



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 156

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010

No. 25

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by guest Chaplain Rev. Benny Tate, senior pastor of Rock Springs Church in Milner, GA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we bow our heads in Your presence. The Bible teaches us, "Behold how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, because a House divided will not stand." May Your servants in this body not look to parties, personalities, preferences or press, but may they focus on principles and people.

God, we call our Senators politicians, but You call them ministers in the Bible. May all 100 Members of this body make full proof of their ministry. I ask for Your guidance on their decisions and Your grace on their families. Keep every one of them close and clean, being accountable to You.

We ask for protection for our men and women who so bravely protect us all over our world. We pray respecting all faiths, but pray this prayer in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 25, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to H.R. 1299, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A House message to accompany H.R. 1299, an Act making technical corrections to the laws affecting certain administrative authorities of the United States Capitol Police, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 3326 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3327 (to amendment No. 3326), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 3328, to provide for a study.

Reid amendment No. 3329 of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 3330 (to amendment No. 3329), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, today, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message with respect to H.R. 1299, the legislative vehicle for the Travel Promotion Act. Yesterday, the majority leader filed cloture on the motion to concur. That vote will occur tomorrow morning, unless we are able to reach an agreement to vote today.

In addition, we are also working on an agreement to consider a bill that would extend certain expiring tax provisions for 30 days. If we are able to reach an agreement, we could see votes on that after 4 p.m. There will be no rollcall votes prior to 4 p.m. to allow Senators to attend the health care summit with the President of the United States.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

GUEST CHAPLAIN DR. BENNY TATE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, I rise this morning to thank our distinguished guest Chaplain, Dr. Benny Tate, of Milner, GA, who has brought us an inspirational message with which to begin our day.

Dr. Tate is the senior pastor of Rock Springs Church in Milner, GA, and has served his congregation well for 20 years. When Dr. Tate began preaching at Rock Springs Church, only 20 people came to worship on a given Sunday. Today, Dr. Benny Tate preaches to more than 4,000 people on any given Sunday. Rock Springs Church is now the largest church in the Congregational Methodist denomination.

Dr. Tate is the kind of pastor who finds creative ways to go out to the community and spread the word of God. He hosts the "Apples of Gold" radio program, reaching out to central Georgians through 15 radio stations.

He has worked with local civic organizations, leading his flock by example. He served as the Chappell Mill Fire Station Chaplain and as a Georgia

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Youth Camp board member, just to name a couple of his activities. He has also written three books as well as pieces for the local Griffin Daily News.

One of his books has been read by both my wife and myself and has a very unique and very appropriate title called "Happy Wife, Happy Life." All of us males have a great appreciation for that title.

I have had the privilege of attending Dr. Benny Tate's church on many occasions. I have always found Rock Springs Church to be a very holy, spirit-filled church.

Dr. Tate has a very unique way of spreading the gospel in a manner that is mixed with humor and yet direct, personal feelings and the word of the Holy Spirit and the message that Jesus Christ gives to him. In short, he has effected positive changes in the church and the community through his outreach. We appreciate his efforts and his words of worship this morning, and I am very pleased to have my dear friend, Dr. Benny Tate, with us today.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. KAUFMAN are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wish to speak as in morning business, and I ask unanimous consent to do so.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as are many of us, I have been watching with great interest the bipartisan health care summit that is being broadcast on television. I am happy there is a bipartisan meeting at the White House to discuss health care reform. The practicalities are that only 38 of the 535 Members of Congress can participate directly in the summit, but

I know that representatives of our political parties are there, along with the President. They are talking about something that is very near and dear to all of our hearts, and that is how to bring down the costs of health care which is priced out of the reach of many of the American people, including too many in my State of Texas.

Unfortunately, sometimes in Washington what happens is, you see what is happening on TV or what is happening on the floor of the Senate, and it looks like one thing. Then you find out that behind the scenes something very different is happening. What I am speaking about in particular is, in contrast to a bipartisan summit on health care, my understanding is there are efforts underway on the part of the staff of the majority party to consider the use of reconciliation to try to pass an unpopular health care bill with 51 votes on a party-line basis.

I think that contrast between what people are seeing on TV and what is actually happening behind the scenes is pretty telling. I would say it is disappointing because I think health care reform is too important. It affects one-sixth of our economy. It affects 300 million Americans. It is simply too significant a step to take to try to do so strictly along partisan party lines.

So while it is true that reconciliation has been used in the past, it has never been used for anything such as this. This would be unprecedented. I think it would be an act of defiance toward the American people who overwhelmingly disapprove of this legislation.

There is no doubt that we need health care reform. Premiums have more than doubled over the last decade. Medicare, which provides access to health care for our seniors, has a \$38 trillion unfunded liability which translates into an IOU for every American family in the amount of \$325,000.

If we heard anything out of the recent election in Massachusetts, I think it is that the American people think there is too much spending and too much borrowing taking place in Washington, DC; too many responsibilities, such as this unfunded Medicare liability, that are simply not being met.

We know Medicaid continues to be problematic in not providing access to enough low-income people who are ostensibly beneficiaries of Medicaid. In the Metroplex in Texas, Dallas-Fort Worth, only 38 percent of doctors will see a new Medicaid patient because reimbursement rates are so low. That is not keeping the promise of access. It is, unfortunately, too much like appearing to do one thing on the one hand and actually delivering something far different on the other hand.

I think everyone agrees we need to solve these important problems. But how we go about solving the problem is important to maintaining the confidence and trust of the American people. I think bipartisanship on this subject is absolutely crucial.

After Massachusetts sent our newest Senator, SCOTT BROWN, to Washington,

we know there was more talk about bipartisanship. But instead of working together to solve these problems, bipartisanship has so often translated into: Take it or leave it; if we can do this strictly with a majority party vote, we will.

That is what happened on Christmas Eve. I remember that 7 a.m. vote on Christmas Eve when 60 Senators on the other side voted to pass a health care bill that the American people have simply said in poll after poll they do not want. Of course, now we see the White House repackaging an unpopular House bill with an unpopular Senate bill and posting 11 pages on the White House Web site and claiming this is somehow a package that is sacrosanct and cannot be touched. But in no sense could it possibly be considered a bipartisan piece of legislation. To only let the majority party say: Well, this is the basic template, and you can tweak it around the edges but you cannot change any part of it—that is not bipartisanship.

So now after the election of Senator SCOTT BROWN, who campaigned on the pledge that he would be the 41st vote to defeat the Senate health care bill because of its spending, its raising taxes, and its raising premiums on people with insurance, its taking \$½ trillion from Medicare—already another fiscally unsustainable entitlement program, with \$38 trillion in unfunded liabilities—to create yet another entitlement program, the people of Massachusetts sent Senator SCOTT BROWN here to stop the health care bill that they don't want.

Now we find the majority party wanting to use reconciliation, a hyperpartisan tactic, to ram a bill through that the American people have rejected, most recently in Massachusetts. If we are talking about trying to regain the public's confidence, not only is bipartisanship important in terms of bringing solutions to health care but transparency is crucial when we are talking about something so big that affects so many.

You will remember in 2008 when President Obama was Senator Obama running for President of the United States, he promised to broadcast negotiations on C-SPAN for the American people to see who was arguing on their behalf and who was not.

In stark contrast, again, between what was said then and what was actually done, we saw the White House cutting deals with special interest groups, such as the pharmaceutical industry. We saw individual Senators demand and get special deals for their States as a condition to giving their votes to pass that bill.

As much as anything else in the bill, I think the way the bill was passed with the sweetheart deals, secret negotiations, and lack of transparency turned the American people off to these health care bills. I know the President said that after his election Washington would not be business as

usual. Unfortunately, it has been, and the American people don't like it.

