

mail, the new rules require a trip to see a Medicaid eligibility worker in person.

"There are all sorts of barriers, particularly for people without transportation and who may not have had a documented birth to begin with," Carnes said.

Raulerson said she cares for a family in Monroe County that once had Medicaid benefits but, without a car, has not been able to renew their coverage.

Medicaid officials say they don't know how many Alabamians have lost their Medicaid benefits because they couldn't, or didn't, visit an eligibility worker.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency is also working with other state agencies, such as the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, to see if they've already verified a person's citizenship, she said.

People who also receive Medicare, the health care program for seniors, or Supplemental Security Income for a disability were exempted from the requirements after state Medicaid officials from across the country complained that would be too burdensome.

Other states are struggling to comply as well.

California has yet to implement the new federal rules. Vermont and other states are phasing in the regulations. While the law was designed to cut down on Medicaid fraud by illegal immigrants, Herrmann-Steckel said she does not believe Alabama has a widespread problem of illegal aliens receiving Medicaid.

NEW MEDICAID RULES COULD COST STATE MILLIONS

(By John Hanna)

The state could face millions of dollars in additional costs because of federal rules requiring Medicaid recipients to verify their citizenship, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said Wednesday.

Sebelius said she's worried the state will have to pick up the full cost of caring for some poor, frail and elderly Kansans who are living in nursing homes, instead of sharing the cost with the federal government. Also, she said, she will propose adding state employees to verify the citizenship status of Medicaid recipients and applicants.

The governor told reporters she hopes Congress reviews the issue and other attempts to prevent illegal immigrants from obtaining social services or using driver's licenses as identification.

"There was no input from the states on how realistic these were or what the cost was," Sebelius said during a brief news conference following an unrelated meeting.

Under Medicaid requirements that took effect July 1, recipients must provide either a passport or two other documents, such as a birth certificate and a driver's license, to verify citizenship.

While the measure is targeted at illegal immigrants, some advocates for the needy have worried that citizens will either lose or be denied services because they have trouble finding the necessary documents.

State officials say the number of Kansans covered by Medicaid dropped almost 7 percent since July 1, down to 253,000 from 271,000. They believe much of the decline can be attributed to the new requirements.

Typically, every \$1 the state spends on Medicaid is matched by about \$1.50 from the federal government. If someone loses their coverage, then the state faces paying the entire bill for their services, Sebelius said.

"You're at 100 percent state dollars or push them out the door," she said.

Also, Sebelius said, the state needs to "ramp up" its staffing to handle the additional verification work. The governor is working on the budget proposal she'll submit

to the 2007 Legislature, which convenes Jan. 8.

"We're certainly going to put some of them in place," she said. "We're trying to make a careful analysis of how many we need."

She said that if the state refuses to comply with the law, it could face the loss of all federal health care dollars.

"We don't have a lot of latitude to say we're not going to do this," she said. "There are literally hundreds of millions of dollars at stake."

Meanwhile, Sebelius expressed concern about a federal law on driver's licenses passed last year.

Starting in 2008, federal agencies won't treat a state's licenses as valid ID unless a state requires license applicants to document that they're living in the United States legally. Lack of ID could prevent someone from entering a federal building or boarding a plane.

Sebelius said the law will require local driver's licenses offices to certify that someone has the proper documentation and to store the information.

"Exactly how that's going to happen, we're not quite sure," Sebelius said. "We don't basically have any of the equipment that's required to do that in any of the rural areas."

THOUSANDS IN KANSAS OFF MEDICAID FOLLOWING CITIZENSHIP RULES

Thousands of low-income Kansans have lost or been denied state health care coverage because of new rules requiring them to prove they are American citizens, state officials say.

Since the federally mandated rules took effect July 1, the number of Medicaid recipients in Kansas has decreased by about 18,000, to 253,000. While officials can't determine exactly how much of the 7 percent drop can be attributed to the new rules, they believe much of it can.

"The impact to the consumer has been severe," said John Anzivino, a vice president for MAXIMUS, a Reston, Va., company that helps administer the joint federal-state Medicaid program in Kansas. "From our perspective, this has possibly been the most dramatic change and challenge to the Medicaid program since its inception."

The new rules were included in last year's federal deficit reduction law and were designed to prevent illegal immigrants from enrolling in the state programs providing health coverage.

But consumer advocates said many vulnerable people who legitimately were eligible for assistance would lose coverage because they couldn't produce the necessary documentation.

"We expect that many of these that have lost coverage will regain coverage once they have gathered and provided the necessary documentation," Marcia Nielsen, executive director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, told the Lawrence Journal-World. "They will, however, experience a gap in coverage that could prove to be significant for some."

Medicaid applicants can prove their citizenship by providing a passport. Or they can provide other documents that verify both their citizenship, such as a birth certificate, and their identities, such as a driver's license.

Anzivino said most people seeking benefits don't have a passport and are left scrambling to find birth certificates and other documents.

The number of calls each month to a Kansas Medicaid clearinghouse has more than doubled to 49,000 from 23,000, official said.

