

In fiscal year 2009, the Alaska Region Forest Service funding level for subsistence management activities in the two largest forests in the National Forest System—the 17 million acre Tongass National Forest—an area roughly the size of West Virginia—and the 5.6 million acre Chugach National Forest—totaled \$5 million. The current bill before you would only fund half this amount, \$2,582,000.

The need has not suddenly changed, and I hope Congress has not suddenly forgotten its obligation to the Alaska Native people. I can only hope that the fiscal year 2010 amount resulted from the innocent ignorance of an incoming administration about the obligation the Federal Government has to the Alaska Native people.

Subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering is about more than simple economics. It is about the survival of a way of life and identity of Alaska's Native peoples. However, its economic importance is central to rural Alaska life and cannot be overstated. Rural Alaska residents harvest approximately 44 million pounds of fish and wildlife for food, the replacement value of which is \$220 million.

Subsistence is a major source of employment and sustenance for families in rural Alaska; subsistence participants work to feed and clothe their families. Wild foods supply one-third of the caloric requirements of rural Alaskans, in many remote communities it can total 75 percent or more.

One in every five Alaskans lives in a rural area, about 125,000 people in more than 250 communities. Most rural settlements are off the road network and are comprised of fewer than 500 people, the majority made up of Native villages. In a State where approximately 15 percent of the population is Alaska Native, nearly half of all rural Alaskans are Alaska Native.

Of subsistence foods taken by Alaskans, 60 percent of the catch is made up of fish, land mammals make up 20 percent, marine mammals make up 14 percent, birds, shellfish, plants, and berries make up the remaining 6 percent of the rural harvest of wild food.

Mr. President, I ask for your assistance in helping the Federal Government honor its commitment to the Alaska Native people and fully fund the Alaska Region Forest Service subsistence management budget.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO VIVIA MOTSINGER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a good friend, Vivia Motsinger, on the recent celebration of

her 90th birthday. A longtime resident of Washington, DC, Vivia's 90 years may best be characterized by her incredible work ethic, as well as her undying devotion to public service.

Vivia Motsinger was born the daughter of a shipbuilder in Portsmouth, VA, on September 20, 1919. Years later, Vivia's father moved the family to our Nation's Capital in order to work in the construction of government buildings. She went to school at Roosevelt High, where she graduated in 1935 at the age of 16. Tragically, 2 years later her father died, making teenaged Vivia the only breadwinner in her family. Grateful to have the aid of Social Security to supplement her meager earning power, Vivia started out her career working hard to assist her mother and younger sister.

Vivia's professional career saw her begin as a clerk at a naval gun factory during WWII. Later, she found employment as a stenographer and an administrative assistant at the U.S. Department of State. Mrs. Motsinger's final position, before she retired, was that of a Foreign Service worker. She is very proud of the accomplishments that she has made and grateful for her years of service to the Federal Government.

Vivia has been blessed with a loving family. She married a remarkable husband, who worked as an officer for the Central Intelligence Agency, and raised a son who is now employed by NASA. She loves her church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and is proud to have become a member some 34 years ago. She has spent her years of retirement studying her heritage, a hobby which has driven her to become avidly involved with genealogy and research.

With her optimism and strong work ethic, Vivia represents the spirit of America. Despite challenging circumstances, she has achieved great things. I congratulate Vivia Motsinger on this her 90th birthday.

GOLD STAR MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this Sunday marks Gold Star Mother's Day, a day for us to honor the mothers of servicemembers lost while serving in our Armed Forces.

This Sunday, the last Sunday in September, is a day that is part of a larger Gold Star tradition, one that brings together all family members who have lost a son or daughter in uniform.

The gold star has its roots in World War I, when families would display in the windows of their homes a blue star for every family member who was serving and a gold star for every family member who had died in the war. In 1936, Congress established the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mother's Day.

America has been home to hundreds of thousands of Gold Star Mothers, each of whom has lost a child. They often choose to become part of an organization of other Gold Star Mothers,

one that—in the words of one mother—“none of us ever wanted to become eligible to join but we are grateful to have.” It is a testament to their strength that so many continue to volunteer and to remember, long after they learn of their own loss.

On Sunday, the American people are encouraged to display our flag and also to hold meetings to publicly express the love, sorrow, and reverence we have for Gold Star Mothers.

Gold Star Mothers from across the country will visit our Nation's capital, to remember. They will visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, a short distance from this place, where many will lay wreaths for their sons or daughters. They will travel to Arlington National Cemetery and view the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In Illinois, Gold Star Mothers will be recognized in ways big and small, from the Governor's annual ceremony in Chicago, to a barbeque held in their honor at the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial in Marseilles, Il, to commemorations in townhalls and on radio shows.

