

we wouldn't be here today. As I did on the stimulus, thanking those three who had the bravery to say yes, I thank the eight or nine who had the bravery to say yes and move to regulate tobacco. Food is regulated. Drugs are regulated. Consumer products are regulated. Tobacco is not. We know this bill could prevent 80,000 tobacco-related deaths every year.

It makes me sad to think that over the years our failure to address this issue is having the greatest impact on our Nation's children. Ninety percent of all new smokers are children. I have spoken to the tobacco executives and watched them being interviewed. "Oh, we just don't want kids to get our products." Please. It is embarrassing that they can say that with a straight face when they have invented all kinds of new products, including tobacco candy. You know, there is an old cliché that "this is so easy, it is like giving candy to a baby." We know kids love candy, and what happens if you lace that candy with an addictive product? The answer is that we get a lot of kids hooked on tobacco who cannot quit when they get older.

Claims by the tobacco industry that these products are safe alternatives to smoking and they are not designed to attract kids, frankly, just don't add up. You know what they are doing. We know adult smokers are finally saying no; they are quitting, thank goodness. It is very difficult. I have watched it up close with family and friends, and some of them who quit for 2, 3 years go right back again, and it is worse than ever. This isn't easy. Don't say you are creating a safer product when you create tobacco candy, a smokeless tobacco. We know smokeless tobacco can lead to oral cancer, gum disease, heart attacks, heart disease, cancer of the esophagus, and cancer of the stomach. Smokeless tobacco products are only the latest effort by the tobacco companies to market tobacco products that they claim pose a reduced risk.

Cigarettes contain 69 known carcinogens and hundreds of other ingredients that contribute to the risk of all of the diseases I mentioned. Yet the tobacco industry is not required to list the ingredients of its products as all food products have to do. We have a right to know the calories, sugar, protein, and all those things when we eat food, but for cigarettes they don't have to list the ingredients.

The bill will make it so that we finally know what is contained in these products. The legislation will grant the FDA the authority to ban the most harmful chemicals used in tobacco and even to reduce the amount of nicotine.

A 2006 Harvard School of Public Health study revealed that the average amount of nicotine in cigarettes actually rose 11.8 percent from 1997 to 2005. How can my colleagues on the other side, who voted pretty much en masse against this bill, say we should just keep it open to amendment? How can they explain that even after all these

years, now that we know the risks of tobacco? There were reasons in the early years when we didn't know how serious it was. That is one thing. But here they have a situation where recently they raised the amount of nicotine. There is no rhyme or reason for that.

This bill will give the FDA the authority to require stronger warning labels, prevent industry misrepresentations, and regulate "reduced harm" claims about tobacco products. If you die because you use smokeless tobacco but say you die from a heart attack, you are still dead. This Congress and the President have committed to reducing health care costs through comprehensive reform. This legislation is such an important step on the way because lung cancer is a preventable disease. It is preventable, as well as the heart risks associated with smoking. Investing in prevention and wellness will enable us to increase access to quality health care while reducing costs.

Tobacco use results in \$96 billion in annual health care costs, and in California alone—my State—we spend \$9.1 billion on smoking-related health care costs. Everybody who has a heartbeat and a pulse today knows that my State suffers mightily from a terrible budget crisis—\$20 billion. We don't know where to look, what to do. People never put together the fact that smoking is causing our health care costs to swell. If my State could save \$9.1 billion on smoking-related health care costs, that really saves the education system and a lot of other important things we do in our State.

Preventive medicine and giving the authority to the FDA to vigorously enforce some strict, new laws about cigarettes is going to make a positive difference. I am proud to be here in support of this important legislation.

I wish to say again to Senator KENNEDY, if he is watching this debate, how much I respect, admire, and miss him and his presence here on this bill. If he were here, he would be roaring from the back of the Chamber about this, in the best of ways, and challenging us to move forward on this bill as quickly as we can.

