanent resident" after "citizen".

On page 269, line 25, insert "or lawful permanent resident's" after "citizen's".

On page 269, line 26, insert "or lawful permanent resident's" after "citizen's".

On page 269, line 32, insert "or lawful permanent resident's" after "citizen's".

On page 269, line 41, insert "or lawful permanent resident" after "citizen".

On page 270, strike lines 18 through 27.

On page 270, line 29, strike the first "(3)" and insert "(2)".

On page 271, line 17, strike "(4)" and insert "(3)".

On page 273, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following:

(5) RULES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER CERTAIN ALIENS ARE IMMEDIATE RELATIVES.—Section 201(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151(f)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "paragraphs (2) and (3)," and inserting "paragraph (2)."; and

(ii) by striking "(b)(2)(A)(i)" and inserting "(b)(2).";

(B) by striking paragraph (2);

(C) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (2); and

(D) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking "(b)(2)(A)" and inserting "(b)(2)".

(6) NUMERICAL LIMITATION TO ANY SINGLE FOREIGN STATE.—Section 202 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1152) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (4); and

(B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (4).

(7) ALLOCATION OF IMMIGRATION VISAS.—Section 203(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(h)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "subsections (a)(2)(A) and (d)" and inserting "subsection (d)";

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking "becomes available for such alien (or, in the case of subsection (d), the date on which an immigrant visa number became available for the alien's parent)", and inserting "became available for the alien's parent."; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), by striking "applicable";

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "The petition" and all that follows through the period and inserting "The petition described in this paragraph is a petition filed under section 204 for classification of the alien parent under subsection (a) or (b)."; and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking "subsections (a)(2)(A) and (d)" and inserting "subsection (d)".

(8) PROCEDURE FOR GRANTING IMMIGRANT STATUS.—Section 204 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(1)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (iii)—

(aa) by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "citizen" each place that term appears; and

(bb) in subclause (II)(aa)(CC)(bbb), by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "citizenship";

(II) in clause (iv)—

(aa) by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "citizen" each place that term appears; and

(bb) by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "citizenship";

(III) in clause (v)(I), by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "citizen"; and

(IV) in clause (vi)—

(aa) by inserting "or legal permanent resident status" after "renunciation of citizenship"; and

(bb) by inserting "or legal permanent resident" after "abuser's citizenship";

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B);

(iii) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) through (J) as subparagraphs (B) through (I), respectively;

(iv) in subparagraph (B), as so redesignated, by striking "subparagraph (A)(iii), (A)(iv), (B)(ii), or (B)(iii)" and inserting "clause (iii) or (iv) of subparagraph (A)"; and

(v) in subparagraph (I), as so redesignated—

(I) by striking "or clause (ii) or (iii) of subparagraph (B)"; and

(II) by striking "under subparagraphs (C) and (D)" and inserting "under subparagraphs (B) and (C)";

(B) by striking subsection (a)(2);

(C) in subsection (h), by striking "or a petition filed under subsection (a)(1)(B)(ii)"; and

(D) in subsection (j), by striking "subsection (a)(1)(D)" and inserting "subsection (a)(1)(C)".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, in the last few days, I have come to the floor to speak about reform of our broken health care system: how to make that system run better, so that tens of billions of dollars are not wasted every year, so we no longer lose as many as 100,000 Americans every year to avoidable medical errors, so that we no longer spend vastly more of our GDP every year than any other industrialized nation for poorer health care outcomes.

I believe three central things need to be reformed. One is improving the quality of care in ways that drive down costs. I spoke about that on Tuesday and used the example of an intensive care unit reform in Michigan that saved \$165 million in 15 months and saved over 1,500-plus lives. We need to encourage a lot more of that. The second major reform we need is of health information technology, and I spoke yesterday about the dire state of infor-

mation technology in health care today—the Economist magazine reported that the health care industry was the worst of any American industry except the mining industry and the significant savings we could generate from expanding our use of health information technology. The RAND Corporation predicted that adequate health information technology would save us from \$81 billion to \$364 billion per year. We need desperately to capture those savings.

Today, I want to talk about the third piece of this reform: repairing our health care reimbursement system, the way we pay for health care, so that the economic signals we send into the system produce the care we want. Improving quality of care will be an uphill struggle until our payment system rewards it. Health information technology will lag behind other industries until the economics of investing in it makes sense for participants in the health care sector.

