

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

Seabrook and all of New Hampshire when he won a bronze medal in the men's halfpipe competition. We are all very proud of Andrew Weibrecht, who won bronze in the Super-G, and Hillary Knight, who took silver with her team.

Of course, the State is still celebrating Bode Miller, who, by winning a gold, silver, and bronze medal on the Whistler slopes, became the most decorated American alpine skier in history.

But I am proud of every Granite Stater who represented our country in these Games. As someone in elected office, I can tell you that not every race goes exactly how you would like. What is important is that each of you has achieved so much through focus and hard work, far away from the spotlight. You represent the best of our State.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize Tyler Walker of Franconia and Chris Devlin-Young of Campton, who will be skiing for Team USA later this week at the Vancouver Paralympic games. The Paralympic games continue to shine as an example to the world of what each of us can achieve. Thank you for representing our State and our country. Good luck.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate the University of New Mexico men's basketball team for achieving a second straight Mountain West Conference title.

The team's accomplishments include a school record 28 wins, including 10 road wins this season. In addition, their remarkable achievements include 14 consecutive victories and top 10 rankings in both the AP and ESPN/USA Today polls.

Renowned for passionate fans, the University of New Mexico men's basketball team dedication to character and teamwork has brought tremendous pride to the people of New Mexico and offers our country a reflection of this spirit.

I also wish to commend the leadership of senior cocaptain Roman Martinez for his excellence in the classroom and his contributions to the community. As an Academic All-American, Roman exemplifies the true character of a student-athlete. Knowing Roman's dedication to service in the community, it is clear that his role in this most worthy pursuit will be even greater in the years to come.

Along with my fellow New Mexicans, I wish these students much success as they prepare to compete in the Mountain West Conference and NCAA tournaments, and I applaud their achievements.●

##### DR. MIKE LOOPER

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate Dr. Mike Looper of

Greenwood for being named the Agriculture Research Service National Scientist of the Year for 2009. Dr. Looper, an animal scientist at the Dale Bumpers Small Farm Research Center, is the first Arkansan to receive the Herbert L. Rothbart Outstanding Early Career Research Scientist Award, which goes to the top scientist who has worked for less than 7 years.

I commend Dr. Looper for his research on how improved livestock management can have a positive economic impact on our rural farmers. Through his research efforts, Dr. Looper represents the best of our Arkansas values: hard work, dedication, and perseverance. He also inspires the next generation of Arkansas leaders as an adjunct instructor of biology and physiology at the University of Arkansas.

As a seventh-generation Arkansan and farmer's daughter, and as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I understand firsthand and appreciate the hard work and contributions of our Arkansas agriculture community. Agriculture is the backbone of Arkansas's economy, creating more than 270,000 jobs in the State and providing \$9.1 billion in wages and salaries. In total, agriculture contributes roughly \$15.9 billion to the Arkansas economy each year.

I salute Dr. Looper and the entire Arkansans agriculture community for their hard work and dedication.●

##### RECOGNIZING THE ARKANSAS RED CROSS

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today, during Red Cross Month, I salute the efforts of the Arkansas Red Cross. The men and women who work in support of our local Red Cross chapters are part of a global network that mobilizes during the most devastating of times. They provide comfort and care for those who need it most, whether that need is clothing, shelter, or blood.

The Arkansas Red Cross exemplifies our Arkansas values of humanity, compassion, and a spirit of giving. Many times throughout the years, I have seen the good work of our Arkansas Red Cross first hand. The sacrifice and commitment they make is to be acknowledged and celebrated. On behalf of the people of our State, I thank everyone in the Arkansas Red Cross family, from volunteers to staff members to donors of blood or financial resources.

Since 1943, the President of the United States has proclaimed March as "Red Cross Month." President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the first Red Cross Month proclamation, recognizing the American Red Cross as a true reflection of the humanitarian and volunteer spirit and calling on Americans to "rededicate themselves to the splendid aims and activities of the Red Cross."

Mr. President, communities depend on the Red Cross in times of need, and the Red Cross depends on the support of the public to achieve its mission.●

##### TRIBUTE TO KEVIN WATTS

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate Kevin Watts of McGehee, AR, for being named Ginner of the Year by the Southern Cotton Ginners Association. Kevin is an excellent example of Arkansas's agriculture tradition. After working with his father in a cotton gin, Kevin knew by the time he graduated from high school what he wanted to do with the rest of his life.

As a seventh-generation Arkansan and farmer's daughter, and as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I understand firsthand and appreciate the hard work and contributions of our farm families. Agriculture is the backbone of Arkansas's economy, creating more than 270,000 jobs in the State and providing \$9.1 billion in wages and salaries. In total, agriculture contributes roughly \$15.9 billion to the Arkansas economy each year.

Our farm families are critical to our Nation's economic stability. Agriculture is one of the leading U.S. industries in exports, with a trade surplus of \$23 billion in fiscal year 2009. We must work to continue the farm family tradition, so families are able to maintain their livelihoods and continue to help provide the safe, abundant, and affordable food supply that feeds our own country and the world and that is essential to our own economic stability.

I salute Kevin and all Arkansas farm families for their hard work and dedication.●

##### REMEMBERING DIANA TILLION

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Diana Tillion, of Halibut Cove, AK. I am saddened to report that Diana, a true Alaskan spirit and invaluable public servant, passed away at home, with her family surrounding her, on February 3, 2010, at the age of 81. Diana is remembered by those who knew her as a beloved wife and mother, public servant, teacher, writer, poet, and friend. She is treasured by the people back home as an incredible artist who depicted Alaska's beauty in a unique way. Diana had the ability to create a window through her art—a window into the impressive and untamed landscape of our great State. Any one of her pieces could draw you into that scene and that moment in a meaningful and memorable way.

Alaska is a vast open land full of breathtaking scenery, wild animals, and diverse terrain. It is also a place that is rich in culture. From Alaska's native peoples and the traditions passed down by their ancestors, to the pioneers of the gold rush, to Alaskans who are breaking new ground today—it is not a place for the faint of heart. Alaskans take pride in this, and Diana Tillion undoubtedly understood this sense of pride and shared in it with us.

Diana was born in Paradise, CA on June 1, 1928. She migrated north to the