

United States and our ISAF partners are perceived by the civilian population as another invader.

I have my own concerns with the President's strategy in Afghanistan, which I will discuss at a later time. But today, as General Petraeus prepares to assume command of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, it is fortunate, I believe, that he knows from Iraq that winning the support and respect of the local population means much more than the cliché it has become. Progress in Afghanistan depends on it.

RECOGNIZING THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, one of the great joys of my job as Senator is working with non-profit organizations dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans. I would like to take a moment to salute one such organization, the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international nonprofit organization with over 1 million members worldwide. Established in 1898, the Fraternal Order of Eagles has truly made the lives of people across the world better by raising millions of dollars to combat cancer and heart disease, help children living with disabilities, and support the elderly.

Two years ago, over 700 delegates representing the Fraternal Order of Eagles voted by unanimous consent to commit \$25 million to the University of Iowa to create the world's premier diabetes research center. Already a world leader in medical and diabetes research, the University of Iowa has the unique ability to fully maximize every dollar being donated. But that isn't the only reason the Fraternal Order of Eagles selected the University of Iowa to receive these funds; both the Eagles and the University of Iowa have had a tradition of helping those in their communities and beyond for over a century.

One of the missions of the Fraternal Order of Eagles is to lessen the ills of mankind, and I can't think of a more appropriate way to do that than to join in the fight against diabetes. In the United States, over 23 million children and adults already suffer from the diabetes, with an additional 1.6 million adults being diagnosed every year. It is said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and perhaps nowhere is that more applicable than in the case of diabetes. Unlike other chronic diseases which do not appear until later in life, diabetes does not spare the young. Almost 200,000 Americans below the age of 20 suffer from diabetes. It was recently predicted that one in three children born in 2000 will eventually suffer from diabetes if current rates continue. The health care cost associated with caring for these patients is enormous, amounting to over \$170 billion in 2007. But the costs to patients and their loved ones who suffer from diabetes are even greater.

Patients with diabetes are subject to an increased risk of blindness, kidney failure, high blood pressure, need for amputations, nerve damage, and premature death. The potential benefits of a cure for diabetes are truly outstanding, and that is why donations such as the one made by the Fraternal Order of Eagles are so important to improving the lives of all Americans.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" I think it is quite clear that the Fraternal Order of Eagles is doing a great deal. For this donation and for their other good works, I commend the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

HIRA

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, a few months ago, my colleagues and I passed a landmark health insurance reform bill.

President Obama signed it into law, and together we ushered in a new era of transparency, accountability, and cost savings for the American people.

Now, these reforms will go a long way towards fixing our broken health care system.

They will restore responsibility to the insurance market, and impose commonsense regulations, to ensure that every American can get a fair deal.

Some of these provisions have already gone into effect. Others will take time to implement correctly.

But as we move swiftly to translate this legislation into reality, we need to be mindful of those who would take advantage of this period of transition.

Already, there are reports that some health insurance companies have drastically increased their rates, using our reform law as an excuse.

I recently heard from Charles, a small business owner from Plano, IL, who reported that his employees will see their premiums go up by an average of almost 28 percent next year.

And some folks will have to pay an arbitrary increase of 35 percent—even though their benefits haven't changed yet.

That is because a few big insurance companies have chosen to hike up their profits before our health reform law requires them to improve their services as well.

Now, there is nothing wrong with making an honest buck.

But these abusive increases will make it harder for ordinary folks and small businesses to get coverage in the short term.

There is no question that they violate the spirit of our reform law—so I believe we need to take action.

It is time to close this loophole, so big companies must compete with others in an open marketplace—and so they can be held accountable for unreasonable rate hikes.

That is why I am proud to support the Health Insurance Rate Authority Act.

This legislation would require insurance companies to justify major increases in their premiums—a power that already resides with regulators in a handful of States.

Our bill would merely bring similar regulatory authority to a national level, in response to numerous claims of abuse all across the country.

Mr. President, this wouldn't put insurers out of business or prevent them from making an honest profit, but it would increase transparency, restore accountability, and ensure that these corporations can remain solvent.

In my home State of Illinois, some insurers must already supply rate increase information to the State department of insurance.

But under current law, regulators are powerless to rein in obvious abuses when they occur.

And as a result, small business owners like Charles—and countless folks in the individual market—are held hostage to the same corporate agendas that led us to pass a health reform law in the first place.

This is unacceptable. We need to pass the Health Insurance Rate Authority Act, to keep insurance providers in check until the full effects of the new law have taken hold.

I would urge my colleagues to join with me in standing up to the insurance giants.

Let's give regulators the authority to approve or deny excessive rate hikes, so we can make sure every American can get a fair deal—starting today.

REMEMBERING DONALD J. RUHL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this weekend, the citizens of Greybull, WY gather to dedicate a monument at the Donald J. Ruhl Memorial Cemetery. This monument is the culmination of the hopes, dreams and hard work of dozens of people in the community. A true American hero was laid to rest in their cemetery, and these committed individuals wanted his memory to be honored forever. Donald served our Nation during World War II as a marine. His bravery and ultimate sacrifice earned him our Nation's most distinguished recognition, the Medal of Honor.

Donald J. "Johnny" Ruhl, enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve on September 12, 1942. Immediately going on active duty, the new recruit used his lifelong experience with firearms to qualify as a sharpshooter, and demonstrated his endurance by becoming a combat swimmer. Following his exemplary performance at boot camp, Private Ruhl volunteered for Parachute Training School. At the conclusion of this 5-week training, Ruhl was promoted to private first class and assigned to further training in New Caledonia.