These problems can each be fixed, but the repair will work better if the three solutions proceed together, not necessarily as one, but staying close, because they are mutually reinforcing.

The payment system for health care expenditures today sends all the wrong messages: it rewards procedures rather than prevention; it rewards office visits more than email contacts; it neglects best practices and discourages innovation. To a large degree, the system has been co-opted by today's unfortunate business model for health insurance. This is a business model which seeks first to cherry-pick the healthy customers and abandon the sick ones, second to try to deny coverage if a customer does get sick, and third to try to deny claims whenever their sick customer's doctor tries to send in the bills. Health care economics gets in the way of the change we need, gets in the way of improved quality of care, gets in the way of investment in information technology and illness prevention, and gets in the way of lowered costs.

The problem is best exemplified by a tale from a book called "Demanding Medical Excellence" by Michael Millenson. Northfield, MN, Madam President, is a town I am sure you know. It is a town of only a few thousand people, but it was home to four very innovative doctors at Family Physicians of Northfield. They discovered they could reduce the average treatment cost of a urinary tract infection from \$133 to only \$39, a savings of nearly 70 percent, by changing their practice pattern. Instead of doing an office examination, a complete urinalysis and culture, sensitivity studies for antibiotics, prescribing ten days of antibiotics, and a follow-up culture, they attained the same results with a phone conversation with a patient, a complete urinalysis, and a prescription for three days of antibiotics. But pretty soon, the Family Physicians at Northfield were so good at treating their patients—for urinary tract infections and other diagnoses—that their

waiting room was empty. As a reward for their good work, the practice lost so much revenue, from never-performed lab tests and empty appointment calendars that, in 1995, Family Physicians of Northfield, was forced to close. These doctors were taught a harsh, and perverse, lesson by our present health care system, and that lesson is: reduce costs and improve care, and you will be punished.

In Rhode Island, our hospitals are pursuing quality improvement projects in every intensive care unit in the state, modeled on the Michigan program that saved \$165 million in 15 months and over 1,500 lives as well. The Rhode Island intensive care unit program had a significant hurdle to overcome, however: the cost was expected to be \$400,000 annually per intensive care unit, and the hospitals had to pay it. The savings were estimated to be \$8 million, but those savings would not go back to the hospitals. The savings went to payers. So, for its \$400,000 invested, a hospital actually stood to lose money, from shorter intensive care unit stays and fewer complications, so fewer procedures to remedy the complications. Truly pushing that quality envelope, and striving for zero tolerance in infections and errors, was against the hospital's best economic best interests. It took the special, collegial relationships developed within our Rhode Island Quality Institute to solve this payment dilemma between our hospitals and insurers.

A similar analysis pertains to prevention investments. The payer has to shoulder 100 percent of the cost today, but the savings in forestalled illness might not occur for years. Maybe by then the customer will be some other insurer's customer, then maybe Medicare's. If you are the insurer, why take the chance and assume that cost, if the savings will not accrue to you?

There are many ways to repair perverse incentives in the way we pay for health care, but one that makes sense to me and uses existing infrastructure would be the following. Let medical societies and specialty groups, who create "best-practices" within their specialty, submit those best practices—including cost-effective prevention programs—for approval by local health departments. If, after suitable administrative procedures, the best practices are approved, reward the effort by differentiating, in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates, between care that follows the local best practices and care that does not. Reward the effort by forbidding any insurer operating in interstate commerce—any health insurer—from using "utilization review"—that is their word for denying payment—for care that is delivered within these approved best practices. Require them to pay all those claims, in which the provider followed best practice protocols, within 30 days.

The legislation I have prepared will do just that.

This legislation sets a lot of good forces in motion. It encourages devel-

opment and dissemination of best practices in medicine. It encourages doctors to follow those best practices, and discourages the wide and unjustifiable variations in medical treatment evident now. It encourages a sensible one-time debate in a professional, administrative forum at the time approval or amendment of the best practices is sought, and it discourages the wildly expensive payment battle now fought, claim by claim, between insurers and providers. I know from my experience as the insurance commissioner for Rhode Island how much time and money insurers and providers spend in claims administration. Studies have estimated that \$20 billion is spent every year in this bitter and expanding arms race, both by insurers seeking to deny claims and doctors seeking to defend their claims, and every dollar of that fight is wasted. Doctors in Rhode Island tell me regularly that as much as half of their staff is engaged in this billing battle. Instead of in providing health care for their patients.