The House has acted. Once the Senate acts, we can have a conference—or maybe the House will take the Senate bill—and this bill will be on the President's desk before we do health care reform. Imagine what a great preamble this would be to health care reform—tackling this incredible problem in our society, tobacco use, an incredible problem in our society that causes so much suffering and dependence and so much addiction, so much cost—if we are able to tackle this as a preamble to our health care reform, I would be so proud. I know each and every one of us who will support this will be very proud. I know President Obama will be very proud. He has struggled with tobacco addiction. He knows how tough it is to say no to cigarettes. Clearly,

the best way is to prevent someone from getting addicted in the first place.

I don't want my grandkids being lured into smoking by looking at a box of candy cigarettes and trying one, two, three, and four. I don't want that for anybody's grandkids. If people decide when they are older, when they know all of the facts, that they are going to smoke, in many ways that is their problem. But it is our job to let them know the risks and dangers. Very clearly, we have been dancing around the edges with these little warning labels, but we have not controlled tobacco. We need to do that.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—again, thanking the eight or nine Republicans for joining us—to make an investment in the health of the American people and support this legislation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the vote with respect to the Burr-Hagan amendment be modified to provide that the vote occur at 4:20 p.m. under the same conditions as previously ordered.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

JUDGE SONIA SOTOMAYOR

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, for the sake of my colleagues, I want to talk about the timing of the Judge Sotomayor nomination.

I talked with the distinguished ranking member last week on this schedule, and I would note the concerns he raised, but I am announcing today that the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold the confirmation hearing on the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to be Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court on July 13.

I have talked and met with Senator SESSIONS, the committee's ranking member, several times to discuss the scheduling of this hearing. I will continue to consult with Senator SESSIONS

to ensure that we hold a fair hearing. We were able to work cooperatively to send a bipartisan questionnaire to Judge Sotomayor within one day of her designation by President Obama. Last week the committee received her response to that questionnaire. We also received other background information from the administration, as well as the official Presidential nomination.

This is a reasonable schedule. It will be the middle of next month. It is in line with past experience. It will allow several more weeks for committee members to prepare for the hearing—several more weeks than if I had held the hearing this month—and there is no reason to unduly delay the consideration of this well-qualified nominee. Judge Sotomayor deserves the opportunity to go before the public and speak of her record, especially as some have mischaracterized and misstated it. The only place she can speak of her record is in a hearing.

It is also a responsible schedule that serves the many interests involved. Of course, first and foremost is the American people's stake in a process that is fair and thorough but not needlessly prolonged. It serves the purpose of the institution of the Senate, where we need sufficient time to prepare for a confirmation hearing. We have a full legislative plate of additional pressing business in the weeks and months ahead that is of great importance to our constituents and to the Nation. Then, of course, it serves the need of the third branch of government, which depends on the other branches of government to fill court vacancies in our independent judiciary. It serves the needs of the President who has nominated Judge Sotomayor. And lest we forget, it serves the needs of the nominee herself, who as a judge will only be able to speak publicly about her record when the hearings are convened.

This is an extremely important obligation that we as Members of the Senate take on. There are only 101 people who get a direct say in the nomination and confirmation of a Justice of the Supreme Court. First and foremost, of course, the President of the United States—and in this case, President Obama consulted with numerous Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike—prior to making his nomination. Then once the nomination is made, 100 Members of the Senate have to stand in for 300 million Americans in deciding who will get that lifetime appointment. I voted on every single current member of the Supreme Court, as well as some in the past, and I know how important an obligation that is.

The Justice who takes Justice Souter's place for the court session that convenes October 5 also needs as much time as possible to hire law clerks, to set up an office, to find a place to live here in Washington, and to take part with the rest of the Court in the preparatory work that precedes the formal start of the session on the first Monday in October.

I mention that because I have put together a schedule that tracks the process the Senate followed, by bipartisan agreement, in considering President Bush's nomination of John Roberts to the Supreme Court in 2005. At that time, I served as the ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee. I met with our Republican chairman, and we worked out a schedule which provided for Chief Justice Roberts' hearing 48 days after he was named by President Bush.

