

We ought to be working together. I guarantee, if we turn all of this over to the government—I heard the distinguished Senator from Ohio, who is very sincere and very loquacious and has an interesting personality. I care for him. But if we do that, everybody is going to suffer because the Federal Government cannot do it better. It is just that simple. We have all the years since 1965 to prove that.

The fact is, if we turn this over to the almighty Federal Government and the bureaucrats in Washington, it will cause a furor like we cannot believe in this country, and rightly so. I heard the distinguished Senator say: Well, if the insurance premiums should increase because of this bill, let's turn it over to the government, and we will save all that money.

What about the \$38 trillion in unfunded liability in Medicare as we stand here today? What about Medicaid going into bankruptcy within the next 10 years? There is nobody who doubts that who looks at the financial matters in this country. The reason they are is because they are run by the almighty Federal Government. I would much rather see a system whereby we allow the States themselves, which have different demographics—and the Chair is from New Hampshire, which is different from Massachusetts, and it is also different from my State of Utah. I will bet that the New Hampshireites can handle their problems a lot better than the Federal Government in Washington. I know Utah can. We have a good health care system because we do all the things that are necessary to make it good. It is closer to the people, and the government is closer to the people. They have to be responsible to the people.

I would like to see a system where we basically block grant these funds and let the States set up their own programs and have 50 State laboratories that literally can show us the way; where we can compare plans and see the good in one State and maybe adapt it to ours. If we turn this all over to a government plan, run by Washington, I cannot begin to tell you the stifling that will be to innovation and good ideas compared to allowing the 50 State laboratories, as federalism was designed to set up.

The majority leader said: The Republicans are just the party of no; they have no plan. We have 40 Members here and we have six plans. We find that even some of our plans are off the charts in cost. Some are good. The fact is, we know this system needs to be reformed. Every Republican is for reforming the system. We are not for bankrupting the country. We are not for having these almighty bureaucrats in Washington determine what we all have to do. We are not for turning everything over to the government, which is already running Medicare and Medicaid into bankruptcy. We don't believe a central form of government should control everything.

Our Founding Fathers didn't believe that. That is why they did the Constitution the way they did it. Anybody who believes they can do it better in a government-run program hasn't studied history. I have to admit some of our colleagues on the other side do believe a single-payer system is better. Single-payer is socialism, pure and simple. They don't like to call it socialism, but that is what it is. When we get socialism, we get everything that goes with it, and that means rationing.

We have to be reasonable about what services we can give. The States will do it the right way. The Federal Government will mess it up, I guarantee it. I don't know anybody who has been here as long as I have who could not acknowledge that. I don't think they should try to dispute that. I think they would be run out of Washington. If you want bureaucrats between your doctor and you, this is the way to do it—a government-run plan right here in Washington, with all the costs and expenses and the oblivious not caring about the future that we have seen year after year.

That is why Republicans are up in arms. That is why we cannot support this bill. I wish we could work with our colleagues and get together. I wish we could do a bipartisan bill. I might add that one person is not bipartisan. You can call it that, but it really isn't. I deeply respect that one person, and she knows that.

The fact is, we are a long way from having a health care bill. The further fact is, it will not be the bill that passed out of the committee today. It is going to even be worse.

If I were sitting on the Democratic side, I would be worried to death about what they are finally going to come up with. They really do, for the most part—the majority—believe a single-payer system, run by Washington, DC, and the bureaucrats here is going to be better than one run by the States. I have to admit there are some States that would mess it up, no question. We can all name them too. There are generally States that are behind the single-payer system, but there aren't many of them. The vast majority of States would show us the way and help us to find the way and help us to do a good job on health care.

Madam President, I am very concerned. I am one who likes to work in a bipartisan way, but it has to make sense. What we passed out of there today doesn't make sense, and it is going to get a lot worse. By the time they take the HELP Committee bill, which was a totally Democratic partisan bill, and take what they want out of that, and by the time they take the tricommittee bill over in the House, which is a partisan Democratic bill, it will get worse. When it does, the American people are going to be the losers.