My legislation will engage the medical community in a thoughtful way. It will bring best practices to the forefront. There is a lot of discussion about comparative efficiency in health care today, debates over which treatments and methods are most effective—this legislation will provide a truly meaningful forum for those discussions. An example: Recently, the New York Times reported on a 40-step protocol implemented for bypass surgery patients by Geisinger Health Systems, which right now can be implemented only within Geisinger hospitals. This bill would allow these protocols, if pursued by the local cardiology association and approved by the State health department, to get favorable reimbursement statewide. I hope this bill will help the health insurance industry look to a new business model where your insurance company is looking out for you, is your advocate when you are sick, reminds you when testing or prevention is appropriate, helps you find the best practices or care, where your insurer is your navigator and your adviser in the health care system instead of your adversary.

This legislation can help repair our health care system. It puts the priorities and incentives in the right place so market forces are unleashed in our favor. It uses existing structures, just in new ways. It is designed and mandated to be budget neutral. And it does no harm if it does not work right away, if doctors do not take it up, if health departments will not hold the hearings, no harm is done. But let's give it a chance to work.

Let me close by saying how important this moment is. I serve on the Budget Committee and have heard the troubling facts about what the health care system will cost us in years to come. By the year 2050, the combined cost of Medicare and Medicaid will rise to eat up 22 percent of our gross domestic product. Further, as my friend

Budget Chairman CONRAD has noted, the 75-year net present value of the unfunded liabilities in Social Security and Medicare equal \$38.6 trillion, and \$33.9 trillion of this total is for Medicare alone. The health care system is eating up our economy, costing twice as much as the European Union average. There is more health care than steel in Ford cars and more health care than coffee beans in Starbucks coffee. It is significantly hampering our competitiveness. It is the number one cause of American family bankruptcies.

By acting now, by acting in advance, by bringing some sensible economics and some sensible management and some helpful incentives to our health care system, we can start to grapple with its cost. And if we take on that fight here and now, while time is still on our side, we can reduce costs in the best possible way: by improving the quality of care, by making Americans healthier, by preventing illness before we have to treat it, by avoiding expensive and often fatal medical errors, by giving our doctors the decision support other professionals have had for decades, in sum, by making our health care system better. Considering the stakes, shame on us if we fail in that duty.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENATE DEMOCRATS

Mr. REID. Madam President, Democrats earned the majority in Congress last year by strongly opposing the President's failed Iraq policy and advocating restoration of the values of working families in relation to our Government. The American people sent a clear message last November it was time to change course in Iraq. Congressional Democrats made that our top priority in the first day in this Congress, and have every day since. In less than 4 months, we have been able to send to the President's desk a number of things to keep our Government open; and that is the case literally.

In less than 4 months, we have been able to send to the President's desk things he refused in years past, because now there is a Congressional branch he has to deal with.

As it relates to Iraq, the President has vetoed the bill which reflected the wishes of the American public and many senior military leaders and a bipartisan majority of Congress.

Last night we sent him another bill that doesn't go as far as I would like, and the majority of the Democratic Senators, and that is an understatement. But it does begin the process of holding the President and the Iraqis accountable.

POLLING DATA

I think it is important to note how the American people feel, that this isn't just a bunch of politicians talking in Washington. There was a poll taken by the New York Times and CBS that was reported today. It was a very in-depth poll. When we do polls at home, those of us who serve in government, they do samplings of 400 to 600 people. This poll was twice that big. Almost 1,200 adults were sampled, so the margin of error was very low when this poll was done.

Among other things, it said 61 percent of Americans say the United States should have stayed out of Iraq, and 76 percent say things are going badly there, including 47 percent who say things are going very badly. President Bush's approval ratings remain the lowest of his office in more than 6 years: 30 percent approve of the job he is doing; 63 percent disapprove. More Americans, 27 percent, now say that generally things in the country are seriously offtrack. This is the lowest number of approval and the highest disapproval rating since these polls have been taken.

Public support for the war has eroded: 61 percent say the country should have stayed out of Iraq; a majority, 76 percent, including 51 percent of Republicans, say additional troops sent to Iraq this year by Mr. Bush either have had no impact or are making things worse. Most Americans support a timetable for withdrawal; 63 percent say the United States should set a date for withdrawing troops from Iraq sometime next year. The poll found Americans are more likely to trust the Democratic Party than the Republican Party by a significant margin. More than half said the Democratic Party was more likely than the Republican Party to make the right decisions about the war. More broadly, 53 percent of those polled said they have a favorable opinion of the Democratic Party.