This subject—health care reform—is too big and too important and too costly to do through sweetheart deals, backroom negotiations, and with utter disregard for transparency. The American people are smarter than I think many folks in Washington, DC, give them credit for because they know this health care proposal is not lasting reform, and it simply would not work as advertised.

The White House proposal will still increase premiums on American families; that is, if you have health insurance now, this White House proposal, an amalgam of the Senate and House bills, will raise your insurance premiums because of costly Federal Government mandates. But this White House bill does one thing the Senate bill did not. It actually spends \$75 billion more than the Senate bill that passed this body on Christmas Eve, at 7 a.m.

The White House bill does share some common elements with the Senate proposal. It still cuts nearly \$500 billion from Medicare to create a new entitlement program, including a program that is very popular in my State called Medicare Advantage, which gives seniors access to more choices and the quality care they like. Rather than allow them to continue to keep that Medicare benefit, this proposal, the White House bill—like the Senate bill—would cut \$500 billion from Medicare, including Medicare Advantage.

The basic problem, again, is that we call this “health care reform,” but the health care bill offers no long-term plan for the Medicare Program’s solvency—in other words, that \$38 trillion I mentioned a moment ago. This actually makes it worse by taking another \$½ trillion out of Medicare and makes things worse, not better, when it comes to the program’s long-term solvency. I simply think the choice the President has made, and that the Senate and House health care bills have made, to force millions of low-income people onto Medicaid is simply not right, giving them no choices but a government-run program which, as I mentioned earlier, denies them access too many times to a doctor because they cannot find a doctor who will see patients and accept government rates for Medicaid reimbursements.

I mentioned the 38-percent figure in the Metroplex of Dallas-Fort Worth. Only 38 percent of the doctors there will see these patients because of the rates. Yet these health care bills force millions of people onto that program along with, in the process, promising them access to care but then not delivering as advertised.

Then there is this problem. As you know, the Medicaid Program—the cost of that is borne by the Federal Government and the State governments. In my State alone, the health and human services commission in Texas estimates that the expansion of Medicaid

under the President’s proposal will cost Texas taxpayers an additional \$24.3 billion over the next 10 years. That \$24.3 billion is an unfunded mandate that is contained in this bill.

Where does that money come from? Well, too often—I think some of our former Governors will tell you that what happens is, that is money that has to be used for an unfunded mandate from the Federal Government that comes from education, higher education budgets, law enforcement budgets, and other State priorities. It is simply irresponsible for Congress to force on State taxpayers this responsibility to pay for this unfunded mandate when there are other priorities the States have chosen that they think are important—things such as education, as I mentioned, and law enforcement.

The unfunded mandate in this bill is simply unacceptable. The Wall Street Journal summed up the President’s proposal this way:

It manages to take the worst of both the House and Senate bills and combine them into something more destructive. . . .

It includes more taxes, more subsidies, and even less cost control than the Senate bill.

And it purports to fix the special interest favors in the Senate bill not by eliminating them—but by expanding them to everyone.

We know the furor it caused across the country when some Senators were able to negotiate more favorable Medicaid reimbursements than the rest of the country and when everybody found out those who were not in those favored States would end up paying for those special favors that were necessary in order to get 60 votes. This bill doesn’t repeal those; it simply expands them to everybody, vastly increasing the cost of this legislation and making it even worse, not better.

The President and his congressional allies who support this legislation seem to think the only reason the American people oppose these bills is “misinformation.” I suggest we simply look at the facts—in this case straight from the Congressional Budget Office—and see what they, the official scorekeeper for Congress, have to say about these pieces of legislation.

The CBO said premiums for those who have health insurance of some kind—85 percent of the American people—whether it is through government programs like Medicare, the VA, or the like, but those who have private insurance, their premiums will go up by 10 to 13 percent or an average of \$2,100 for families buying policies on their own. That is in the individual market where most small businesses and individuals have to shop for their insurance. Their health insurance premiums will go up an average of \$2,100 a family or 10 to 13 percent.

No wonder the more people learn about this legislation the less popular it becomes, and individuals who get health care through small businesses or larger employers, which is 83 percent of Americans, will see the status quo. They will see their premiums con-

tinue to increase by 5 to 6 percent a year.

I thought health care reform was about bringing down the cost and making it more affordable, “bending the cost curve,” to use the jargon that has been used here time after time over the last year and a half. But we find out that for those in the individual market, premiums will go up 10 to 13 percent. For those in the larger employer market, it will go up 5 to 6 percent. It will not bend the cost curve down. It will either be ineffective at all and keep premiums basically where they would have been anyway or it will make it worse.

Then there is the gamesmanship in how it deals with the budget deficit. Here is what CBO said about the bill’s impact on the budget deficit:

Washington budget gimmicks allow the White House to pretend the bills reduce the deficit by \$132 billion, which is a fraction of Washington’s \$1.3 trillion budget deficit.

Americans don’t believe “reducing the deficit” is possible at the same time we are spending \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years, and they are right. It is easy to pretend we are reducing the deficit when we are raising taxes by \$500 billion and taking another \$500 billion from Medicare in order to pay for this program.

The Obama administration’s own actuaries have worried that future Congresses would not let the \$500 billion in Medicare cuts happen. In other words, the bills spend now but would not pay later.

I assume the majority leader will bring up the doc fix sometime soon because he needs to. The 23-percent cut in reimbursement rates for doctors who don’t take Medicare patients is not taken care of in this bill, and it should be. If this is really about health care reform, shouldn’t it be making sure that our seniors on Medicare have access to doctors and that they can actually find a doctor who will see them? If you cut 23 percent in the doctor reimbursement rates, which is where we are headed now, they are not going to have access to doctors.

Here is what the Obama administration’s own experts say about the cost curve. The Senate bill, they say, will increase overall American health care expenditures by \$222 billion.

It will not bend the cost curve down. It will actually bend it up, making things worse, not better.

The American people have been pretty smart about this. They have been more engaged, better informed on this subject than I have seen in a long time. Of course, health care reform is a very complicated area. But they have gotten very well informed about it. They want lasting reform that will lower costs.

Here is what we know works to lower costs, but this is not something that is in the President’s bill and, apparently, not something the majority party is even willing to consider. If they did, I submit this would be a big step forward to bending the cost curve down, making health care more affordable, and

yield a bipartisan product the American people could support.

I believe we need to give control over health care dollars to patients, not to Washington bureaucrats or to insurance company bureaucrats either. The American Academy of Actuaries found that consumer-driven health care plans have saved as much as 12 to 20 percent in health care premiums—12 to 20 percent. That is a lot.

Then, of course, there is a practice of defensive medicine, ending lawsuit abuse which would save \$54 billion over the next 10 years, according to the CBO.

We also support allowing small businesses to pool together such as big companies do to pool their risks to help bring down premium costs. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this would lower premiums for small businesses by 2 to 3 percent—that is not a huge amount, but I am sure they will tell you every little bit helps—and in conjunction with these other reforms would have a real, meaningful impact in terms of bringing down health care costs.

I also support and our side of the aisle supports allowing Americans to purchase health insurance from any State they want to, and that would create national competition. It would allow people to buy policies they can afford that suited their family's needs rather than those loaded with State government mandates with no choices, which would result in higher costs.

If Congress would allow Americans to purchase their health insurance in any State they choose and thereby increasing competition, the Congressional Budget Office says the cost of their health care premiums would go down by 5 percent.

Clearly, competition, transparency, keeping the power in the hands of the consumer not in government are some of the things that would lower the costs, not cause them to go up. Are these part of the bipartisan health summit at the White House? Unfortunately, apparently not.

