

territories from the FEMA Region IX office in California and Region X office in Washington State. Supplies for any recovery effort in the Pacific are prepositioned in Hawaii at FEMA's Pacific Area Office warehouse, as well as in Guam and American Samoa. I worked to establish and maintain the FEMA Pacific Area Office headquartered in Honolulu in order to protect our isolated island communities. The office has been essential for preparedness efforts in Hawaii and critical for disaster response throughout the Pacific region.

Equally important, the actions of State and local officials and the people of Hawaii have demonstrated the value of citizen and community preparedness. Thanks to the efforts of the people of Hawaii, we were prepared to save lives and avert considerable damage had a large tsunami come ashore. Around 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, tsunami warning sirens sounded in Hawaii, which notified people to evacuate the low-lying areas. The people of Hawaii followed the directions of our local authorities, stayed calm, and evacuated all shorelines.

Hawaii is familiar with the destructive power of tsunamis. In 1960, a 9.5 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Chile generated a tsunami that killed over 60 people in Hawaii. More recently, Hawaii faced a disaster of a different kind, in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki caused billions of dollars in damage.

The Chilean earthquake reminded us that when a disaster occurs, we need to be prepared. Because Hawaii is isolated from the rest of the United States, it is even more critical that we are prepared to take care of ourselves. I want to congratulate the people of Hawaii, as well as Federal, State, and local authorities who successfully prepared for and responded to the tsunami.

While I am thankful for the tsunami's minimal impact on my home State, we cannot forget the tragedy in Chile. My thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by the earthquake.

#### SATELLITE TELEVISION EXTENSION AND LOCALISM ACT OF 2010

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to urge passage of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act of 2010, or STELA, as part of the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act of 2010.

Over the past 15 years, satellite television has grown into a strong competitor to cable by offering consumers in rural as well as urban markets a choice in pay television providers. Where residents once were limited to a single cable operator, satellite providers now offer most consumers an alternative. This has led to price and service competition, which is good for consumers. Congress supported such competition through the passage of the Satellite Home Viewer Act and its progeny, in-

cluding the Satellite Home Viewer Extension and Reauthorization Act, or SHVERA. And now Congress has the same opportunity with passage of STELA, which reauthorizes and extends certain communications and copyright provisions.

A decade ago, Congress, recognizing that consumers want access to local news, weather, and community-oriented programming, established a mechanism by which satellite providers could offer local broadcast stations to residents in the local market. This means that when a satellite subscriber in Huntington, West Virginia tunes-in to CBS, PBS, ABC, FOX or NBC, they hear about events in the state capital and see the successes and trials of their neighbors—not the weather in Manhattan.

Recognizing the limits of satellite providers at the time, Congress did not require the companies to offer local channels to every market in the country. Over time, this has created a division between haves and have-nots in which satellite companies are not providing local channels to residents in the smallest markets.

In West Virginia, satellite subscribers in the Parkersburg and Wheeling markets cannot receive local channels from either satellite provider. In certain other markets in the State, only one provider offers local channels. Rural consumers deserve better.

That is why I am particularly pleased that STELA provides incentives to provide local service into all 210 markets across the county, which sets the stage for consumers in even the most rural regions to gain access to local news, sports, and community programming.

Another important provision of STELA changes existing law to promote the carriage of high-definition local public broadcasting stations and to make it easier for statewide public television networks, like that in West Virginia and 14 other States, to reach every resident of the States they serve.

As some broadcast television has become coarser and less informative, the importance of the mission and programming provided by public television has grown. STELA makes sure that more satellite subscribers will have access to the compelling programming available on public television.

Passage of STELA provides us with the opportunity to encourage greater competition and access to quality programming to consumers throughout the nation. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to support passage of this important legislation.

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as we move closer than ever to enacting legislation that delivers on the promise of secure and affordable health care across America, it is important to remember what is at stake and whom we are fighting for.

Over the last year, I have told many of my colleagues about the Bord family

of West Virginia and their son Samuel who suffered from leukemia.