As for Mr. Bush, 23 percent approve of his handling of the situation in Iraq, 23 percent; 72 percent disapprove. Madam President, 25 percent approve of his handling of foreign policy; 65 percent disapprove. And 27 percent approve of his handling of immigration issues, while 60 percent disapprove.

SENATE AGENDA

Regarding the war in Iraq, I have spoken over the last week to two parents in Nevada—one in Reno, one in Fernley—who have lost sons in Iraq. Multiply that almost 3,500 times. I can't imagine the grief and despair. During the last 3 days, 17 American soldiers and marines have been killed in Iraq, 3 days—9, 2, and 6. It is an American tragedy. As I said last night on this floor, we will not stop our efforts to change the course of this war until either enough Republicans join us with regard to this war to reject the President's failed policies or we get a new President.

At the same time we have opposed the President's Iraq policy, we have

moved forward on legislation that invests in our security, our economy, and our health. In a matter of days, we will have as law a raise in the minimum wage. Sixty percent of the people who draw the minimum wage in America are women, and for more than half those women that is the only money they get for their families. It was important that we raise the minimum wage, and we did that. It was long overdue.

We have also provided, and will shortly have signed into law, \$400 million to ensure that States don't run out of money for the State Children's Health Insurance Program. In the coming weeks, we will seek to reauthorize this successful program that keeps millions of children healthy. We may not be doing much for adults in health insurance, but we are taking steps forward with our children.

For 3 years we have tried to pass legislation that would give relief to farmers and ranchers. We have been unable to do that. The Republican majority has refused to allow us to do that. Disaster relief for farmers and ranchers, we did that. That is now going to be signed into law, \$3 billion. Farms have gone bankrupt in the ensuing years of the need for this relief. I would suggest, if you look on the Internet at what an emergency supplemental is all about, it talks about emergencies that occur during the year—floods, fires, drought, hurricanes, tornadoes. That is why what we did last night, farm relief, \$3 billion to help farmers and ranchers recover from drought, flood, storms, and other disasters is long overdue. That will be the law in a matter of days.

Because of global warming, the western part of the United States has been swept with wildfires. In Nevada, millions of acres have burned. When these areas burn, we get noxious weeds that come instead of the plants and grasses that should be there. We are going to have in a short few days relief. The law has been passed, western wildfire relief, \$465 million to help prevent and fight wildfires in the west and elsewhere. That is so important.

As I understand, there has been a raging fire on the border of Minnesota and Canada. It has taken days to put that fire out. That is what we are talking about. It should have been done a long time ago. We have had to fight for this. I can remember going to the White House, being told by one of the President's assistants: Don't worry about that. We will do it with one of the regular bills.

We are limited on what we can do on regular bills. This is emergency funding. The President has gone to New Orleans, LA, more than 20 times since those devastating floods that occurred there as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The President has talked about it but done very little. We did something about it. We have overcome the opposition of the White House, and in the bill that we passed last night, we provided

nearly \$6.3 billion to help the people of the gulf coast affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Homeland security—Senator BYRD, from his seat right here, over the last 5 years has offered many amendments. He wrote a book and talks in his book about the times he offered amendments to do something about homeland security. It was defeated on a straight party line basis many times. Last night we weren't defeated on a straight party line basis. We didn't get enough, but we did get a billion dollars to look at programs that are all so absolutely important and necessary: port security, \$110 million; rail and mass transit security, \$100 million; explosive detection systems for airline baggage. It is interesting with our airlines, you climb in one of those seats in the airplane. You are seated. You feel pretty comfortable about the person sitting next to you. But you don't know what is in the cargo of that airplane. We got some money for that last night, as well we should. Air cargo security, \$80 million to inspect cargo on commercial passenger airlines; \$285 million for explosive detection systems for airline baggage. It was long overdue—not enough but certainly a step in the right direction.

The Republicans had a majority of 55 to 45. They couldn't pass a budget because it was so skewed toward the rich, so skewed toward the business community and directed against working class America, they couldn't pass it. We have a majority, with Senator TIM JOHNSON being ill, of 50 to 49, not 55 to 45. But we passed a budget. We passed a balanced budget that restores fiscal discipline and puts the middle class first, cutting their taxes while increasing investment in education, veterans care, and children's health care.