I might say that the agreement on time was reached even before the committee received the answers to the bipartisan questionnaire. And while Justice Roberts—then Judge Roberts—had not written as many opinions as Judge Sotomayor, he had been in a political policy position in Republican administrations for years before, and there were 75,000 pages of documents from that time. In fact, some arrived almost on the eve of the hearing itself. And, of course, that nomination replaced Justice O'Connor, who was recognized as a pivotal vote on the Supreme Court.

If something that significant required 48 days, and Republicans and Democrats agreed that was sufficient to prepare for that hearing, in accordance with our agreement on the initial schedule, certainly that is a precedent that says we have more than adequate time to prepare for the confirmation hearing for Judge Sotomayor.

My initial proposal to Senator SESSIONS was that we begin the hearing on July 7, following the Senate's return from the Fourth of July recess. I have deferred the start date to July 13 in an effort to accommodate our Republican members. With bipartisan cooperation, we should still be able to complete Judiciary Committee consideration of the nomination during the last week in July, and allow the Senate to consider the nomination during the first week in August, before the Senate recesses on August 7.

In selecting the date, I am trying to be fair to all concerned. I want to be fair to the nominee, allowing her the earliest possible opportunity to respond to attacks made about her character. It is not fair for critics to be calling her racist—one even equating her with the head of the Ku Klux Klan, an outrageous comment, and both Republicans and Democrats have said it was outrageous—without allowing her the opportunity to speak to it, and she can't speak to it until she is in the hearing.

I also want to conclude the process without unnecessary delay so that she might participate fully in the deliberations of the Supreme Court selecting cases and preparing for its new term. In his May 1 letter to President Obama, Justice Souter announced his resignation effective "when the Supreme Court rises for the summer recess this year," which will happen later this month. Thereafter, the Supreme Court prepares for the next term. To participate fully in the upcoming delibera-

tions, it would be helpful for his successor to be confirmed and able to take part in the selection of cases as well in preparing for their argument.

I am merely following the timeline we followed with the Roberts nomination. The timeline for the Alito nomination provides no reason to delay the hearing for Judge Sotomayor. It presented a very different situation in many ways. For one thing, that nomination was made with no consultation by President Bush. By contrast, President Obama devoted several weeks to consultation with both Republicans and Democrats before making his selection. The Alito nomination was President Bush's third nomination to succeed Justice O'Connor. It followed 4 months of intense effort by the Judiciary Committee, beginning with Justice O'Connor's announcement on July 1. And finally, the Christmas holidays helped account for the timing of those hearings. I do not believe Bastille Day requires us to delay the confirmation hearings for the first Hispanic nominated to the Supreme Court for an additional 6 weeks.

Some may recall that Justice O'Connor's resignation in 2005 was contingent on the "nomination and confirmation of [her] successor." She continued to serve on the Supreme Court when its new term began in October 2005, and until Justice Alito was confirmed at the end of January 2006. In addition, proceedings to fill that vacancy involved a more extended process, not only because Justice O'Connor represented a pivotal vote on the Supreme Court on so many issues, but because President Bush first nominated John Roberts and then withdrew that nomination, then nominated Harriet Miers and withdrew her nomination when Republicans and conservatives revolted, and finally nominated Samuel Alito. The nomination of Judge Alito was the third Supreme Court nomination that the Senate was asked to consider, and followed the withdrawal of the Miers nomination by only 3 days.

Given that sequence of events, and the then upcoming Christmas holiday, that hearing on the late October nomination of Samuel Alito was appropriately scheduled by the Republican Chairman to begin after the New Year. In addition, Judge Alito did not return his questionnaire until November 30. His hearing was held 40 days after his questionnaire was returned, which includes the Christmas and the holiday period. That is substantially equivalent to the 39 days between the time receipt of Judge Sotomayor's questionnaire response and her hearing.

Of course, in the case of the current nomination, Judge Sotomayor had been reported to be a leading candidate for the vacancy as soon as it arose on May 1, and her record was being studied from at least that time forward. The right wing groups attacking her were doing so long before she was named by the President on May 26, and those attacks have intensified since her designation.