Madam President, 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. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. UDALL of Colorado pertaining to the introduction of S. 1777 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements of Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I yield the floor.

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado assumed the Chair.)

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am so pleased that last Thursday we passed another appropriations bill in regular order and with bipartisan support. I thank Chairman KOHL for his work to pass move this bill through the process. And I think Senator BROWBACK, the ranking member, for his work on this bill as well.

This is a good bill—it is good for the Nation and it is good for my home State of Nevada. By adopting this conference report we are making investments in rural towns, in working families, and in the farm families that feed us.

This bill includes significant investments in rural development programs to help our rural towns improve their hospitals, drinking water and sewage systems. We also help rural communities attract businesses and jobs with investments in broadband access and business loan programs. These programs are especially important as we help families living in rural towns get through these tough economic times and make their communities stronger.

In this bill we also increase funding from last year's levels for nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, the Women Infants and Children program, the Commodity Food Supplemental Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program and School Lunch and Breakfast. In addition, I am pleased that in this bill Nevada has been added to the list of States authorized to run afterschool supper programs that will provide a hot meal for kids who would otherwise go hungry. We have all seen the stories on the news and in the papers about the historic demand for Federal feeding programs and the strain being placed on our local food banks and food pantries. This bill will help families in Nevada and throughout the nation who are currently struggling to put food on the table.

We also make a significant investment in the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, CFTC, with \$169 million, which is an increase of \$23 million from last year. We are making this investment because we need the CFTC to be capable of conducting rigorous oversight of futures markets, especially in

crude oil and other commodities. The CFTC must be fully equipped and staffed so it can prevent the excessive speculation that drove oil prices to record highs last year and really hurt energy consumers. This funding is an important investment that will help us rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation.

In addition to these good programs, this bill also includes funding for a number of important Nevada projects. We have funding for the Nevada Arid Rangelands Initiative, Mormon cricket control, and noxious weed control. We have assistance for the Wildfire Support Group in Orovada to help them do fuels management. And we have funding for the University of Nevada Reno for their work with the Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute, which does great research to help us understand what is going on in American agriculture so we can create good programs to help our farmers.

This bill makes a number of important investments. So I am very pleased that this bill has passed the Senate with broad support—76 Senators voting to send this conference report to the President.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

For more than a century, a proud and vibrant Greek community has thrived in Nevada. 50 years ago, the parish of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was established in Las Vegas, NV, to serve this dynamic community.

For half of a century, the parishioners at St. John the Baptist have celebrated their Hellenic heritage through cultural and spiritual events, all while giving back to the Las Vegas community through service. As one example of the many ways parishioners have inspired southern Nevada, the Panagia chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society meets monthly to serve the parish and the community by working in a hands-on fashion to serve the liturgical, charitable, educational, youth, and crisis needs of the community.

Las Vegas is profoundly enriched by the St. John the Baptist Greek Church. Every year, the church holds a Greek Festival, where Nevadans of all backgrounds listen to Greek music, eat Greek food, and embrace the spirit of kefi—a passion for life that radiates from the parishioners at St. John the Baptist.

It is my honor to celebrate the “Golden Heritage” of this storied church on Friday, October 16, 2009. To my friends at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church: OPA! May you celebrate many more successful years.

REMEMBERING SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, with the passing of Senator Teddy Kennedy, Americans lost a champion, the Senate lost a living legend, and those of us who were fortunate to know him personally lost a friend and mentor.

My memories of Teddy Kennedy reach beyond our short time together in the Senate all the way back to my days as a kid when his brother Jack was running for President of the United States. My father was an early supporter of Jack’s campaign and Teddy stayed at our house in Arizona while he was campaigning for his brother in the west. In those days, the west was not considered a plum campaign assignment so, naturally, as the youngest of his clan it fell to him. We had a full house at the time, with all of my brothers and sisters at home, so there wasn’t even a bed for him to sleep on. So he slept on the floor and never uttered a word of complaint. My memories of him from that time reflect the same Teddy Kennedy everyone describes today. He was a kind man, dedicated to his brother and his family, and always patient with all of us kids and our questions.