For the second year in a row, we legislated to give the hope of stem cell research to millions of Americans who suffer from all kinds of diseases. There is one Senator holding up our overriding the President's veto. It could be any one of these Republican Senators. We are at 66. We need one more to override the President's obstinance in the form of this veto.

What the President has done to stifle hope for millions of Americans is wrong. We were at a Senate retreat. Michael J. Fox came in, someone whom Rush Limbaugh made fun of because he shakes when he talks. He has Parkinson's disease. The renown actor came up and talked to us about his money he has put in to find a cure for other people who have Parkinson's disease. He has done good work because the human genome project is completed, and they found the gene that causes Michael J. Fox's neurological problems. But he said: We need more help. Stem cell research would help us find out a way to attack that gene, to take care of that gene. But the President has stifled, stopped, slowed down the hope of millions of people just like Michael J. Fox.

Several other important bills have passed and will soon be on the their way to the President, such as a continuing resolution. This is not a name I came up with, the "do-nothing" 109th Congress. The Republicans controlled by significant margins the House and the Senate, and they have been dubbed by historians and the press as the do-nothing Congress. They did less and served their constituents less days in actual work in the Senate and the House than in the history of the country. They did less and were in session less than the do-nothing Congress of 1948.

One of the things they didn't do is fund the Government. They lost the elections last November and just left town and unfunded the Government. So there was a responsibility upon us, the Democrats, to fund the Government from February 1 to October 1. We did that. It wasn't easy, but we did it.

The 9/11 Commission, the President fought it. But there was a hue and cry to establish an independent bipartisan commission to look at what happened on 9/11, what went wrong. Led by Congressman Hamilton and Governor Kean, this independent bipartisan commission came up with recommendations. We waited almost 3 years for the Republican Congress to do something. They did basically nothing. The 9/11 Commission, in fact, gave the Bush administration failing grades, Ds and Fs, in all that they asked Congress and the President to do. But we, the Democratic Congress, passed all the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission after they had been pushed aside for all those years. Now, within a matter of weeks, the House will do the same, and we will send this matter to the President and have him sign it.

Ethics. The most significant ethics and lobbying reform in the history of our country we did as the first bill we took up. With the culture of corruption that existed here in Washington in the 109th Congress with—think about this: Am I making up a culture of corruption? For the first time in 130 years—approximately 130 years—someone who was working in the White House was indicted. "Scooter" Libby was indicted and convicted. Safavian, who was head of Government contracting, appointed by the President and responsible for billions of dollars, was led away from his office in handcuffs because of sweetheart deals he made with Jack Abramoff and others.

On the other side of the Capitol, in the House, the majority leader in the House was convicted of three ethics violations in 1 year. What did they do to respond to that? Changed the ethics rules. He is also under indictment.

So there certainly was a culture of corruption. Staff members are still under investigation. Congressmen are still under investigation because of this culture of corruption. Members of Congress have had to resign or have lost their races because of being involved in unethical and criminal activities.

Yes, there was a culture of corruption, and we took this up as our first legislative measure and passed it. The House passed it yesterday. We need to go to conference now and send that to the President.

As we all know, we have begun debate on immigration reform. We are continuing that the week we get back. We have taken action on 7 of our top 10 legislative priorities we introduced on the first day of the 110th Congress. It is tradition that the majority party introduces the first 10 bills. We did that. Seven of them we have passed.

In the coming weeks, we expect to turn our attention to the remaining three.

Energy. As soon as we finish immigration, we are moving to energy legislation. It is bipartisan. It is legislation that has been reported out of the Energy Committee on a bipartisan basis, legislation reported out of the Environment and Public Works Committee on a bipartisan basis, and legislation that has come from the Commerce Committee on a bipartisan basis.

It is not everything I want but a great start for one of the big problems we have facing America today: energy.

In the State of Nevada, my home, we have the third highest gas prices in the country—Nevada. In Reno, NV, gas prices are around \$3.40 a gallon. We need to do something about it.

The gluttony of the oil companies is unbelievable—making tens of billions of dollars. It is so interesting, every time at just about Memorial Day, when people want to travel, their refineries go down, they need repair. Who makes all the money? It is not the person you go to who pumps gas in your car or even a self-service station you go to. They make pennies. They make less than a nickel a gallon. In Reno, NV, and other places in the country, you can pay \$3.40 a gallon at the place you buy that gasoline, and that person makes almost nothing. It is made by the gluttonous oil companies, the refiners—record profits, of course.