I do not want to see this historic nomination of Sonia Sotomayor treated unfairly or less fairly than the Senate treated the nomination of John Roberts. In 2005, when President Bush made his first nomination to the Supreme Court, Senator MCCONNELL, who was the majority whip, said the Senate should consider and confirm the nominations within 60 to 70 days. We worked hard to achieve that.

The nomination of Judge Sotomayor should more easily be considered within that timeframe. Judge Sotomayor has been nominated to succeed Justice Souter, a like-minded, independent and fair Justice, not bound by ideology, but one who decided each case on its merits and in accordance with the rule of law. We have the added benefit of her career being one that includes her service on the judiciary for the past 17 years. Her judicial decisions are matters of the public record. Indeed, when my staff assembled her written opinions and offered them to the Republican staff, they declined, because they already had them and were reviewing them. We have the benefit of her judicial record being public and well known to us. We have the benefit of her record having been a subject of review for the last month, since at least May 1, when she was mentioned as a leading candidate to succeed Justice Souter. We have the benefit of having considered and confirmed her twice before, first when nominated to be a judge by a Republican President and then when elevated to the circuit court by a Democratic President. We have the benefit of not having to search through Presidential libraries for work papers of the nominee. By contrast, the 75,000 pages of work papers for John Roberts required extensive time and effort to retrieve them from Presidential libraries and to overcome claims of privilege. In fact, they were still being received just days before the hearing.

To delay Judge Sotomayor's hearing until September would double the amount of time that Republicans and Democrats agreed was adequate to prepare for Judge Roberts' hearing. That would not be fair or appropriate. That would not be equal treatment.

Unlike the late July nomination of John Roberts, this nomination of Judge Sotomayor by President Obama was announced in May. Unlike the resignation of Justice O'Connor that was not announced until July, the retirement of Justice Souter was made official on May 1. Given that the vacancy arose 2 months earlier, and the nomination was made after bipartisan consultation 2 months earlier, by following the Roberts roadmap, we should be able to complete the process 2 months earlier. We should be able to complete the entire process by the scheduled recess date of August 7.

Of course, while the Roberts nomination was pending, Chief Justice Rehnquist passed away and President Bush decided to withdraw the initial nomination to be an Associate Justice,

and proceeded to nominate John Roberts to succeed the Chief Justice, instead. We did not insist that the process start over; rather, we continued to move forward. It was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, with its destruction and toll in damage and human life, that pushed the start of the hearings back 1 week, by bipartisan agreement.

We were still able to complete Senate consideration and the Senate confirmed John Roberts to be the Chief Justice 72 days after he was initially designated to be an Associate Justice. We did this despite the fact his initial nomination was withdrawn and only shortly before his hearing he was re-nominated to serve as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. And we did this despite the terrible aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where everybody—Republicans and Democrats alike—agreed that we should hold back a week on the hearings so we could all concentrate the Nation's resources on Hurricane Katrina. So that required a week's delay. If we followed the same schedule, 72 days after Judge Sotomayor was nominated to the Supreme Court would be August 6—and we will not have to lose 7 of those days to Hurricane Katrina.

Her historic nomination should be treated as fairly as the nomination of John Roberts was treated by the Senate. Given the outrageous attacks on Judge Sotomayor's character, I do not think it fair to delay her hearing. I cringed when I was told that, during the courtesy visit Judge Sotomayor paid to Senator MCCONNELL, reporters shouted questions about conservatives calling her a racist. She had to sit there silently and could not respond. She deserves that opportunity as soon as possible.

The hearing is the opportunity for all Senators on the Judiciary Committee, both Republicans and Democrats, to ask questions, to raise concerns, and to evaluate the nominee. As Senator SESSIONS' Saturday radio speech ably demonstrates, Republican Senators are already prepared to ask their questions. Last week, we were considering another judicial nomination at the meeting of the Judiciary Committee when Senator KYL suggested that he may oppose all of President Obama's nominees given what he views as the criteria President Obama is considering in selecting them. Republicans have questioned whether her recognition that she brings her life experience with her, as all judges do, is somehow disqualifying.