I would also support—and I think there would be a lot of support on a bipartisan basis—giving Medicaid patients, the ones who cannot find doctors because of low reimbursement rates, premium assistance; that is, to supplement what they can pay so they can buy private sector coverage which pays doctors at more of a level they would accept in terms of seeing those Medicaid patients. Providing Medicaid premium assistance rather than forcing people onto a Medicaid Program that is dysfunctional and does not work would be an improvement, and you could do it cheaper. According to CBO, this would reduce Federal spending by \$12 billion over 10 years.

My conclusion from all this is, the American people want us to start over. We need lasting health care reform. I have offered some concrete suggestions on how we could lower the costs and make it more affordable. I believe that

if Republicans and Democrats can work together, we can achieve it. On something as big and important and as costly as this, we need to do it on a bipartisan basis. It needs to be transparent. It needs to be devoid of special interest deals and secret negotiations and done out in the open where people can see it and trust it for what it is.

We have to reject purported solutions that will do nothing but increase spending, increase taxes, and increase premiums. We need to start over and implement commonsense steps that will lower costs.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico pertaining to the introduction of S. 3039 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess from 12:30 to 2 p.m. today.

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

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, this afternoon it is my understanding we are going to have one more vote. It is going to be on the Travel Promotion Act. I have opposed this in the past. I have already voted against it three times. I am not going to hang here and waste the whole day just to vote against it a fourth time.

I ask unanimous consent that I make a very brief statement and it be printed in the RECORD immediately following the vote that takes place this afternoon.

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

Mr. INHOFE. 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. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICAN HIKERS HELD IN IRAN

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the ongoing imprisonment of three young Americans—Joshua Fattal from Pennsylvania and two other Americans who have been in prison in Iran with him, Sarah Shourd and Shane Bauer. These are three Americans who have now spent more than 7 months in solitary confinement in Iran's Evin Prison for allegedly crossing a poorly marked border, the border between Iran and Iraq.

Since their detention along the Iran-Iraq border on July 31, 2009, the Iranian Government has refused requests from their attorney for visits. The Government of Iran has delayed due process and rejected requests from family members to call or visit them. The Iranian regime has also delayed requests for Iranian visas for the families and stonewalled the Swiss Embassy's attempt to carry out diplomatic visits.

The longer the detainment of these young Americans continues, the more clear it becomes to the international community that the Iranian Government, the Iranian regime, is engaged in political games rather than seeking to grant them a fair and timely judicial process. On this basis, I request that Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Ahmadinejad, Judiciary Chief Larijani, and other Iranian officials make the humane and just decision to release Josh, Sarah, and Shane immediately.

Keeping these three innocent Americans in prison without due process violates the international human rights standards as well as Iran's own laws. It has been more than 2 months since Foreign Minister Motaki claimed they would be tried in court. Yet no trial date has been set. According to Iranian law, no detainee can be held temporarily for more than 4 months; thus, judiciary officials must either schedule a court hearing or set the three young Americans free. The only conclusion the international community can draw from the Iranian Government's words and actions is that they intend to keep these three young Americans in limbo for domestic or foreign policy aims. It has nothing to do with the actions or intentions of these three American tourists who were simply admiring the natural beauty of the Kurdish mountains near the Iran-Iraq border. The world is a much worse off place when idealism, especially held by innocent young people, is squashed by cynical politics.

Among ancient Persia's greatest legacies is a transparent and efficient justice system. Innocent people do not appear on the court docket. We ask the Iranian Government—we ask them to send the world the unambiguous message that transparent, timely, and fair judicial processes remain a cornerstone of Iranian civilization. Keeping Josh, Sarah, and Shane indefinitely in solitary confinement and without access to legal counsel or their families is unjust and is sure to color the visions of Iranian society for young people the world over.

Do not make Josh, Sarah, Shane, and their desperately concerned parents wait another day before being reunited. Supreme Leader Khamenei, release these young hikers now.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Madam President, in addition to those remarks about those young Americans, I want to talk for a few minutes about unemployment and what is happening, certainly across the country but in particular in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We have 560,000 people out of work right now in Pennsylvania. Our rate is lower than a lot of places, but we still have that many people out of work, a very high number—maybe not historic but close to a historically high number, 560,000 Pennsylvanians.

There are lots of ways to try to understand what people are going through and try to get a sense of what people are living through. I had a chance a couple of weeks ago to sit with 8 of those 560,000 people in what is called a career link, a job center in Pennsylvania where people are filling out scores of applications, applying for jobs. In the case of these eight individuals, they are all over the age of 50 and many are over the age of 60 and 70—some of the worst situations for those who are in that age bracket, who worked for years, 20, 30 years at one job and did it very well, and now, through no fault of their own, are out of work.

Listening to their stories gave me a better insight into what people are up against every day. A number of comments were significant and relevant and poignant, but one in particular by a woman by the name of Debi who said something very simple but telling about what is in her heart and what she is living through—she said simply: We just want to get back to work. That is a very simple statement, but I think that is on the minds of a lot of Americans who are out of work, and their family members. They just want to get back to work.

They also want to see that Washington is not just legislating—that is obviously important, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a moment—but that we are trying to understand what they are up against. They do want to get back to work. It is that simple. One of the ways we can do that is by making sure those who are out of work, those something like 15 million Americans out of work through no

fault of their own, that we do something to help them in the next couple of days to get through the next couple of weeks, literally, with unemployment insurance, COBRA health insurance, and so many other ways.

We should note that the eligibility for emergency unemployment compensation and for COBRA—known as COBRA premium assistance, really health insurance for the unemployed—that both of those will expire this Sunday, February 28. If an extension of the unemployment programs authorized by the Recovery Act is not passed, 1.2 million workers will lose their unemployment benefits by the end of March. So we have to act now to prevent that from happening. It is unfortunate that it seems there is only an agreement to keep extending it from December to February, then from February into March or the end of March. We should extend it a lot further than that. Maybe we will have an opportunity to do that. But, at a minimum, we have to make sure unemployment insurance is extended and COBRA health insurance is extended. There are other reasons to do that as well. The most important reason is the people who will be positively impacted by those actions.

An extension of the federally funded unemployment compensation and COBRA programs through December 31, 2010—what we should do is extend it that far. They are necessary for a number of reasons. State labor departments will not be under pressure to constantly update their systems and inform constituents of changes in national law. We should give them the kind of certainty and predictability that they have a right to expect, certainly the State government officials but more importantly, the families and affected persons who are recently laid off—not constantly be reminded that their unemployment benefits may run out sooner than expected. This is especially true at a time when there are six applicants for every one job.

It is important to take action on unemployment insurance and COBRA health insurance coverage for a third reason as well.

At a time when millions of people don't have health care coverage, failure to provide an adequate safety net to ensure people have affordable health insurance coverage will only add to the rolls of the uninsured in the midst of this debate on health care.

Two other points before I conclude. According to the CBO, which we keep quoting in the health care debate and in many others, for every \$1 spent on unemployment insurance benefits, up to \$1.90 is contributed to the gross national product. This is further evidence, in addition to what I and many others have quoted—Mark Sandy from moodys.com—you spend a buck on unemployment insurance or COBRA benefits and/or food stamps, all of those safety net provisions to help workers who lost their job, you not only help someone who needs help and should

have the help we can provide, you also help our economy literally by jump starting spending.

We know that in the past couple of days we passed the jobs bill, the HIRE Act, a good piece of legislation for small business, for economic vitality but also for preserving and creating lots of jobs. That jobs bill is not enough. We have to pass these safety net provisions on unemployment and COBRA health benefits. We also have to put more job creation strategies on the table and get bills passed to create more jobs. The recovery bill is still having an effect, still having a tremendous impact in Pennsylvania, with still a whole year left of spending and benefits of that spending in Pennsylvania and other States.

I see Senator SPECTER is with us. He and I have seen that up close in Pennsylvania, a tremendous impact already, but there is still more to do on the recovery bill he voted for under great pressure not to vote for it. Thank goodness he did. Without his vote, that bill would not have passed. Millions of Americans' lives would be adversely impacted if we did not pass the Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. We have a long way to go, more work to do across the country and to have a positive impact on Pennsylvania.