Gold Star Mothers affect every community in this country. Their presence is another reminder that in the Senate, the vote for war is among the most significant votes a Senator will ever take.

I hope all Americans will take a moment out of their day this Sunday to honor Gold Star Mothers, their families, and their children who died while serving our country.

PUBLIC OPTION LITE

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, a September 17, 2009, editorial in the Wall Street Journal, “Public Option Lite,” clearly and concisely describes how the Finance Committee chairman's health care plan would result in a near total government takeover of the health care industry.

Because it does not include the public option, the chairman's plan has been touted as a more moderate proposal than other bills before Congress. But, as the Journal writes, the absence of the public option “is a political offering without much policy difference. His plan remains a public option by other means.”

Near total government control would be achieved through the bill's two main mechanisms: an individual mandate for all Americans to purchase government-approved insurance and the regulatory insurance “exchange.” The inevitable outcomes of these mechanisms would be “vast new insurance regulation” and “a vast increase in the government's share of U.S. health spending, forcing doctors, hospitals, insurance companies, and other health providers to serve politics, as well as, or even over and above patients.” Thus, power would be centralized with politicians and bureaucrats, rather than patients and doctors.

Along the way, as the editorial points out, the bill would increase the

cost of insurance through new taxes and mandates, reduce consumer choice, and ultimately ration health care in an attempt to keep costs under control.

The editorial also explains that most of the Medicare cuts used to help pay for this plan “come from supposedly automatic cuts that a future Congress is unlikely to ever approve, that is, until this entitlement spending swamps the entire federal budget.” Then, “The government will have no choice but to raise taxes to European welfare-state levels or impose drastic restrictions on patient care. Or likely, both.”

The article concludes that this plan is “a recipe to ruin healthcare” and “bankrupt the country.”

I ask unanimous consent to have this article printed in the RECORD and urge my colleagues to consider the facts and arguments contained in this editorial.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 17, 2009]

PUBLIC OPTION LITE

Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus finally unveiled his health-care plan yesterday to a chorus of bipartisan jeers. The reaction is surprising given that President Obama all but endorsed the outlines of the Baucus plan last week. But the hoots are only going to grow louder as more people read what he's actually proposing.

The headline is that Mr. Baucus has dropped the unpopular “public option,” but this is a political offering without much policy difference. His plan remains a public option by other means, imposing vast new national insurance regulation, huge new subsidies to pay for the higher insurance costs this regulation will require and all financed by new taxes and penalties on businesses, individuals and health-care providers. Other than that, Hippocrates, the plan does no harm.

The centerpiece of the Obama-Baucus plan is a decree that everyone purchase heavily regulated insurance policies or else pay a penalty. This government mandate would require huge subsidies as well as brute force to get anywhere near the goal of universal coverage. The inevitable result would be a vast increase in the government's share of U.S. health spending, forcing doctors, hospitals, insurance companies and other health providers to serve politics as well as or even over and above patients.

The plan essentially rewrites all insurance contracts, including those offered by businesses to their workers. Benefits and premiums must be tailored to federal specifications. First-dollar coverage would be mandated for many services, and cost-sharing between businesses and employees would be sharply reduced, though this is one policy that might reduce health spending by giving consumers more skin in the game. Nor would insurance be allowed to bear any relation to risk. Inevitably, costs would continue to climb.

Everyone would be forced to buy these government-approved policies, whether or not they suit their needs or budget. Families would face tax penalties as high as \$3,800 a year for not complying, singles \$950. As one resident of Massachusetts where Mitt Romney imposed an individual mandate in 2006 put it in a Journal story yesterday, this is like taxing the homeless for not buying a mansion.

The political irony here is rich. If liberal health-care reform is going to make people

better off, why does it require “a very harsh, stiff penalty” to make everyone buy it? That's what Senator Obama called it in his Presidential campaign when he opposed the individual mandate supported by Hillary Clinton. He correctly argued then that many people were uninsured not because they didn't want coverage but because it was too expensive. The nearby mailer to Ohio primary voters gives the flavor of Mr. Obama's attacks.

And the Baucus-Obama plan will only make insurance even more expensive. Employers will be required to offer “qualified coverage” to their workers (or pay another “free rider” penalty) and workers will be required to accept it, paying for it in lower wages. The vast majority of households already confront the same tradeoff today, except Congress will now declare that there's only one right answer.

