

of two Capitol police officers who were killed, Officers Chestnut and Gibson.

Gibson I knew. We were on a Senate retreat in Virginia, and my wife became ill. Gibson is the man who ran with all of the paraphernalia to make sure she was going to be OK. He was profusely perspiring. I can still remember very clearly this wonderful hard-working man. He came to save my wife.

Well, these two officers were killed. In the process of their being murdered by a madman, we do not know how many people's lives were saved in the Capitol complex. But it was the impetus that caused us to complete this great Capitol Visitor Center that we have, in the sacrifice that they certainly did not intend to make but they did make because of their training and skill.

Yesterday, an armed man fled a traffic stop, driving erratically around Capitol Hill. We do not know all of the details, but we do know that he struck a parked car, we understand now a motorcycle and a police car, a Capitol police car, and he almost ran over two police officers.

But when he got out of the car, a block from where we are right now, he came with an Uzi-type weapon, semi-automatic weapon, and started firing at the police and anyone else around them.

Fortunately, the Capitol police officers stopped him before he had a chance to do any harm. He was shot numerous times as was required under the circumstances. But the interesting part about this is what did the police officers do when the firing stopped, when they could no longer hear the bullets. They immediately ran over and administered first aid to this domestic terrorist. They tried to save the life of a man who seconds earlier tried to take theirs.

I do not know how we define heroism, but I think that is a pretty good description. An investigation is, of course, underway. We do not know all of the details, nor can we know how many lives these officers saved yesterday. And we cannot sufficiently thank them for what they did. But on behalf of the entire Senate, we appreciate each of them. I admire what you do. Wherever we go on this Capitol complex, there are people looking over us. That is not the way it always was, but now with terrorism, with there being a war that is being waged against our great country, we have had to have all of these police officers protect not only us but all of the people who come here on a daily basis.

We have people whom we can see in uniform. We have people we do not know are police officers; they are in plain clothing. We deeply value the honorable work these men and women do for us every day, putting their lives on the line to protect people they do not know.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

HONORING THE CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I join my colleague, the majority leader, in extending my appreciation this morning to our marvelous Capitol police force. We were reminded in a very vivid way yesterday that they are on constant alert and that they are in constant danger.

Fortunately, incidents such as the one that took place yesterday are rare. We are all glad for that. And we are glad we have such a professional, well-trained, and courageous group of men and women to keep us safe day in and day out. They are always ready. On behalf of the entire Senate family, I want to express my appreciation for their hard work and their courage in the line of duty.

HEALTH CARE WK VI, DAY IV

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the past several weeks I have come down to the Senate floor just about every day we have been in session, and I have brought a simple message: Americans want health care reform, and both parties want to deliver that reform. What Americans do not want is a government takeover masked as a reform that leaves them paying more for less. And they don't want us to rush something as important and as personal as health care reform just to have something to brag about at a parade or a press conference.

So it was perplexing to hear the President say yesterday that the "status quo . . . is not an option." I cannot think of a single person in Washington who disagrees with that statement. No one is defending the status quo, no one. What we are defending is the right of the American people to know what they are getting into: the exact details and the cost.

That leads me to another distressing aspect of the administration's approach to this debate, the artificial timeline for reform. The President has said he wants to see a health care reform bill out of the Senate in 3 weeks and on his desk in October. His rationale seems to be the same as it was during the debate over the stimulus. The economy's in bad shape, so health care reform has to happen right away.

Certainly the two are connected. But the problem is that many of the Democrat proposals we have seen would not make the situation better, they would make it even worse. And due to our current financial situation, we need to be even more careful about how we spend our money, not less. We saw the consequences of carelessness on the stimulus bill. We rushed that, and Americans got burned. We must not make that mistake again.

But we can start with a point of real agreement: Americans want reform, but they want us to be careful.

An artificial deadline virtually guarantees a defective product—virtually guarantees a defective product. Look no further than the drafts coming out of the House and Senate this very week. Both of them are shot through with weaknesses and deficiencies typical of a rush job. First, they cost way too much. According to early estimates, the House bill would cost more than \$1 trillion over the next 10 years and yet—listen to this—it still wouldn't cover all the uninsured; \$1 trillion and it wouldn't cover all the uninsured. It includes a new tax on small business that could keep companies from hiring low-wage employees. It creates a new nationwide government-run health plan that could force millions off their current insurance. One of the worst parts is that advocates of the House bill want small businesses and seniors to pay for it; small businesses and seniors they want to pay for it. Businesses would pay through new taxes, seniors through cuts to Medicare, cuts that hospitals in my home State simply cannot sustain.

I have talked to the hospitals in Kentucky that are worried about the impact these Medicare cuts would have on the services Kentucky hospitals currently provide to seniors. I encourage all of my colleagues to talk to the people who care for patients day in and day out at hospitals in their own States and see what they have to say about this proposal. It may be a lot different than what some of the interest groups here in Washington are saying.

Small businesses are worried too. At a time when the unemployment rate is already approaching 10 percent, the new tax on small business will inevitably lead to even more job losses. Business groups across the country that have seen the details of the House bill are warning that it would certainly kill jobs. Under the House bill, taxes on some small businesses could rise as high as roughly 45 percent. Let me say that again: Taxes on small business up to 45 percent, meaning their tax rate would be about 30 percent higher than the rate for big corporations. So small businesses, which have created approximately two out of three new jobs over the past decade, get a bigger tax increase than big corporations. It is worth asking why small businesses, which created about two-thirds of the new jobs in this country over the last 10 years, get hit so hard under the House bill. Is it because they can't fight back as hard as big businesses? Either way, the House bill would lead to some small businesses paying higher taxes than big businesses, even though the U.S. corporate rate for all of our corporations is already one of the highest in the world.