One concluding thought. When you look at Pennsylvania, we might have a lower rate than a lot of States but we do have 560,000 people out of work. Unfortunately, more and more we are seeing in different labor markets, such as the Erie labor market, which is at 10 percent, the Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton at 9.8 percent, northeastern Pennsylvania, my home area, at 9.7 percent—even though our rate has not yet hit statewide 9 percent, we are seeing in different pockets that number going up. We have to continue to put job creation strategies in the pipeline, continue to have the recovery act have an even more positive impact. And thirdly, we need to make sure we pass the safety net provisions.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I have sought recognition to talk briefly about two subjects: a recent CODEL where I participated and, secondly, on the passing of a beloved staff member. I ask unanimous consent that the time for business be extended until 12:45.

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

FOREIGN TRAVEL

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, from December 28 to January 7, I participated on a congressional delegation which visited in Cypress, Syria, India,

Afghanistan, and Morocco, and have submitted a lengthy report, which is my practice.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of that report be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. For purposes of comment at this time, I will focus on what we found on our trip to Afghanistan and India as it relates to the current war in progress in Afghanistan which has, as a practical matter, been extended into Pakistan and a comment about our trip to Syria, our meetings with President Assad, as it bears upon the potential for a peace treaty between Israel and Syria.

Our visit to Afghanistan was very revealing to get a firsthand impression as to what is going on on the ground. I approached the trip with serious reservations about the President's proposal to add an additional 30,000 troops there. My concern arose in the context of why fight in Afghanistan when al-Qaida could organize as well in many other places, Yemen or Somalia. There had been such a lack of success in efforts in Afghanistan by the Soviets, by the Brits, going all the way back to Alexander the Great.

There is no doubt we have to do whatever it takes to defeat al-Qaida, because they are out to annihilate us. The question is, where? Where we face reports that there were only about 100 al-Qaida actually in Afghanistan, we are really looking at a battle with the Taliban.

In our meetings with General McChrystal and other key officials, they emphasized the point that we should not retreat and that it would be a watershed event if the United States did not provide whatever military force was necessary in Afghanistan.

Our delegation replied that the NATO support was lacking and we ought to rethink exactly how we are going to deal with the Taliban. The efforts to persuade the Taliban to come back and support the Karzai government—because there are many there who could be brought back if the inducements were sufficient and they were sufficiently confident—the Karzai government did not lend a whole lot to inspire confidence. They had an election which was clouded with fraud. They have sustained reports about dealing in the narcotics trade with high-ranking officials, repeated evidence of corruption at the highest levels—hardly inducive to a stable government.

When the President projected a withdrawal by mid-2011, that was not what President Karzai had suggested. He was quoted in the press as saying, U.S. troops would have to be in Afghanistan for 15 years. When our delegation had an opportunity to meet with President Karzai, we pressed him on that issue, and he said: Well, 2 years would be required for an adequate presence of the

U.S. military. He never could quite define what "adequate" was, but he said U.S. forces would have to stay for another 10 years.

More recently, in the intervening weeks, the war there has shaped up. We still have only committed a small fraction of the 30,000 troops—something like 5,000. Perhaps it will not be necessary to commit the additional 25,000 troops.

We had a very productive meeting with the Prime Minister of India, Prime Minister Singh. A point which we pressed was whether India and Pakistan could enter into an arms reduction pact similar to the pacts which the United States and the Soviet Union have had, which would reduce the number of troops from India and the number of troops from Pakistan on the border to liberate more Pakistan military to help in the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Prime Minister Singh said he would certainly be willing to consider that, but Pakistan would have to control the terrorists. We questioned him as to whether the Pakistani Government could control the terrorists, and his reply was very blunt: Yes, the terrorists are the creation of Pakistan, which is the way he responded to that situation.

In the intervening weeks, again, there has been unique cooperation between Pakistani intelligence and the CIA, with many joint maneuvers, so perhaps there could be a material improvement along that line.

The written text, which will be submitted, goes into some greater detail, which I shall abbreviate because of the shortness of time.

In Syria, our meeting with President Bashar al-Asad was cordial and I think constructive. I had first visited Syria in 1984, and this was the 19th visit there. I have gone there repeatedly, as I have to the region generally, and even more often to Israel, because I have long thought Syria was the key to the Mideast peace process.

Syria desperately wants to regain the Golan Heights, and only Israel can decide whether it is in Israel's interest to cede the Golan Heights. But it is a different world in 2010 than it was in 1967, when Israel took the Golan. The strategy is very different in an era of rockets. It is not quite the same situation.

There is a great deal Israel could gain if a peace treaty was entered into with Syria: stopping Syria from continuing the destabilization of Lebanon, which Syria denies but I think happens to be a fact. For Syria to stop supporting Hezbollah and Hamas would be very important to Israel's security. To try to drive a wedge between Syria and Iran would be helpful not only to Israel in the context of the Iranian President wanting to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth but would be good not only for the region but for the entire world, if we can find a way to contain Iran in their determination to acquire nuclear weapons.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testified yesterday before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, and I asked her if she would consider a recommendation to have the President call the Israeli leaders, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the Syrian President, Bashar al-Asad, to the Oval Office to be an intermediary there. The office of the Presidency could have great forcefulness and great weight. The Secretary was noncommittal, and the record will reflect the exact words which she used.

The trip was very worthwhile. I find that when we leave the Beltway and leave Washington and see what is actually happening in the field, wearing a flak jacket in a helicopter across Afghanistan or talking to Foreign Minister Walid Mualeem, who was the Ambassador here for 10 years, and getting a feel for what is going on in India, it gives us a much better insight into how we handle our foreign aid, how we handle our budget, and how we handle our military operations.

EXHIBIT 1

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER FOREIGN TRAVEL

I seek recognition to speak about a Congressional Delegation I took part in from December 28, 2009 to January 7, 2010. The CODEL, led by Senator Gregg, comprised of Senators Bayh, Cornyn, Enzi, Klobuchar and their spouses. I was accompanied by my wife, Joan, and my Legislative Director, Christopher Bradish.

CYPRUS

We departed Andrews Air Force Base on Monday morning, December 28th, en route to Nicosia, Cyprus, with a refueling stop in Shannon, Ireland. We began the day with a meeting with our USAID mission to review projects being supported by the United States.

We then had a briefing with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which is focusing on reconciliation projects, to include media expansion. The UNDP office is located in the U.N. administered neutral zone, which divides the island. The UNDP continues to work with representatives in Cyprus on revision of textbooks and the diversification of media to allow viewpoints other than those of just the state-dominated media outlets to be heard.

The media is dominated by Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political outlets. Cyprus does not have equivalents of NPR or PBS. UNDP hopes to build on those models to allow diversification in the media by providing independent programming which can then be picked up by existing outlets for broadcast. The UNDP media program aims to provide all Cypriots with a non-partisan avenue of communication.

Following our meeting with USAID and UNDP officials, the delegation held a country team briefing led by Jonathan Cohen, our Deputy Chief of Mission. Our embassy in Cyprus has 65 U.S. employees in addition to roughly 100 Cypriot nationals. Cyprus has become increasingly important to the U.S. due to its strategic location. With an increasing number of U.S. ships transiting the Mediterranean Sea, U.S. port visits in Cyprus increased 24 percent in 2008. With thousands of U.S. troops having shore leave while in port, the U.S. Embassy has worked with the Cypriot government to ensure that appropriate safety measures are in place to protect our ships and sailors.

Since Cyprus' accession to the European Union in January 2004, the number of Cypriots attending U.S. universities has decreased dramatically. The U.S. mission has created a program to use Cypriots who are alumni of U.S. universities to go to high schools and communities to speak about the benefits of an education in the United States.