Meanwhile, Rep. Dennis Moore, a Democrat whose district is centered on the state's

portion of the Kansas City area, said federal officials were aware of states' problems with the new rules and probably would work on it when the new Congress takes office in January.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 13—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2008 BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES (BCS) NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. MARTINEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 13

Whereas on January 8, 2009, before a crowd of more than 78,000 fans in Miami, Florida, the University of Florida Gators won the 2008 Bowl Championship Series (BCS) national title with a stunning 24-14 triumph over the University of Oklahoma Sooners;

Whereas the University of Florida is one of the premier academic institutions in the State of Florida;

Whereas the University of Florida Gators captured the Southeastern Conference championship title on December 6, 2008;

Whereas University of Florida football Head Coach Urban Meyer has won 2 BCS national championship games in the past 3 years;

Whereas University of Florida quarterback Tim Tebow was named the Most Outstanding Player of the BCS national title;

Whereas Tim Tebow won the Maxwell Award for the second time in 2 years;

Whereas the University of Florida defense held the University of Oklahoma to only 363 yards of offense in the BCS championship game;

Whereas the Gators finished 2008 ranked first in the Associated Press Poll and first in the Coaches Poll;

Whereas the Gators finished the 2008 season with a record of 13-1;

Whereas the University of Florida student athletes are among the most talented in the Nation;

Whereas University of Florida fans worldwide supported and encouraged the Gators throughout the football season;

Whereas University of Florida President J. Bernard Machen and Athletic Director Jeremy N. Foley have shown great leadership in bringing success and glory to the University of Florida; and

Whereas the University of Florida students, faculty, alumni, and all Gator fans are deeply committed to bringing pride to the University of Florida and the entire State of Florida: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Florida Gators for winning the 2008 Bowl Championship Series (BCS) national championship;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, students, and staff whose hard work and dedication helped the University of Florida Gators win the championship; and

(3) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the University of Florida for appropriate display;

(B) President of the University of Florida, J. Bernard Machen;

(C) Athletic Director of the University of Florida, Jeremy N. Foley; and

(D) Head Coach of the University of Florida football team, Urban Meyer.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, January 15, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct an oversight hearing on Job Creation and Economic Stimulus in Indian Country.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 202-224-2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 13, 2009 at 10 a.m. to conduct a committee hearing on the nomination of Mr. Shaun Donovan to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, January 13, 2009, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. At this hearing, the Committee will consider the nomination of Steven Chu, to be Secretary of Energy.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 13, 2009, at 9:30 a.m., to hold hearing a nomination hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate on January 13th, to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Mr. Arne Duncan, of Illinois, to be Secretary of Education. The hearing will commence at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT OF 2009—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 14, S. 181, and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 14, S. 181, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

Jim Webb, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Jeff Bingaman, Mary L. Landrieu, Tom Harkin, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher J. Dodd, Maria Cantwell, Debbie Stabenow, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Barbara A. Mikulski, Harry Reid.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum be waived.

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

Mr. REID. I now withdraw the motion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The motion is withdrawn.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

GAZA CONFLICT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the events that are in front of us and their significance. We are presently sharing in the excitement that surrounds this Capitol and our country at the prospect that President Obama will be taking office and leading this country in a positive fashion.

There is a lot of work to do and a lot of concerns have been brought to our attention. We are reminded by President-elect Obama that people are losing their jobs, and we cannot stand still and let it happen. Prospects are that maybe 500,000 new people a month will be out of work. The economy is fragile and there is not the capital around to get businesses started or to reverse the course we are on. And health care is of great concern to people who are uninsured and struggling.

At the same time that we are concerned about these things now in our own country, we have international responsibilities that we cannot ignore.

Even as excitement surrounds us here, inspired by the new President, we have to look away from our shores and see what is happening in the Middle East where there is fighting raging between Israel and Hamas. And even while we face domestic problems, we cannot step back from what is happening in the Middle East and the responsibility of America as the leading Nation on our globe. Although I bring this up with some degree of reluctance, we must discuss the situation that we face.

We know that governing is about choices. When we look at the Middle East right now, the choice for Israel is whether Israel steps aside and ignores the attacks on her people that come daily, without provocation.

We have all heard the opinion around the world about how awful the situation in the Middle East is. It is awful. It is terrible. When I see children hurt, when I see them killed, when I see families distressed as their economy worsens, it is a terrible sight.

I was in the Gaza Strip some years ago, bringing good news and financial assistance to the people of the Gaza as they opened a new airport. It was during the time that Arafat was President. There was hope springing up all around that maybe they could get out of the misery that existed in the Gaza Strip and develop an orderly society.

Israel is a democracy in an area of many nations that are less than democratic. When these economies flourish the wealth falls into a few hands, who build their buildings, take their resources, and buy bigger yachts and bigger airplanes for themselves and not for their countries. But there was hope that maybe the Gaza Strip would become a place of opportunity for its people. That is why I was so pleased to be there and to bring the promise of aid upon which we had agreed.

There was no Hamas there at that time. Now, Hamas is there making determinations about its future and the future of the people of the Gaza. Apparently the choice of Hamas is to continue the assault on Israel and to not let discussions take place. I am one of those people who support a two-state commitment there, knowing full well that Israel is a place that could share its knowledge and experience with the people of Gaza. But Hamas refuses to do that. It is a terrorist organization.

I remember a trip I took with several colleagues when we went to Iraq and on the way we stopped in Jordan and Syria, and we spoke to the President of Syria and I asked him to try to curb the activities of Hamas by securing the borders. I said: Why are you encouraging Hamas to find refuge here, have their headquarters here along with Hezbollah? President Asad said: They are a social service organization.

Social service—Mr. President, that is no more a social service organization than the people who attacked us on 9/11; than the people who attacked the British train system; than those who attack innocent people in various countries and cities.

Terrorism is at our throat. We have to be wary. It has changed the way our society functions. Look at all the inspections you go through if you want to catch an airplane or go into public buildings—always with an ID card. We know the results of terrorism. It is to destroy democratic society, take away the choices people have in their lives. It says women have to conduct themselves in a certain way satisfactory and