Our Republican colleagues have said they intend to ask her about her judicial philosophy. It doesn't take a month to prepare to ask these questions. In fact, most of them have already raised the questions. They will surely be prepared to ask them more than a month from now. And during that month, we have a week's vacation from the Senate. I intend to be using that week—without the interruption of committee hearings, without the inter-

ruption of votes, without the interruption of the regular Senate business—to prepare for the hearings. I would advise those Senators who feel they have to have extra time to forgo your vacation and spend that week preparing for the hearing. Holding Judge Sotomayor's hearing on July 13 will, in effect, afford 10 weeks for them to have prepared.

Because this is a historic nomination, I hope all Senators will cooperate. It is a schedule that I think is both fair and adequate—fair to the nominee, but also adequate for the Senate to prepare for the hearing and Senate consideration. There is no reason to indulge in needless and unreasonable delay.

I say this is a historic nomination because it should unite and not divide the American people and the Senate. Hers is a distinctly American story. Whether you are from the south Bronx or the south side of Chicago or south Burlington, VT, the American dream inspires all of us. Her life story is the American dream. And so, I might add, is the journey of the President who nominated her.

Some are simply spoiling for a fight. There have been too many unfair attacks, people unfairly calling her racist and bigoted. I know Sonia Sotomayor, and nothing could be further from the truth. These are some of the same people who vilify Justice Souter and Justice O'Connor. Americans deserve better. There are others who have questioned her character and temperament. She deserves a fair hearing, not a trial by attack and assaults upon her character. So let's proceed to give her that fair hearing without unnecessary delay.

I am also disappointed that some have taken to suggesting that after 17 years as a Federal judge, including 11 as a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, Judge Sotomayor does not understand "the judge's role." I know her to be a restrained and thoughtful judge. She has reportedly agreed with judges appointed by Republican Presidents 95 percent of the time. Let us respect her achievements, her experience and her understanding. Let no one demean this extraordinary woman or her understanding of the constitutional duties she has faithfully performed for the last 17 years. I urge all Senators to join with me to fulfill our constitutional duties with respect.

I have said many times on the floor of this great body over my 35 years here that as Senators we should be the conscience of the Nation, as we are called upon to be. There have been occasions when this Senate—Republicans and Democrats alike—has united and shown they can be the conscience of the Nation. I would say this is one time we should rise above partisanship and be that conscience.

When I met with Judge Sotomayor, I asked her about her approach to the law. She answered that, of course, one's life experience shapes who you are, but ultimately and completely—

her words—as a judge, you follow the law. There is not one law for one race or another. There is not one law for one color or another. There is not one law for rich, a different one for poor. There is not one law for those who belong to one political party or another. There is one law for all Americans. And she made it very emphatic that as a judge, you follow that one law.

There is only one law. We all know that. She said, ultimately and completely a judge has to follow the law, no matter what their upbringing has been. That is the kind of fair and impartial judging that the American people expect. That is respect for the rule of law. That is the kind of judge she has been.

The purpose of the hearing is to allow Senators to ask questions and raise their concerns. It is also the time the American people can see the nominee, consider her temperament and evaluate her character, too. I am disappointed that some Republican Senators have declared that they will vote no on this historic nomination and have made that announcement before giving the nominee a fair chance to be heard at her hearing. It is incumbent on us to allow the nominee an opportunity to be considered fairly and allow her to respond to false criticism of her record and her character. Those who are critical and have doubts should support the promptest possible hearing. That is where questions can be asked and answered. That is why we hold hearings.

Judge Sotomayor is extraordinarily well equipped to serve on the Nation's highest court. To borrow the phrase that the First Lady used last week, not only do I believe that Judge Sotomayor is prepared to serve all Americans on the Supreme Court, I believe the country is more than ready to see this accomplished Hispanic woman do just that. This is a historic nomination, and it is an occasion for the Senate and our great Nation to come together. This is the time for us to come together.

The process is another step toward the American people regaining confidence in their judiciary. Our independent judiciary is considered to be the envy of the world. Though less visible than the other two branches, the judiciary is a vital part of the infrastructure that knits our Nation together under the rule of law. Every time I walk up the steps into the Supreme Court, I look at the words over the entrance to the Supreme Court. They are engraved in marble from my native State of Vermont. Those words say: "Equal Justice Under Law." The nomination of Judge Sotomayor keeps faith with that model.