On the law enforcement front, the Cypriot government has utilized U.S. expertise in some of their criminal investigations, including the investigation into the recent theft of the remains of former president Tassos Papadopoulos.

We received an overview of U.S. investment in Cyprus as well as U.S. businesses operating on the island. U.S. exports to Cyprus grew by 28 percent in 2008. I asked about the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's efforts to establish a university and medical center in Cyprus. UPMC is exporting its expertise to bring world-class health care, advanced technologies, and management skills to markets worldwide.

Our mission provided an update on the status of negotiations between the north and south. Talks between the Greek Cypriot President, Demetris Christofias and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat have ramped up in recent weeks with the two leaders reportedly meeting multiple times a week. However significant obstacles remain to reaching an agreement to include how to resolve vexing property, security and constituent state constitution issues.

In November 2002, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented a draft comprehensive peace settlement, commonly referred to as the Annan Plan. According to the Congressional Research Service:

"[The Annan Plan] called for a 'new state of affairs,' in which the 'common state' government's relations with its two politically equal component states would be modeled on the Swiss federal example. It would have a single international legal personality. Component states would participate in foreign and EU relations as in Belgium. Parliament would have two 48-seat houses. Each state would have equal representation in the Senate. Seats in the Chamber of Deputies would be allocated in proportion to population, provided that no state would have less than 25% of the seats. A Presidential Council would have 6 members; the offices of President and Vice President would rotate every 10 months among its members. No more than two consecutive presidents could come from the same state. Greek and Turkish troops could not exceed a four-digit figure (9,999). U.N. peacekeepers would remain as long as the common state, with the concurrence of the component states, decides. Cyprus would be demilitarized. During a three-year transition, the leaders of the two sides would be co-presidents. The 1960 Treaties of Establishment, Guarantee, and Alliance would remain in force. There would be a single Cypriot citizenship and citizenship of a component state; residence in a component state could be limited by citizenship, but such limits would have restrictions. Provisions would be made for return or compensation of property. Turkish Cypriot territory would be reduced to 28.5% of the island.

The Delegation departed the country team briefing for a meeting with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat. Talat provided an overview of the negotiations with President Christofias and focused on three main areas of dispute: governance and power sharing; economic and European affairs; and property reconciliation. While he expressed hope about having fruitful and productive discussions, he indicated that the two sides have disagreements over terminology which pre-

clude them from moving forward on a solution. I asked if there were disadvantages to not achieving a solution and if the status-quo is acceptable. Talat responded that neither side seeks violence, but that the current situation is disadvantageous to both sides.

Talat expressed optimism that a resolution could be reached in 2010 but that the talks would likely break in mid-February to allow for elections, the outcome of which could have a significant impact on the continuation of talks between the two sides. Talat indicated that the Greek Cypriots have less of an incentive to find a solution given their dominance of the island. He also confirmed the UNDP representatives' previous assertions that the local media helps inflame opinions on both sides.

The delegation then departed the north en route to a meeting with President Christofias. The President opened the meeting with a 37-minute overview of the situation and the negotiations. He expressed concern over the more than 40,000 Turkish troops on the island, as well as the unknown number of Turkish settlers. He too focused on security and land/property compensation as main obstacles to achieving an agreement. Christofias avowed that he is "free of nationalism" and that "Turkish Cypriots are not our enemies, but our brothers and sisters." He concluded that Cypriots must rule the country—not Turkey. He stated that he "will be the unhappiest man on the island" if he and Talat cannot reach an agreement, but stated: "I will do my utmost because as time passes, new problems arise." He indicated he had a good partner and relationship with Talat and if he should lose in the upcoming elections, the prospects for constructive dialogue and resolution were poor.

SYRIA

On December 30th, the delegation departed Larnaca, Cyprus for Damascus, Syria. This was my nineteenth visit to Syria. We were greeted by Jason Smith, our control officer, and Charles Hunter, our Charge d'Affaires, who provided an update of the situation on the ground during the ride to the embassy. Upon arrival, the delegation received two classified briefings to include a country team briefing. Following our briefings, the delegation departed for the Presidential Palace for a meeting with President Bashar al-Asad and Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem.

President Asad opened the meeting by welcoming the delegation and provided his views on the bilateral relationship as well as regional tensions. I have long held the view that the U.S. could play a positive role in fostering an agreement between Israel and Syria. I indicated that if Hezbollah and Hamas could be disarmed and renounce violence the region would be better off. I expressed the view held by many in the U.S. that the Syria-Iran nexus is troubling and Iran's desire to obtain nuclear weapons poses a danger to the region and the world. I complimented President Asad for his willingness to engage the Israelis via the Turks. I asked President Asad for his view on the prospects for an Israeli-Syrian peace, better relations with the West and his country's relationship with Iran. He indicated that the "devil is in the details." He explicitly decoupled the issues, stating that his country's calculus for each is independent of the others. He indicated the U.S. should support the Turkish role in the peace process—which has been put on hold following the conflict in Gaza in 2008 and Israel's parliamentary elections in 2009.

Asad stated, "only peace can protect Israel"—something no amount of armaments can do. He further stated that Hamas and Hezbollah exist as result of the lack of peace.

On the U.S. role in the peace process, Asad pointed to efforts undertaken in the 1990s, when Secretary of State James Baker engaged forcefully with the interested parties.

It is clear to me that Syria desires robust U.S. engagement in the peace process. Syria's tepid alliance with Iran appears not to be bound by mutual affection, but rather by Syria's desire to be on good terms with a regional force. Syria clearly wants the U.S. to withdraw from Iraq, but not before Iraqi domestic institutions have time to mature to prevent Iran from sweeping in to a political vacuum.

We discussed the issue of intelligence cooperation. The good cooperation Syria and the U.S. had following September 11, 2001 has since dissipated. The delegation pressed Asad for more cooperation. Asad confirmed that cooperation had been good, but said that security and intelligence cooperation cannot flourish in the absence of strong political and diplomatic relations.

The delegation pressed Asad on the Iranian nuclear threat and the potential for Syria to be dragged into a regional conflict. Asad indicated that the Iranian issue needs to be resolved and that conflict must be prevented, but that he does not believe Iran is seeking a nuclear military capability.

Senator Klobuchar and I raised the issue of the three American citizens—Joshua Fattal, Shane Bauer, and Sarah Shourd—who have been detained in Iran since July 31, 2009, when they mistakenly crossed into Iran on a hiking expedition.

The United Kingdom had asked Syria to intercede with Iran in the case of five British citizens who were in Iranian custody under somewhat similar circumstances. The five citizens were released.

Since the start of their detention, I had worked with other members of the Senate to facilitate their release. On August 18, I joined Senators Casey, Feinstein, Boxer, Klobuchar, Franken and Murray in writing to the Iranian Ambassador to the U.N. Mohammad Khazaee to request that Iran grant the Swiss consular access to the Americans per Iran's obligations under the Vienna Convention. This letter was followed by a similar one to Ayatollah Khamenei on September 23, 2009.

On September 22, I introduced a resolution cosponsored by Senators Casey, Feinstein, Boxer, Klobuchar, Franken, and Nelson (FL) encouraging the Government of Iran to grant consular access for the Swiss and to allow Joshua Fattal, Shane Bauer, and Sarah Shourd to reunite with their families in the United States as soon as possible. The legislation passed the Senate on October 6, and passed the House on October 29, sponsored by Reps. Schwartz and Hinchey.

On October 8, I sent a personal note to Ambassador Khazaee requesting his assistance in releasing the hikers.