Stories like the Bords' are a reminder that our work in Congress has a profound and personal impact on millions of lives every day. Each of us brings to this critical work the shared tragic and trying personal experiences of our friends and neighbors back home. They are real: These stories are a picture of people's lives and their pain. And we have an obligation to honor those struggles and sacrifices by working to make things better for everyone. Yet recently, radio host Rush Limbaugh sneered at the Bords' experience, describing it and other stories highlighted during last week's bipartisan health care summit as "sob stories." Always the cynic, he dismissed them entirely, "Can you believe these stories happen in America?" These stories do happen in America—every day. And it is a shame that anyone could hear of this heartbreak and fail to recognize what it says so clearly about the terrible burden our failed health care policies have placed on countless families across this country.

Rich and Amy Bord of Fairmont, WV, are two dedicated schoolteachers with health insurance through their employer. Let me repeat that: They have health insurance. Their 9-year-old son, Samuel, suffered from leukemia, and he needed significant invasive medical therapy. They thought they were covered, only to learn that their policy had a million-dollar lifetime cap. A million dollars sounds like a lot of money—and it is—they surely never would have expected to exceed it. But health care costs are spiraling out of control and the reality is, health insurance companies don't want to cover sick people.

In addition to Samuel, the Bords have two young twin sons at home, and the entire family's health care decisions were impacted by Samuel's bills.

After multiple rounds of chemotherapy and a relapse that required additional treatment for Samuel, the Bords reached their insurance fund's cap. Even with the help of my office and from the Public Employees Insurance Agency to get supplemental coverage for the Bords, Samuel still needed surgery and lots of additional care. Soon they would be approaching the next cap on their supplemental coverage. So the Bords were left with only heart-wrenching suggestions—consider getting a divorce so that Samuel would qualify for Medicaid or stop taking their other children to the doctor altogether, even if they get sick, in order to save every penny for Samuel. That is right. Get a divorce or choose one child's health care needs over another's. Those are the suggestions our Nation offered to these caring, hard-working parents with a sick child?

They did everything in their power to save Samuel, but this fall, he passed away—and there are simply no words to ease his family's loss and pain.

I understand that, to many, circumstances like these may seem rare.

But I cannot tell you how many times, over the many years I have served as U.S. Senator and before that, Governor, that I heard families' desperate pleas for help because their medical needs could not be met.

It breaks my heart to think of what the Bords went through: not only the pain of watching their son fight a terrible disease but also the uncertainty of paying for his treatment when the coverage they counted on—and paid for—would run out. For anyone, especially a public figure, to aggressively question and attack a family's extraordinary personal anguish is deeply offensive and morally reprehensible.

No parents should have to spend the precious, fleeting time they have with their child, struggling to navigate a broken system, worrying how they are going to provide care. And no one, especially a child like Samuel, should be forced to walk such a dangerous tight-rope between life and death because he or she lacks meaningful health insurance coverage, because of runaway costs, and caps, and exclusions. Yet that growing and deeply felt insecurity runs like a common thread through our entire health care system.

It is these stories—real stories of real people—and the unbelievable pain behind them and the battle of so many West Virginians that drive me to fight for comprehensive health reform every single day. We must listen to these stories, take them in, and never ever forget them.

#### DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as I have traveled throughout Rhode Island, I have heard from countless constituents about the sacrifices they have made during these difficult economic times. Many of my constituents have adjusted to the economic climate by cutting back on extras and finding savings where they can.

For seniors living on a limited budget, however, simply cutting back is not an option. I have heard from seniors who have turned off the heat in their homes because oil prices are so high. I have heard from others who are splitting pills and skipping doses because they cannot afford to refill a prescription. These are seniors who have worked hard their whole lives, paid into the system, and believed that they would be able to grow old comfortably. Instead, many are barely scraping by on Social Security benefits that no longer cover their daily living expenses.

Last Wednesday, the Senate had the opportunity to provide some extra help for seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who rely on Social Security. We voted on an amendment offered by Senator SANDERS, which I cosponsored, that would have provided an extra \$250 payment to Social Security beneficiaries. The payment would have been an extension of the financial assistance I successfully fought for as

part of the economic recovery package last year, and these funds would plow right through into our economy to help further stimulate demand and economic recovery. Unfortunately, this year, the amendment failed to receive enough votes for passage.