Her experience as a trial court judge will be important. Only Justice Souter of those currently on the Supreme Court previously served as a trial court judge. Judge Sotomayor has the added benefit of having been in law enforcement as a tough prosecutor who received her early training in the office

of the longtime and storied New York District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau.

I appreciate that she has shown restraint as a judge. We do not need another Supreme Court Justice intent on second-guessing Congress, undercutting laws passed to benefit Americans and protect their liberties, and making light of judicial precedent.

President Obama handled the selection process with the care that the American people expect and deserve, and met with Senators from both sides of the aisle. Senator SESSIONS suggested to the President that it was important to nominate someone with a judicial record. Judge Sotomayor has more judicial experience than any nominee in recent history.

I wanted someone outside the judicial monastery, and whose experiences were not limited to those in the rarified air of the Federal appellate courts. Her background as someone who was largely raised by a working mother in the South Bronx, who has never forgotten where she came from, means a great deal to me. Judge Sotomayor has a first-rate legal mind and impeccable credentials. I think she combines the best of what Senator SESSIONS and I recommended that the President look for in his nominee.

The Supreme Court's decisions have a fundamental impact on Americans' everyday lives. One need look no further than the Lilly Ledbetter and Diana Levine cases to understand how just one vote can determine the Court's decision and impact the lives and freedoms of countless Americans.

I believe Judge Sotomayor will continue to do what she has always done as a judge—applying the law to the case before her. I do not believe she will act in the mold of conservative activists who second-guess Congress and undercut laws meant to protect Americans from discrimination in their jobs and in voting, to protect the access of Americans to health care and education, and to protect their privacy from an overreaching government.

I believe Judge Sotomayor understands that the courthouse doors must be as open to ordinary Americans as they are to government and big corporations.

President Obama is to be commended for having consulted with Senators from both sides of the aisle. I was with him on some of the occasions that he did. I have had Senators come up to me, Republican Senators, and tell me they had never been called by a President of their own party, to say nothing of a Democratic President, to talk about a Supreme Court nominee. But President Obama did call and reach out.

Now it is the Senate's duty to come to the fore. I believe all Senators, of both parties, will work with me to consider this nomination in a fair and timely manner.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, in 1945, President Truman delivered a speech to a joint session of Congress, in which he declared:

Millions of our citizens do not now have a full measure of opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health. Millions do not now have protection or security against the economic effects of sickness. The time has arrived for action to help them attain that opportunity and that protection.

That was said by President Truman, 10 or 11 Presidents ago, perhaps six decades ago, and 64 years later we are still fighting to provide that opportunity and that protection.

A severely weakened economy, growing unemployment, rising health care and health insurance costs, and declining employment-based insurance are all factors contributing to the current health care crisis. Today, 47 million Americans are uninsured. An additional 25, 30, 35, as many as 40 million Americans are underinsured and millions of Americans are either underinsured or uninsured and are saddled with catastrophic medical debt.

Closing the health care gap will dramatically improve the public's health. It will also lead predictability to national health spending, which is essential if we are going to get health care costs under control.

Closing the health care gap would dramatically reduce personal bankruptcies, more than half of which result from catastrophic illness and the huge bills that go with it.

Think about that for a moment. Most bankruptcies in this country are because people have had health care bills they simply cannot pay. Most of those people have those health care bills which they cannot pay which then force them into bankruptcy. Most of those people have health insurance, but it is inadequate and has too many gaps in it.

Closing the health care gap is a short-term and a long-term investment in the health of Americans, the health of U.S. businesses—businesses whose premiums are inflated by the costs of uncompensated care. It is an investment in the health of our economy, which benefits from the health care industry but not from already too high health care costs, further inflated by needless red tape, needless duplication, needless indifference to health care needs that become more serious and more costly when they are not caught early.

Per capita health care spending in the United States is 53 percent higher here than that of any other nation in the world, and we are the only nation