On December 17, 2009 I sent a letter to Secretary Clinton requesting she ask the Syrians to engage Tehran to secure the release of the three Americans. The State Department contacted the Syrian foreign ministry to seek its assistance in a manner similar to the assistance the Syrians provided to the recent efforts to secure the release of the five British yachtsmen detained by Iran in late November after they strayed into Iranian waters. The five Brits were released within a week.

President Asad said they would look into the matter including the charges to see if Syria could be of help in securing their release. President Asad told me he would review the matter and that the Syrians "will try our best."

Later that evening Senator Klobuchar and I had a working dinner with Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem. I have known Foreign Minister Muallem for two decades dating back to his time as Ambassador to the

United States. We discussed in depth the issues raised earlier with the President. We again pressed the Foreign Minister on the issue of the U.S. hikers detained in Iran. Foreign Minister Muallem indicated he would be willing to go to Tehran to engage his counterpart regarding the plight of the hikers if he sees "some light at the end of the tunnel."

INDIA

We departed Damascus the following morning for Delhi, India and where we were met by Deputy Chief of Mission Steven White. The issues we discussed were wide-ranging and included: nuclear cooperation between the United States and India; the November 2008 terrorist attacks in India and India's efforts to combat terrorism; India's tenuous relations with Pakistan and China; its economic and diplomatic presence in Afghanistan; and the position it has taken in global climate change negotiations, in which it has opposed binding emissions reductions as limits on its future economic growth. As the world's second most populous country, it is clear that India will play an increasing role in global politics this century.

The delegation participated in a country team briefing at our mission. We had the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of issues in our bilateral relationship with the DCM, political section, defense attaché, USAID and consular affairs officers.

Much of our discussions during our visit focused on India's growth and the growing pains associated with such growth, to include education. While 92 percent of the country's children go to primary school, half drop out by 6th grade. Many of India's 1.2 billion citizens live in rural regions and getting teachers to those posts is difficult. The country has engaged in an affirmative action for children of lower castes to attend university, but these reserved spots are extraordinarily competitive. Yet, the government of India is committed to inclusive growth and bringing the lower class up to participate in India's prosperity.

A central theme in our discussions with our mission personnel as well as Indian officials was the civil nuclear accord signed by the U.S. and India. On October 1, 2008, Congress approved an agreement facilitating nuclear cooperation between the United States and India. As chronicled by the Council on Foreign Relations, the deal, first introduced in a joint statement issued by President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on July 18, 2005, "lifts a three-decade U.S. moratorium on nuclear trade with India. It provides U.S. assistance to India's civilian nuclear energy program, and expands U.S.-India cooperation in energy and satellite technology" (CFR—11/20/09). During our meetings, this agreement was described as a "watershed" event in our bilateral relationship—an event that opened new doors, new cooperation and new possibilities for two countries that have spent the majority of their histories circling each other but not directly engaging in a meaningful manner.

According to our officials, India is taking steps to be a responsible world power on non-proliferation matters. India has supported international efforts, along with the United States, to address Iran's troubling military nuclear ambitions—most recently by supporting an IAEA censure of Iran's nuclear program during a November 27, 2009 meeting of the IAEA's Board of Governors. This has led to a cooling between the two countries, yet India and Iran still have deep economic connections, as Iran is India's second largest energy supplier.

On the economic front, India's economy was more sheltered than others and weathered the global economic crisis better than

many. Their economy grew 6.8 percent in 2009 and is expected to grow 7.5 percent in 2010. India has increasingly sought and purchased U.S. weaponry. The deepening of the bilateral arms sales are a critical component of our relationship.

On the terrorism front, I pressed the team on the prospect of reconciliation between India and Pakistan in the hopes that a reduction in tensions would allow Pakistan to focus its forces on elements such as Al-Qaeda.

India is no stranger to terrorism, most recently seen in the horrific attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, which killed at least 173 people, including 6 Americans. Our mission and its law enforcement components have provided assistance to the Indians in the investigation of the attacks.

Following the country team briefing, the delegation took a classified regional security briefing before departing for the Prime Minister's office.

I have long been concerned about Indian-Pakistani relations. I brought up the issue of an Indian-Pakistani rapprochement during a visit to India in 1995. In August 1995, Senator Hank Brown and I were told by Prime Minister Rao in a visit to New Delhi that India was interested in negotiating with Pakistan to make their subcontinent free of nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Rao asked Senator Brown and me to raise this issue with Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto which we did. I then wrote to President Clinton urging him to broker such negotiations. Those discussions are summarized in a letter which I sent to President Clinton:

AUGUST 28, 1995.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I think it important to call to your personal attention the substance of meetings which Senator Hank Brown and I have had in the last two days with Indian Prime Minister Rao and Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Prime Minister Rao stated that he would be very interested in negotiations which would lead to the elimination of any nuclear weapons on his subcontinent within ten or fifteen years including renouncing first use of such weapons. His interest in such negotiations with Pakistan would cover bilateral talks or a regional conference which would include the United States, China and Russia in addition to India and Pakistan.

When we asked Prime Minister Bhutto when she had last talked to Prime Minister Rao, she said that she had no conversations with him during her tenure as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Bhutto did say that she had initiated a contact through an intermediary but that was terminated when a new controversy arose between Pakistan and India.

From our conversations with Prime Minister Rao and Prime Minister Bhutto, it is my sense that both would be very receptive to discussions initiated and brokered by the United States as to nuclear weapons and also delivery missile systems.

I am dictating this letter to you by telephone from Damascus so that you will have it at the earliest moment. I am also telefaxing a copy of this letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Sincerely,

ARLEN SPECTER.

After returning to the United States, I discussed such a presidential initiative with President Clinton, but my suggestion was not pursued.

The delegation had a warm welcome from Prime Minister Singh. The Prime Minister began the meeting by thanking the delegation for Congress' strong bipartisan support in implementing the U.S.-India bilateral nuclear accord. He further declared that this

event has made him believe the "sky is the limit" in terms of broadening and deepening the U.S.-India bilateral relationship, from energy to defense to education.

Prime Minister Singh confirmed that his economy continues to grow, and was insulated from the global fiscal difficulties largely because of India's savings rate and that domestic consumption filled much of the void left by lagging exports. He told the group that India's prosperity will have positive effects on the rest of the developing world. He expressed his strong desire to deepen the defense cooperation between our countries.

The group asked the Prime Minister for his views on Afghanistan. He informed the group that India has invested \$1.2 billion in reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. While he admitted the existence of corruption within the Karzai government, he indicated that President Karzai is the best option for stability, and that all will benefit from strong international support for Karzai. He stated that deadlines and withdrawal will only play into the hands of the terrorists, as they will signal looming weakness of the government in Kabul.

I pressed the Prime Minister on the prospects for relieving tensions between his country and Pakistan and the possibility of having an accord on troops and nuclear weapons. If Pakistan will take action against the terrorist elements in its country, India would be willing to discuss many things, Singh stated. Prime Minister Singh told the group of the strong internal pressure he felt after the Mumbai attacks to take some action against Pakistan, but that he refrained. He further told the group that Pakistanis and Indians are the same—highlighting that he was born in what today is Pakistan and that former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was born in what is present day India. He told the group that Pakistan does not need to fear India and that he is committed to engaging in a positive manner with Pakistan. He suggested that serious reform in Pakistan's education system is needed and that madrassas are a significant problem.

I asked Prime Minister Singh whether India would consider a treaty with Pakistan to reduce military forces stationed by each nation on the border. I told him of my 1995 conversations with Prime Minister Rao and Prime Minister Bhutto and my letter to President Clinton. I noted that it would be a great help in the war against al-Qaeda if Pakistan could re-deploy significant soldiers from the border to fight al-Qaeda.