The Senate bill is as bad. As currently written, the HELP Committee bill would increase the Federal deficit by at least \$645 billion, at least that

much. If we add all the Medicaid changes the HELP Committee anticipates, it increases the Federal deficit by more than \$1 trillion at a time when we are already spending about \$500 million a day on interest on the national debt so far this year—\$500 million a day in interest on the national debt so far this year. It too would kill jobs by requiring businesses to either insure all of their employees or pay a tax if they do not. It would levy a tax on those Americans who don't have or cannot afford health insurance. It also fails to reform malpractice laws. It spends billions of dollars on projects unrelated to the crisis at hand. It forces millions of Americans off of their current plans—forces millions of Americans off of their current plans—despite repeated assurances from the administration that it does not. And like the House bill, it creates a nationwide government plan that could lead to the same kind of denial, delay, and rationing of care that we see in other countries.

Health care reform is vital but it is not easy. If the House bill and the HELP bill are any indication, it is certainly not something that should be rushed. Both bills are too expensive, particularly for small businesses and seniors. They are too disruptive of the health care Americans currently have, and they are ineffective in addressing the health care problem in its entirety.

Americans have a right to expect that we will take enough time on this legislation not to make the same mistake we made on the stimulus. The House and Senate bills we have seen this week show we are not there yet, not even close. We need to slow down and let the American people see what they are getting into with these so-called reforms. We all want reform, but we want the right reform.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half.

The Senator from Tennessee.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I rise to speak about where we find ourselves today. This is a momentous time in our country's history, as all of us in both bodies on both sides of the aisle find ourselves focused on the issue of health care reform. In the middle 1990s, I had the tremendous honor of serving the State of Tennessee in a position that allowed me to oversee the State's Medicaid Program and many other programs in our State that focused on the needs of many of the underserved. Since that time, I have been convinced that we, all of us, have a moral responsibility to do everything we can to ensure that Americans of all walks of life have the opportunity for affordable, quality private health insurance.

I have probably attended 50 meetings in the last 90 days working with others toward that end. I am convinced that there are at least 90 people in this body who share the goal of ensuring that Americans of all walks of life have the opportunity for affordable quality health care. It is my hope that we will end up with a bipartisan solution.

I have been disappointed in the results, though, of legislation that has come forward thus far. My sense is that the House of Representatives is promoting a bill that does not meet the mark. The HELP Committee just passed out, on a party-line vote, a bill that, again, does not meet the mark. What concerns me is there are so much that we could agree on, yet we tend to focus on what is out of bounds and does not take us to the place we would all like to be. It is to that end that I rise to talk about this issue.

All of us know that our country has seen unprecedented debt levels. The leader of the Senate Republicans just spoke about that issue. The President in some ways found himself in this place, but on the other hand, since being in office, he has accumulated debt on top of debt for future generations. All of us understand that our biggest obligations exist in entitlements, with Medicare and Social Security. Most of us thought, as we came into this Congress, that one of our major focuses would have to be to get entitlements under control so that while we are doing this unprecedented short-term spending, which I oppose, at least the world community would realize we are trying to tackle our long-term obligations so they would continue to buy our bonds in order that we could go on here in this country.

I hoped strongly we would focus on that, and last Congress we had a bipartisan bill, by the way, supported by Republicans and Democrats, to do that.

What has happened, though—and this is pretty unfathomable to me—is that during health care reform, what has been focused on is Medicare, which has a \$38 trillion unfunded liability, a program where the trustees have said that

it is insolvent and is going to go into the hole in a huge way in 8 years. What is being discussed in this body, and what has already been agreed to by many on the House side, is taking money from Medicare, a program which is insolvent, one that, instead of taking money from, we should be trying to make solvent, but we are taking money from that program to create a whole new set of entitlements that will add incredible amounts of debt to our country's balance sheet.

It is almost unfathomable to believe that people in this body would be looking to make a program that is insolvent even more insolvent by leveraging it to create another program.

For that reason, because I know the Finance Committee is in meetings, in small groups but also as a committee, to try to figure out a way to solve this health care problem—and it is my hope that they will do it in a way that makes sense, in a way that builds bipartisan support—I have delivered today to the majority leader a letter signed by 35 Senators making this body, making the President aware of the fact that we will not support further jeopardizing the Medicare Program by using it to leverage a new entitlement. It is my hope that in delivering this letter, while we have 35 signatures at this moment, there will be more added. While these are all Republican signatures, I actually think there are many on the other side of the aisle who question leveraging an insolvent program for a new program. I have delivered this letter in the hopes that the Finance Committee, the leadership on the Democratic side of the Senate, and the President will seek a solution that is different than taking money from this insolvent program that aids our seniors to create a new entitlement.

One of the most discouraging issues is, it is my understanding—and I hope I am wrong—that the folks who are talking about using Medicare money to create a new entitlement are not even dealing with SGR. Every 18 months, we sit down and discuss the doc fix. Doctors all across the country call us wanting to make sure that their payments are not going to be cut by 21 percent this year. So each year we kick the can down the road and solve that for a year, year and a half, because of budgetary constraints. It is my understanding that what is being discussed at this moment is taking money from Medicare, leveraging a new program which will add increasing debt, and not solving that problem even during the 10-year budget window this legislation will deal with.

Again, I have attended every meeting I have been asked to. I went to the White House yesterday. I met with a bipartisan group last night. I believe that this country does need to figure out a way so that all Americans can access affordable quality health care. I know all Americans are concerned about the cost of health care. I stand here as one Senator committed to