Although a \$250 payment may not sound like much to some, for those on a limited budget the extra financial assistance provides peace of mind amid skyrocketing health care and prescription drug costs. The payment would provide added relief for the millions of older Americans who, for the first time since 1975, did not receive a cost-of-living adjustment in their Social Security benefits. Without some extra help, these beneficiaries are hard-pressed to make ends meet.

Just ask Jackie, a North Smithfield resident, who has seen her health insurance premiums increase by double digits this past year and the cost of her prescription drugs continue to rise. At a time when every penny counts, Jackie says the winter months are particularly hard for her. When Jackie hears the oil truck drive by, she cringes knowing that the cost of heating her home is another bill she simply cannot afford.

I also heard from Edward, a senior living in Warren, who is worried how he will make ends meet without the increase in his Social Security benefit. In recent months, he is seen his car and home insurance increase by \$200, and other daily living costs, such as heating oil, gas, and groceries, rise significantly. In these tough times, Edward could just use a little help. He writes, "I just don't understand why Congress cannot do something to help seniors at least maintain a status quo."

Linda, a Rhode Islander from Providence, survives on only \$500 a month. Like so many older Americans, Linda takes multiple prescriptions every day. The out-of-pocket costs for her prescriptions add up, even on Medicare. Between her medical costs, food, heating, and other daily expenses, she can barely make ends meet. Linda would welcome any financial assistance she can get, so that she can save for copayments for visits to the doctor which she knows she will soon need. Linda says she is disappointed that the Senate does not realize how desperately seniors need added financial help.

Like Linda, I am disappointed by the vote this past Wednesday. My colleagues failed to act on an opportunity to help our seniors when they need it the most; at a time when just a little help would go a long way.

For Jackie, Edward, Linda, and seniors across our country facing similar challenges, I will continue fighting to assist older Americans during these difficult economic times. I urge my colleagues join me in standing by our Nation's seniors.

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE OLYMPIANS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the athletes from

New Hampshire who represented our country at the Olympic games in Vancouver.

As I watched the games over those 2 exciting weeks in February, I know I joined all Granite Staters in celebrating New Hampshire's enduring tradition of excellence in winter sports.

More than 125 years ago, in 1882, residents of Berlin, NH, formed the first modern ski club in America.

In 1927, the Dartmouth Outing Club organized the first downhill race in the United States at Mount Moosilauke in New Hampshire's White Mountains, where the Outing Club still hikes to this day. The next year, a Dartmouth professor organized the country's first slalom race.

In the 1930s and 1940s, as skiing grew in popularity, J-bars and chairlifts were added at mountains in Europe, in the West and across New England, but none could rival Cannon Mountain's Aerial Tramway in Franconia, which was built by the New Hampshire State Legislature and continues to be the platform from which millions of visitors first see our White Mountain range.

At the 1960 winter games in Squaw Valley, CA, 37 years after that first race in the White Mountains, a 22-year-old from Center Harbor named Penny Pitou became the first American to win an Olympic medal in downhill. The great "Skiing Cochran's" have roots on both sides of the Connecticut River, including Barbara Ann, who won a gold medal in 1972, her brother Bob, and Bob's son Jimmy, who competed in the slalom in Vancouver and grew up in Keene.

There were 12 athletes on the U.S. team in Vancouver who have strong New Hampshire ties. On the Alpine team, Jimmy Cochran was joined by Leanne Smith from Conway and Bode Miller from Franconia, along with Andrew Weibrecht, an environmental studies major at Dartmouth.

Hillary Knight from Hanover competed in her first Olympics as the youngest member of the U.S. Women's ice hockey team. And from just down the road in Lebanon, Nick Alexander competed in three ski jumping events including the normal hill event, known in the sport as the "NH Individual."

Kris Freeman from Andover competed in his third Olympic games in Nordic skiing. Kris trains at Waterville Valley, alongside Michelle Gorgone and Hannah Kearney, members of the famous Waterville Valley Black & Blue Trail Smashers Club. Snowboarder Scotty Lago from Seabrook went to his first Olympics in Vancouver after years of practice at Waterville and Loon. My husband Billy would want me to mention that he went to Dover High School with Jim Westcott, father of snowboarder Seth Westcott, who won back-to-back golds in snowboard cross.

The New Hampshire medalists at these Vancouver Games were really spectacular. Scotty Lago spoke with such pride about representing