The subsidies in the Baucus plan go to people without a job-based plan and who earn under three times the federal poverty level, or about \$66,000 for a family of four. Yet according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis we've seen, the plan isn't much of an improvement over the current market.

Take a family of four making \$42,000 in 2016. While government would subsidize 80% of their premium and pay \$1,500 to offset cost-sharing, they'd still pay \$6,000 a year or 14.3% of their total income. A family making \$54,000 could still pay 18.1% of their income, while an individual earning \$26,500 would be on the hook for 15.5%, and one earning \$32,400 for 17.3%. So lower-income workers would still be forced to devote huge portions of their salaries to expensive policies that they may not want or be able to afford.

Other Democrats want to make the subsidies even bigger, but Mr. Baucus told reporters on Monday that, “We're doing our very best to make an insurance requirement as affordable as we possibly can, recognizing that we're trying to get this bill under \$900 billion total.” Another way of putting this is that he is hiding the real cost of his bill by pinching pennies to meet a less politically toxic overall spending number. In that sense, the House health bill which clocked in at \$1.042 trillion because it was more generous upfront was more honest, though not by much.

Like the House bill, Mr. Baucus uses 10 years of taxes to fund about seven years of spending. Some \$215 billion is scrounged up by imposing a 35% excise tax on insurance companies for plans valued at more than \$21,000 for families and \$8,000 for individuals. This levy would merely be added to the insurers' “administrative load” and passed down to all consumers in higher prices. Ditto for the \$59 billion that Mr. Baucus would raise by taxing the likes of clinical laboratories and drug and device makers.

Mr. Baucus also wants to cut \$409 billion from Medicare, according to CBO, though the only money that is certain to see the budget ax is \$123 billion from the Medicare Advantage program. Liberal Democrats hate Advantage because it gives 10.2 million seniors private options. The other “savings” come from supposedly automatic cuts that a future Congress is unlikely to ever approve that is, until this entitlement spending swamps the federal budget. Then the government will have no choice but to raise taxes to European welfare-state levels or impose drastic restrictions on patient care. Or, most likely, both.

To sum up, the Baucus-Obama plan would increase the cost of insurance and then force people to buy it, requiring subsidies. Those subsidies would be paid for by taxes that make health care and thus insurance even more expensive, requiring even more subsidies and still higher taxes. It's a recipe to

ruin health care and bankrupt the country, and that's even before liberal Democrats see Mr. Baucus and raise him, and then attempt to ram it all through the Senate.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT WILLIAM CAHIR

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the exceptional life and service of SGT William Cahir of Alexandria, VA, who died last month while serving with the Fourth Civil Affairs Group in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. Sergeant Cahir was a patriot, wholly committed to the values and principles of the United States. We will remember Bill Cahir for his courage, his generosity of spirit, and his commitment to the very best ideals of this country.

In the last 8 years since 9/11, our homeland has not been attacked. For this, we owe deep gratitude to brave men and women like Sergeant Bill Cahir who made the heroic commitment to defend our liberty and security. In the aftermath of the horrific attacks of September 11, 2001, Sgt. Cahir left his job as a journalist and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves. At 34 years old, he was certainly not the youngest reserve officer, but he ranked among the most skilled and effective. I would like to include in the record a tribute to Sergeant Cahir written by Dan Gerstein who worked with me here in the Senate for years; Dan's piece eloquently captures the tremendous service, character, and spirit of Bill Cahir.

By all accounts, Sergeant Bill Cahir was a talented and loyal member of the Marine Corps. His fellow marines remember him as a man who would have risked his life for anyone on their team and did on countless occasions. His positive attitude and commitment to the challenging job at hand inspired his colleagues, even in the most difficult of circumstances. Bill Cahir was, without question, a force for good in the country that he loved.

Sergeant Cahir served two tours in Iraq during some of the most challenging periods of the war for U.S. forces. He was one among those brave men and women who took part in the “surge” strategy in Anbar Province in 2007. It was the courage and skill of marines like Sergeant Cahir that helped transform the security situation in Iraq and put the U.S. mission there on the track toward success.

Each day, countless Americans offer their service so that we might enjoy freedom and security. It is our duty to remain dedicated to the causes for which men and women like Sergeant Cahir have given their last full measure of devotion—the cause of freedom, the cause of security, and the cause of victory in our necessary war against terror.

We have lost a true patriot and a great American, but his life and service will never fade from our memory. My condolences and prayers are with Sergeant Cahir's wife, Rene Browne, and the entire Cahir family.