In later years, Teddy continued to be a frequent visitor to New Mexico. When our family was in the midst of a campaign and needed that extra bit of star power, Teddy was there the one person who could ignite a crowd like no other. As Democrats, we loved having him in our State because he could always get a turnout. He had rallies with 10,000–12,000 people—huge crowds for New Mexico.

Teddy Kennedy loved New Mexico and New Mexicans. And New Mexicans loved Teddy right back. In most family living rooms, you can find two prominently displayed photographs. They include at least one of the Kennedys be it Jack, Bobby, or Teddy and at least one of the Pope. New Mexicans just have a very deep affection for the entire Kennedy family.

My father eventually served in Jack Kennedy’s Cabinet as Interior Secretary. These days, he talks a lot about his time in JFK’s administration. He says he is now the last of the generation. The last leaf on the tree from the Kennedy Cabinet. My father was greatly saddened by Senator Kennedy’s passing.

Just about every piece of monumental legislation that has come out of this Senate over the past 50 years has had Teddy Kennedy’s stamp on it somehow. Whether it was voting rights or education improvements or health care reform—the cause of Teddy’s life—America owes a debt of gratitude to the senior senator from Massachusetts for his leadership and unwavering dedication to making our country a better place for all who call it home.

But the last chapter in Teddy’s legacy remains incomplete. That chapter is health care reform, and it is our job

as Teddy’s colleagues and friends to pick up where he left off and pass legislation that helps all Americans obtain affordable, quality health coverage. Teddy Kennedy dreamed of a day when decent, quality health care is a fundamental right and not just a privilege. We are once again at the edge of transformative change in our country. We have Teddy Kennedy to thank for getting us to this point. I look forward to joining my colleagues as we make Teddy’s final dream a reality.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise to speak of the enormous contributions to this body and to our nation of our former colleague, the late senior Senator from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy.

When I took the oath as a U.S. Senator on January 3, 2009, I have to confess to a fair amount of trepidation. Many great statesmen have served before me in this esteemed body. For a former mayor from a State so distant from Washington, DC, taking a seat among these American leaders was a little intimidating.

No sitting Senator was a larger giant than Ted Kennedy and he impacted my life long before I arrived here. As a boy born and raised in Anchorage, my parents spoke of the great pride in public service the Kennedy family inspired in our family and in our Nation. My father, the late Nick Begich, served for 2 years in the Congress with Senator Kennedy, before my dad’s death in 1972.

In many ways, Alaska and Massachusetts can’t be further apart. Alaska is just celebrating its 50th year of admission to the United States and is a vast land rich in natural resources and of conservative, independent-minded people. The Bay State was the site of one of America’s first settlements more than four centuries ago, is well developed, and its residents decidedly more liberal.

Yet in the first week of April 1968, those differences faded when Senator Kennedy traveled to Sitka to deliver a speech to the Alaska Democratic State Convention. The days-old assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. still ached in the hearts of Americans. In a scratchy tape recording of his speech, Senator Kennedy calls on Americans to rise above the frustration and fury they felt and to rededicate ourselves to “wipe away cynicism and to introduce the understanding that we wish to see future generations exercise so they will not suffer as their mothers and fathers have suffered.”

The transcript of that speech shows that Alaska U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening and the gathered Alaskans rose to a standing ovation as Senator Kennedy concluded his inspirational remarks. Today, 41 years later, those words continue to serve as an inspiration to me.

Mr. President, I had the opportunity to meet Senator Kennedy only once, when he welcomed me as a Member of this body just a few months ago. The intimidation I felt as a new Senator melted in his warmth and graciousness.