He first saw combat at Bougainville, but it was his actions at Iwo Jima that truly demonstrated his heroism. In February 1945, Johnny departed from

Saipan aboard the USS LST 481, headed for the shores of Iwo Jima. Private First Class Ruhl displayed his courage from the onset of D-day at Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. Johnny recognized his role early on in the battle attacking a group of eight Japanese soldiers single-handedly. Private First Class Ruhl confirmed his valor and bravery by risking his own life to rescue a marine wounded ahead of the front line—ensuring that the man was transported to an aid station, regardless of the threat to Ruhl.

Ruhl continued to establish his commitment to the cause by returning from the aid station to voluntarily investigate an abandoned Japanese gun emplacement. With boundless courage, he prevented the enemy from regaining possession of the valuable site by occupying the position throughout the night. On February 21, Johnny demonstrated his true selfless nature. As Company E, 2nd Battalion, 28th Marines, 5th Marine Division pushed forward on their quest to capture Mount Suribachi, Private First Class Ruhl along with his platoon guide, pressed their position to the top of a Japanese bunker. As the marines prepared to fire upon the enemy troops, a grenade landed between them. While notifying the platoon guide, Ruhl dove onto the grenade, absorbing the full detonation with his body. This sacrifice saved the lives of all of the nearby marines. Thanks in great part to this selfless act, Company E was able to raise an American flag on the top of Mount Suribachi.

In awarding Private First Class Ruhl the Medal of Honor posthumously, President Truman recognized Johnny's efforts, stating "An indomitable fighter, PFC Ruhl rendered heroic service toward the defeat of a ruthless enemy." . . . Certainly Truman was correct when he continued praising Ruhl's dedication to our Nation and his fellow marines, ". . . his valor, initiative and unfaltering spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of almost certain death sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

PFC Donald J. Ruhl embodied the Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis*, committing his life, and his death, to loyalty to the Corps and his country. The community of Greynbull has done well to recognize this hero. They have demonstrated their faithfulness to his memory by renaming his eternal resting place. His gift to our country will never be forgotten—in passing his memorial, we will forever know that Donald J. Ruhl gave all so our country could remain free.

NATIONAL HEREDITARY HEMORRHAGIC TELANGIECSTASIA MONTH

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia—HHT—Month to raise awareness of this

public health threat and encourage greater prevention, diagnosis and treatment efforts.

Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia, HHT, also referred to as Osler-Weber-Rendu Syndrome, is a complex genetic blood vessel disorder that affects approximately 70,000, or 1 in 5,000, Americans. It is characterized by irregular blood vessel growths, or telangiectases, in the nasal mucosa, mouth, gastrointestinal tract, and skin of the face and hands, as well as artery-vein malformations—AVMs—in the major organs including the lungs, brain, and liver. If left misdiagnosed or untreated, HHT can result in considerable morbidity and mortality.

It is estimated that 20 to 40 percent of debilitating and life-threatening complications and sudden death due to these "vascular time bombs" are preventable. Twenty percent of those with HHT, regardless of age, suffer death or disability. HHT has been subject to underreporting for many years. Approximately 90 percent of the HHT population is not yet diagnosed and is at risk for sudden rupture of the blood vessels in major organs in the body, such as the brain and lungs, and other complications due to nosebleeds and gastrointestinal bleeding.

It is my hope that efforts throughout the month of June will increase awareness of HHT and mitigate the preventable health threats posed by this disorder.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL CLARENCE S. PARKER

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to join with my colleague, Senator ISAKSON, today to honor the accomplishments of COL Clarence S. Parker of Valdosta, GA, in the RECORD of the Senate.

For most of his life, Colonel Parker has been a dedicated pilot. In 1940, when the United States was on the brink of war, Colonel Parker was prepared to fight for his loved ones and his nation. A native of Houston, TX, Colonel Parker began his lengthy career in aviation while enrolled as a student at the University of Houston.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Colonel Parker entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in January of 1942. He completed military flight training and was commissioned in September of that year. During World War II, Colonel Parker was an instructor pilot at Waco Army Airfield, primarily in the BT-13 and the P-40 aircraft. He flew during the early phases of the Berlin Airlift, and later ascended to a position of leadership as the chief of flight procedures from 1948 until the end of the airlift. In 1950, he returned to the U.S. to serve at the Pentagon in the U.S. Air Force Headquarters and also at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. Following service in Vietnam, he fin-

ished his military career as wing commander at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, GA, flying T-37 and T-38 aircraft.

Following his retirement in 1971, Colonel Parker made Valdosta, GA, his home. He became heavily involved in the operations and upkeep of the Valdosta Municipal Airport and began a second career in banking. During his tenure as chairman of the airport authority from 1987 to 2005, he was instrumental in earning funding for several major construction projects, including a project to lengthen the main instrument runway to 8,002 feet.

Colonel Parker remains an active pilot with over 7,500 hours of flight time. He continues to work with the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce to benefit the flying activities at both Moody Air Force Base and in the Valdosta civil aviation community. Additionally, he remains a consultant to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority.

Colonel Parker has enjoyed a career that is extraordinary in length, quality of service, and leadership. For these reasons, he has been selected to receive the Federal Aviation Administration's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award recognizes pilots who have maintained safe flight operations for 50 or more consecutive years. We can think of no higher award for a pilot, and we are proud to recognize Colonel Parker for his receipt of the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.●

TRIBUTE TO SARAH MARGARET AKER

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Sarah Margaret Aker, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several weeks.

Sarah is a graduate of Sturgis Brown High School, Sturgis, SD. Currently, she is attending the University of South Dakota, where she is majoring in chemistry and political science. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Sarah for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO KEATON JACE BAUMAN

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Keaton Jace Bauman, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several weeks.

Keaton is a graduate of Huron High School in Huron, SD. Currently, he is attending the University of South Dakota, where he is majoring in history and political science. He is a hard