I analogized an Indian-Pakistan treaty to the U.S.-Soviet arms reduction treaties. If India and Pakistan could agree on disclosure and reduced forces, that would liberate Pakistani troops. Prime Minister Singh said India would be willing to consider such a treaty, but pointed out that Pakistan would have to control Pakistan terrorists such as the ones who attacked the hotel in Mumbai. He said he had been under considerable pressure to respond forcefully, but had not done so. Many feared that the Mumbai hotel attack and a forceful India response could have set off a nuclear exchange.

I asked Prime Minister Singh pointedly if the Pakistan government could control the terrorists and he responded "yes." He added the terrorists were the "creation" of the Pakistan government.

Regarding Iran, Prime Minister Singh told the group India was not in favor of another nuclear power in the region and doesn't want Iran to have that capability. Prime Minister Singh highlighted his country's support at the United Nations to address Iran's nuclear ambitions. He indicated that Iran is a signatory to the NPT, and as such is entitled to

enrich uranium for peaceful purposes, but that they must comply with international accords to reassure the international community of their peaceful intentions.

Following our meeting with the Prime Minister, I returned to the embassy for a meeting with Robert Hladun, the Deputy Country Attache for the DEA and Gib Wilson, the Assistant Legal Attache for the FBI. I received an overview of the regional drug trade and how it impacts the U.S., and our cooperation and assistance to India with their investigations and counterterrorism efforts.

The Deputy Chief of Mission hosted a working lunch with our counterparts from the Indian National Congress including: Pallam Raju, Minister of State for Defense, Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Manish Tewari, Prakash Javadekar, Raashid Alvi, Madhu Goud Yashki and Deepender Singh Hooda. Our discussions centered on the same topics we had discussed with Prime Minister Singh and the country team, but also provided us an opportunity to discuss how, as parliamentarians, we deal with local and national issues of importance to our constituents. Following lunch, we departed Delhi for Morocco, with a refueling stop in Qatar.

AFGHANISTAN

On January 3, 2010, the delegation flew from New Delhi to Kabul, Afghanistan and returned to New Delhi late on the same day. Upon arrival at the U.S. Embassy, we were greeted by General Stanley McChrystal and Ambassadors Anthony Wayne and Francis Ricciardone.

General McChrystal outlined a strategy aimed at influencing the Karzai government to institute reforms to win the support of the Afghan people so that many of the insurgents would support the Karzai government and reject the efforts of the Taliban to win control. He acknowledged some of the insurgents who supported the Taliban leadership would stay with the Taliban, so that the Taliban and their supporters would have to be defeated militarily.

I asked General McChrystal why fight in Afghanistan when others—the Soviets, the British, Alexander the Great had failed—and al-Qaeda could organize strikes against the U.S. and others from Yemen, Somalia and elsewhere and the U.S. was engaging only a small number of al-Qaeda (estimated by some as few as 100) and really only fighting the Taliban. General McChrystal responded that U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would have disastrous consequences in the region and beyond and that al-Qaeda would continue to have their best sanctuary in the caves and mountains on the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I asked him about the reality of significant withdrawal by mid-2011, pointing out that the commitment to start the withdrawal could be met by a small withdrawal which would not be significant. He did not respond on a date for final withdrawal, but said the mid-2011 start of withdrawal was a realistic exit strategy.

When I pointed out that President Karzai had publicly stated U.S. troops would be needed for 15 years, General McChrystal did not modify his previously stated estimates.

When our Codel later met with President Karzai asked when he thought Afghanistan would be able to maintain the peace and function on its own without any U.S. troops. He said that if the resources were "adequate," that U.S. troops could start withdrawal in two years with full withdrawal after 10 years. There was insufficient time to clarify with President Karzai what resources would be "adequate" or what the timetable

would be as to estimates of how many troops could be withdrawn each year.

We received a brief on the status of the Afghan Army and were informed that it is well respected by much of the population and is seen by many as an entity that holds the promise of binding the nation. The police force is in poorer shape: corruption and involvement in the drug trade, combined with a chronic lack of leadership, hamper its improvement. Only 25 percent of the police force has formal training.

The delegation then proceeded to a country team briefing. Our mission in Afghanistan has four ambassadors—a rare occurrence, but one that is necessary given the complexity of the issues and the size of the mission.

We discussed the significant monetary investment being made in Afghanistan, with \$250 million alone spent on the civilian side each month, and once the additional 30,000 troops arrive the cost will rise to between \$9 and \$10 billion per month for the entire U.S. effort. When asked to discuss the national security significance to U.S., Major General MacDonald stated that Afghanistan is the extremists' base, threat exists and they have resources in Afghanistan. I pressed the team to rationalize the disparity between President Obama saying we begin withdrawing in 2011 and President Karzai saying that it will take 15 years for his security forces to be ready to stand on their own. I pressed them on how quickly we can train security forces so the U.S. could turn over responsibility and again shared the concern by many over U.S. debt, deficit and obligations at home.

Lieutenant General Caldwell outlined the efforts to develop the police and ministries of defense and interior. He highlighted the issue of lacking an effective Afghan civil service. He told us that an Afghan soldier makes \$165 a month whereas a judge makes only \$80. Clearly, civilian pay reform is needed.

I pressed the officials on getting the international community to carry its weight. They replied that the U.S. requested 2,500 troops on December 1, 2009 and NATO pledged 460, and U.S. officials are now going around Kabul asking each country's ambassador for additional troops. I again pressed them on when we can finally leave. They stated that governance, economy and security need to all be working in tandem and that 300,000 Afghan security forces will be ready by July 2011.

MOROCCO

The delegation arrived in Rabat, Morocco at 1 AM on January 5th where we were met by Ambassador Samuel Kaplan. Our Codel was very impressed with him. There is considerable debate about "political appointees," but Ambassador Kaplan brought unique skills to this position from a distinguished career in the law, considerable business experience, and extensive activity in political and community affairs.

We met with Foreign Minister Fassi-Fihri and Director General Mohamed Mansouri. The Foreign Minister told the delegation he was pleased with the status of relations between our two countries and the deepening in the relationship on issues such as trade and defense and intelligence cooperation. The Foreign Minister explained Morocco's unique position in the world, with one foot in the Mid-East and one in Africa. He described the difficulty his country has had in establishing a democratic system, permitting political parties while maintaining a democracy.

Much of our discussion focused on terrorism and prospects for peace in the region. Director General Mansouri stated that terrorists have manipulated Islam and that Mo-

rocco has pushed for a more moderate approach and that it is engaged in combating radicalism. I pressed the Foreign Minister on recent incidents of terrorism and what can be done to combat the ideology that inspires suicide bombers and their skewed religious/political views. He told me that many in the Muslim world are frustrated—especially the youth. They lack educational and economic opportunities and poverty has led many to extremist camps. Yet, we also discussed how many terrorists, including those that perpetrated 9/11 and most recently the Detroit airline bombing attempt were educated and came from middle class or wealthy families.

The officials told us that we must work to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and that a lasting peace will help subdue tensions and allow governments and moderate Muslims to stand up and lead. In addition, they suggested a global interfaith dialogue must occur. They stated their desire to play a leadership role given Morocco's history in hosting the three great religions.

The Foreign Minister highlighted Morocco's efforts to engage the youth with opportunities and positive messages and that their brand of Islam is open, inclusive and tolerant and is a good model for the broader Muslim world.

We departed Rabat early on January 7th to return to Andrews Air Force Base by midday EST.

TRIBUTE TO MR. KENNY EVANS

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, Kenny Evans recently passed after being with me for some 30 years. I had known Mr. Evans in Philadelphia for a long time, but when I ran for the Senate in 1980, I asked him to be my campaign deputy in the African-American community. When I was elected, I brought him in as my key operative in the African-American community because of the urgency of having active minority representation.

He came to be known and loved and admired as a leading public official in the city. He served longer than most anybody else who had been in public office. He took on a great role in housing and in job training and in education, on civil rights issues and on immigration.