We are going to take a whack at that. I hope we can get it passed. It has some interesting things in it. One of the things it has is CAFE standards, saying automobiles in our country should be required to have higher mileage per gallon. We are going to try to get that done.

The bill also includes some legislation dealing with alternative energy. We cannot produce our way out of the problems we have in America with oil. We have less than 3 percent of the oil in the world in America. We cannot produce our way out of our problems. We have to lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

Today, in America, we will use 21 million barrels of oil. It is hard for me to comprehend there is that much oil in the ground, let alone our use of it in 1 day. We import about 65 percent of that oil. This oil comes from some of the worst tyrannical governments in the world. Much of that money is used

to export communism and other bad things to countries, including to America.

We must lessen our dependence on foreign oil. This administration is the most oil-friendly administration in the history of our country. So we are going to take up this legislation the second week we get back. The bill will dramatically increase America's renewable fuel production so we can begin the crucial long-term effort to reduce our dependence on unsustainable and volatile energy supplies I have talked about.

The bill requires consumer appliances, buildings, lighting and, most importantly, vehicles to become much more energy efficient. The Federal Government's own energy performance will be significantly improved as well.

I so appreciate Senator BINGAMAN, the chairman of the Energy Committee, and Senator BOXER, the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, whose career has been based on things dealing with the environment. Senator INOUE, chairman of the Commerce Committee, and his right-hand person in this effort, Senator KERRY, have done remarkably good work.

This legislation will address the growing threat of price gouging and energy market manipulation as gas prices continue to set new record highs almost every day.

I have been so impressed with MARIA CANTWELL, the Senator from Washington, for her continual efforts to go after these big gluttonous oil companies. Her price-gouging legislation and energy market manipulation legislation has been, in my opinion, a picture of how we should legislate.

Education. We expect to address reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in the next few weeks—in the next few months, probably more likely. I hope to do it, complete it, before our August recess.

Since the act was last authorized in 1998, college costs have continued to skyrocket. A growing number of students are being priced out of a college education and all the doors it opens. A child's ability to be educated should not be dependent on how much money their parents have.

I, of course, am a big fan of early childhood education. I was so impressed yesterday, not far from here, the conservative reporter—I should not say reporter—editorial writer, David Brooks, from the New York Times, talked about his belief of young people being educated and how he had become a convert and he now believes that the Government should be involved in getting kids educated.

Many of those lucky enough to make it through college now begin their careers saddled by the weight of the money they have had to borrow. In Nevada, the average debt of a student is \$15,000. That is unacceptable. It is not unusual for someone to graduate from medical school owing \$150,000.

Now, people say: Well, doctors make a lot of money. They do not make that much money. One of my friends, a prominent physician in Las Vegas—I do not think he will mind me mentioning his name; if he does, he can call me—Dr. Tony Alamo worked hard all his life—his father came in a boat from Cuba—believes in education. The senior Tony Alamo did everything he could to get his kids educated. He had a boy become a doctor.

Now, young Tony is one of the lucky ones because his dad has done so well with the rags-to-riches story in America, and I am sure as to his debt, his dad could help him pay it off, if necessary. But Dr. Alamo is very unusual because he has parents who can help him. He has explained to me that when doctors graduate from medical school, they get a job, and a lot of jobs now are with managed care, being they are all over, and they are salary jobs. They have difficulty with their salary job paying off their loans.

Our legislation will increase the maximum Pell grant, reduce student loan interest rates, expand loan forgiveness programs, and cap student loan payments at no more than 15 percent of their income. Our bill takes important steps to address this alarming and growing crisis.

We are going to take up the next work period the Defense authorization bill. One of the things we talked about doing in one of our 10 bills is to rebuild our military. It is in a state of disarray, disrepair. We learned that when we found out from the Governor of Kansas, after that tornado, that half of the equipment of her National Guard was in Iraq. Could not respond to the crisis there. It is that way all over the country.

JIM WEBB, who is a Senator from Virginia—JIM WEBB has a résumé of an American hero because that is what he is. He is a graduate of the Naval Academy, fought heroically in Vietnam, earned medals for heroism, was badly injured. His military career ended not because he wanted it to but because he was hurt and had to get out.