When we had a proposal advanced by Congressman CHAKA FATTAH called GEAR UP almost a decade ago, with a \$300 million price tag, I consulted with Kenny Evans, listened to his advice and recommendations and helped provide \$300 million a year, which has now come to be in the \$2.5 billion range, not only servicing Philadelphia but the entire country.

When we had a controversy last summer about African-American children being excluded from a swim club which said they were not welcome there, Kenny Evans took the lead in consultation and advice on how to handle it with the Civil Rights Division, and action has been taken to correct a wrong there.

He was an unusual public servant and an extraordinary man.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a statement which was prepared by Michael Oscar, my executive director for southeastern Pennsylvania, which Mike Oscar gave at Kenny's funeral, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

Today, we do not grieve for Kenny Evans, for now he is free to follow the path God has laid out for him. Kenny took God's hand when he heard Him call.

Good Morning and on behalf of Charolette and the entire Evans Family, I offer the following remarks highlighting our friend, Kenny Evans.

My name is Michael Oscar and I serve as Sen. Specter's Executive Director in Southeastern Pennsylvania. For nearly a decade, I had the distinct pleasure of working with Kenny in many different legislative and political capacities. It is with this background and distinction that I speak to you today.

May it be said of Kenny, the words of Alfred, Lord Tennyson:

"I am a part of all that I have met
To much is taken, much abides
That which we are, we are . . .
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Kenny personified these words because his cause was ours,—you and me—the cause of the common man and the common woman. His commitment was to those who Andrew Jackson called "the humble members of society: the farmers, mechanics, laborers, and the forgotten."

On this foundation for the past three decades with Sen. Specter and beyond, Kenny defined our values, refined our policies, and refreshed our faith. He did this by operating behind the scenes with much grace, class, and dignity.

There was never a problem no matter how big or small, he did not try to solve, a request he did not try to respond to, or a person he did not try to help. This was his marquee value.

Kenny's work ethic and style mentored future generations of congressional staffers, political candidates, and current legislators in the art and science of politics. As Al Jackson, his friend and luncheon companion for nearly 27 years, stated on numerous occasions, "he is the maestro of politics"—instinctively knowing how to deal with people and their everyday concerns.

In my opinion, he earned this astute characterization because he worked from the ground up, which provided him the proper rubric on how to communicate with people.

As his Executive Director for the past five years, I witnessed firsthand his innate ability to soften even the harshest of personalities. There was not a day that went by that Susan Segal would say, "Kenny would be the perfect choice to handle this constituent."

"And handle this constituent he did" because his commitment went well beyond the federal scope. Whatever it took, a phone call, a letter, a closed door meeting. He was a tireless advocate always on a mission.

When I first joined Senator Specter's staff in Washington, D.C. before coming to Philadelphia, my COS at the time, Carey Lackman told me "you had an impressive list of references, but none greater than Kenny Evans." Candidly, I didn't know what Carey was talking about. I had no idea who Kenny Evans was and he was not listed as one of my references.

I later learned that Kenny worked closely with one of my former employer's, Michael Kunz, the Clerk of Court for the District Court. When Mr. Kunz heard that I applied for the position he called Kenny to advocate on my behalf. Apparently, Kenny immediately called Carey and stated, "this guy worked for the clerk, do you know how many calls a day I get from constituents to get out of jury duty? You need to hire this guy."

However, my first and lasting impression of Kenny occurred about a year later. Many of you may not be aware of this, but Kenny, along with Al Jackson, established the first urban aquaculture center in the nation.

Many of you like me are probably scratching your heads right now wondering what is aquaculture. Well, it's any crop that is cultured in water—whether it be shrimp, fish, or seaweed.

Kenny learned about aquaculture from his numerous luncheon conversations with Al Jackson and over the course of a year, they drafted this unique partnership between the University of Pennsylvania and Cheyney University. They wanted to provide African American students the opportunity to learn this unusual science.

Proudly I report to you today, the center has been successfully funded for the past seven years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and has graduated nearly 188 African American students in the field of urban aquaculture. This was just one accomplishment of many that Kenny succeeded in on behalf of Sen. Specter.

Beyond Kenny's political acumen, he mentored all of us on how to keep things simple, light. When I was drafted by the Senator to run his Philadelphia Office, I heard one of my predecessors define it as "Kennyism." Those Kennyisms have sustained me and our team in Philadelphia for many years and they will never be forgotten.

One specific anecdote that defines what we collectively call a "Kennyism" was when I was on a leave of absence from the Senator's office to run Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick's campaign. Despite my absence from the office, my three-year-old son, Liam, at the time was enrolled in the daycare center located in the Green Federal Building.

So for three days a week, I drove down to the city to drop him off. Before heading up to the campaign office in Doylestown, I would stop by the second floor cafeteria to grab a cup of coffee and I was always greeted by Kenny's chuckle.

He would tell me "Sit down, Mike, tell me about the campaign and more importantly, how is your family?" He would listen, he would laugh, and he taught me to keep it light. He would end every conversation with "It will be ok."

Speaking of campaigns, when I had the pleasure of accompanying the Senator during his visit with Kenny just a few weeks ago in the hospital, Kenny despite his medical maladies went right to work assessing for the Senator how the African American Community along with many others will come out for him in his re-election. Yes, many a "kennyism" was shared that day.

A few short weeks later, I went back to visit with Kenny, along with Al Jackson, and Elvis Solivan, another stalwart of the Specter Team. While there I had this memorable conversation with Kenny's grandson, Lamont. He told me how his grandfather would bring the Senator's Lincoln Town Car home and when he did he would offer his grandchildren a ride in it, and if they accepted the offer then they would wash it later.

When I heard the story, I just laughed. "Senator, rest assured, no one yet from the Oscar family has ridden in the Lincoln let alone washed it except for their father."

Upon your arrival at today's services, you may have noticed that radiant photo of Kenny, Charolette, and President Obama. On that day, Tuesday, September 15, 2009, candidly, Kenny was noticeably not well, but we wanted to ensure he received his photo with the first African American President of the United States.

That said, I grasped Kenny's hand, along with Charolette's and together we raced down the long convention center hallway

with Andy Wallace at our side running interference. When we got to the photo line, we were immediately escorted to the front of the line. I turned to Shanin Specter and asked him to introduce Kenny and Charolette to the President, and he replied, "No," but he immediately responded with "Mike, I want you to do it."

So, I proceeded to the President, "Mr. President, I would like to introduce you to Kenny and Charolette Evans. Kenny has been with the Senator for the past 30 years." President Obama retorted, "my man, Kenny Evans" and extended a warm hug and handshake. Without question, I will NEVER forget that moment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for those of us who are a part of or friend of Sen. Specter's Alumni and Family, please do not regard today in sorrow, rather rejoice in Kenny's memory and adapt his cause to your daily work.

Find comfort and solace in knowing that Kenny joins Carey Lackman and Tom Bowman, former staffers that were dedicated to the cause in helping the common man and woman of Pennsylvania and the nation. Imagine if you will the conversation they must be having right now.

For the rest of us assembled here today and to Kenny's family; specifically, Charolette, I offer this summation of a consummate advocate for the little guy, Kenny Evans, by recounting the final sentence of Sen. Ted Kennedy's "The Dream Shall Never Die Speech," at the 1980 Democratic National Convention:

"For all of those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die."

As in everything we do, may God be blessed! Thank you.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold the suggestion of the absence of a quorum?

Mr. SPECTER. I do.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:42 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BURRIS).

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2009—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, right now there is a meeting at the White House that is being covered extensively by the media live. There has been much anticipation about the meeting between the President and a number of Members of Congress, equally divided between the two bodies, the House and Senate, and the two political parties. It is a chance for both sides to listen to each other. The media has decided that by and large this is going to be unproductive. I watched a good bit of it today. At least people are