He believes the most important thing we can do to hold the President's feet to the fire in Iraq is force him to make sure our troops are ready to go to battle, they are trained properly, they have that equipment. He has an amendment we are going to work on to get in the Defense authorization bill.

One of the boys killed from Nevada this past week was on his fourth tour of duty in Iraq. His friend said: He told me he survived four explosions, and he didn't think he would survive another one. He did not. It was an awful death. We now have two hostages, prisoners of war in Iraq. Remember, when they were captured, they did not know who for sure the three were because they knew there was a body in the Humvee. So I called and talked to the dad, and he prayed that his boy was not in the Humvee, that he was a prisoner. But it didn't work. His boy was incinerated in

the Humvee. They could only find out who he was with DNA. He was on his fourth tour of duty.

That is what JIM WEBB is advocating. That is what we advocate. We are going to take that up in the Defense authorization bill, to make sure our troops have what they need. They do not have that now.

The bill last night that we passed provides funding to ensure our troops, until the first of October—active and retired—get some of the money they need. But we have to restore and renovate what has been ruined and damaged in Iraq.

JACK REED, a graduate of West Point, believes it will take nearly \$100 billion to bring our military up to what it should be. We are going to work toward that in the Defense authorization bill. That committee is chaired by CARL LEVIN. So we are going to make investments, critical investments to address troop readiness problems in the Army and Marine Corps caused by the President's flawed Iraq policy.

We will take a number of steps to reconfigure our national security strategy to better meet the threats and challenges we face today. That includes returning focus to the growing and increasingly overlooked problems in Afghanistan and working to improve special operations capabilities.

So once the next work session is complete, we will have taken action on all 10 of our day one priorities and passed most of them with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Now, we have had to fight to get that support, with cloture, on many different issues to get to where we could have a vote. But we have made it, and I appreciate that help from the Republicans.

We have also successfully addressed many crucial issues not on that list. The FDA reauthorization bill we passed facilitates the timely review of new drugs while improving the safety of the medicines patients take and the food we eat. We passed the Water Resources Development Act, known as WRDA, the first one in about 6 or 7 years. It will protect America's environment and keep our economy strong. We also passed the America COMPETES Act, which is an act to return our country to a position of leadership in science, research, and technology.

I would say by far the most important fight we have taken up this year is our effort to oppose the President's failed Iraq policy and bring the war to a safe and responsible end. The next work period, as I have indicated, will oppose the President's failed policy regarding the war at every turn. The Defense authorization bill will be a major part of that battle. We will continue this fight every day. We have had some bipartisan victories this year and some tough fights as well. Progress especially on the war has not come easy and that is not likely to change. But if we continue to work in good faith, seeking bipartisanship at every oppor-

tunity, I have no doubt we can accomplish great things for the American people.

Madam President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are not.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I voted in favor of the Vitter amendment yesterday because I do not support a plan that tells those who came to this country illegally up until December 31 of last year that they are excused and now have legal status.

I think that is a mistake.

But I do want to state clearly that there are a fair number of those 12 million people who came in here without legal authorization whose status must be resolved in a sensitive way. I am talking about those who have been here for decades, who have raised families, worked hard, and been model citizens. I believe we should adjust their status and give them an opportunity to earn citizenship.

That same right, however, should not apply to someone who just last December decided that they were going to sneak into this country illegally.

My understanding is that we will have additional amendments that will be sensitive to the need to distinguish that difference and I intend to support the amendments that will provide the sensitivity to those immigrants who have been here leading productive lives for a long period of time.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR TED STEVENS

Mr. BOND. Madam President, in April, TED STEVENS became the longest serving Republican Member of the United States Senate in our country's 230-year history. I join my colleagues in congratulating the Senator and thanking him for his many years of service and our friendship.

Much has already been said about Senator STEVENS' sometimes grouchy and intimidating demeanor. But if we look past the hulk ties, the scowling countenance, the vigorous defense of any and all attacks on Alaskan priorities, and the cowed staff who fear that they have fallen on the wrong side of our esteemed senior Senator, we see another, more compassionate side.

When I first arrived in Washington, DC, in 1987, my son was entering first grade at the same time as TED's beloved daughter. Sam and Lily became fast friends, and so did their parents.

TED and Catherine were very close friends of ours and like godparents to Sam. Anyone who knows TED well