

**SEC. 303. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY FAMILY MEMBERS.**

Section 2102A(e) is amended by striking “December 31, 2011” and inserting “December 31, 2021”.

**SEC. 304. INDEXING OF LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY FAMILY MEMBERS.**

Section 2102A(b) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2011), the Secretary shall use the same percentage calculated pursuant to section 2102(e) of this title to increase the amounts described in paragraph (1) of this subsection.”.

**SEC. 305. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES TO PERSONS WHO DIED IN THE ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERVICE.**

Section 112(a) is amended—

(1) by inserting “and persons who died in the active military, naval, or air service,” after “under honorable conditions.”; and

(2) by striking “veteran’s” and inserting “deceased individual’s”.

**SEC. 306. AUTOMATIC WAIVER OF AGENCY OF ORIGINAL JURISDICTION REVIEW OF NEW EVIDENCE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7105 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e)(1) If, either at the time or after the agency of original jurisdiction receives a substantive appeal, the claimant or the claimant’s representative, if any, submits evidence to either the agency of original jurisdiction or the Board of Veterans’ Appeals for consideration in connection with the issue or issues with which disagreement has been expressed, such evidence shall be subject to initial review by the Board unless the claimant or the claimant’s representative, as the case may be, requests in writing that the agency of original jurisdiction initially review such evidence.

“(2) A request for review of evidence under paragraph (1) shall accompany the submittal of the evidence.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (e) of such section, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to claims for which a substantive appeal is filed on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 307. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITIES OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO USE INFORMATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES.**

(a) AUTHORITY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM SECRETARY OF TREASURY AND COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY FOR INCOME VERIFICATION PURPOSES.—Section 5317(g) is amended by striking “September 30, 2011” and inserting “September 30, 2016”.

(b) AUTHORITY TO USE DATA PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES FOR PURPOSES OF ADJUSTING VETERANS BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 5317A(d) is amended by striking “September 30, 2011” and inserting “September 30, 2021”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 453(j)(1)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(j)(1)(G)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2011” and inserting “September 30, 2021”.

**SEC. 308. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR REGIONAL OFFICE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.**

Section 315(b) is amended by striking “December 31, 2011” and inserting “December 31, 2012”.

**NOTICE OF HEARINGS****COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information 531 of the Senate and the public of an addition to a previously announced hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 7, 2011, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

In addition to the other measures previously announced, the Committee will also consider S. 1067, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research and development and demonstration program to reduce manufacturing and construction costs relating to nuclear reactors, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6150, or by email to [Abigail\\_Campbell@energy.senate.gov](mailto:Abigail_Campbell@energy.senate.gov).

For further information, please contact Jonathan Epstein or Abby Campbell.

**COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, June 9, 2011, at 2:15 p.m. in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct an oversight hearing entitled “Setting the Standard: Domestic Policy Implications of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee.

**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Energy of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The hearing will be held on Thursday, June 9, 2011, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on critical minerals and materials legislation, including S. 383, S. 421, and S. 1113.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony

for the hearing record may do so by sending it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510-6150, or by email to [Abigail\\_Campbell@energy.senate.gov](mailto:Abigail_Campbell@energy.senate.gov).

For further information, please contact Allyson Anderson or Abigail Campbell.

**APPOINTMENT**

(Omitted from Thursday, May 26, 2011 RECORD)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, and after consultation with the Republican leader, pursuant to Public Law 106-286, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People’s Republic of China: the Honorable SUSAN COLLINS of Maine, and the Honorable JAMES E. RISCH of Idaho.

**ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2011**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., on Tuesday, June 7; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 782, the Economic Development Act; further, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. to allow for weekly caucus meetings.

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

**PROGRAM**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tonight, I filed cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 782, the Economic Development Act. I hope it is not necessary that we vote to invoke cloture on this matter on Wednesday, and I hope we can get to it tomorrow. If we cannot move to it under consent, then we will have the cloture vote Wednesday morning.

**ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent it adjourn under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator BROWN of Ohio.

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

## MEDICARE

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, for the last couple weeks, I traveled to senior centers from Toledo to Youngstown to Columbus to talk with seniors and health professionals about the threats facing their Medicare benefits. We owe it to our children, we owe it to our grandchildren, we owe it to succeeding generations to reduce our Nation's deficit. We know almost exactly one decade ago we had the largest budget surplus in the history of our country. We know during the next 8 years—as Congress and President Bush cut taxes mostly on the wealthy in 2001 and 2003, began two wars with Iraq and Afghanistan and didn't pay for them, did a prescription drug benefit, a supposed benefit that was, in many ways, a bailout for the drug and insurance companies and didn't pay for it, and deregulated Wall Street—during those 8 years, we had the largest budget deficit in American history. We went from the largest budget surplus in American history to the largest budget deficit in American history.

What we see in the Republican budget now, as we talk about Medicare and as they talk about Medicare—ending Medicare as we know it, turning Medicare over to the insurance companies—what we are seeing is sort of the same old game, the same old song from people who do not much like Medicare; that is, cut taxes on the wealthy again and pay for those tax cuts—you have to find a way to pay for them—I guess, pay for those tax cuts by cutting the Medicare benefits seniors have earned. That is what is troubling to me about this Republican budget.

Too many Americans are facing a middle-class squeeze, working hard, playing by the rules, finding it still hard to get ahead in this economy. Many parents, many Americans in their forties and fifties and sixties are part of a sandwich generation. They are helping their parents as their medical costs go up and their parents are not earning very much. They are maybe getting Social Security, maybe something else, and they are trying to pay for their children's college, so this is the wrong time, as if there would ever be a right time, to turn Medicare over to the insurance industry, Medicare as we know it.

That is why Senators CARDIN from Maryland, MCCASKILL of Missouri, and TESTER of Montana wrote a letter to the Vice President calling for the Republican plan to end Medicare as we know it to be taken off the table during the deficit reduction negotiations.

I want to see our deficit reduced. I want to see us have a long-term plan to get our budget deficit under control the way we did in the 1990s and turned budget problems inherited by President Clinton—bequeathed by Presidents Reagan and Bush, inherited by President Clinton—how we got from a budget deficit to a budget surplus.

The statistics behind Medicare are clear. The number of seniors lifted out

of poverty in these 45 years, the number of families who have the help to care for a parent or grandparent—we can't reverse those gains for the ultimate form of rationing health care for seniors. Make no mistake, this is rationing health care. When you shift the cost, you give a senior citizen a voucher—you give them an \$8,000 check, and that check goes to insurance companies to pay for health insurance. If it runs short, what happens—and it likely will—they pay out-of-pocket. That really is rationing. If you are not a fairly wealthy senior and you run out of this privatized Medicare voucher, you will reach into your pockets and pay for it. That is rationing because many seniors won't be able to pay for it.

When I hear the terms “death panels” and “rationing” and all these things that conservative politicians usually enthralled in the insurance industry are telling this Chamber and down the hall in the House of Representatives—real rationing is when seniors can not afford to pay out-of-pocket for their health insurance costs because of what this Republican budget plan does. Their plan calls for vouchers for private health coverage, doubling their out-of-pocket costs in the first year alone. The average senior would receive an \$8,000 voucher; however, in the first year of the voucher program, out-of-pocket expenses would, according to the Congressional Budget Office—not a Democratic group, not a Republican group, a down-the-middle group—the Congressional Budget Office said seniors' out-of-pocket expenses would double to more than \$12,500 annually. As I said, at the same time, Republicans are going to take these savings to the budget, these cuts to senior care, to Medicare, and finance tax cuts for those people who earn 10 times or more than the average retirement income of a Medicare recipient.

Seniors would see their prescription drug costs explode. In the health care bill, we cut the costs of prescription drugs to those seniors who are in the coverage gap, the so-called doughnut hole, cut them in half. That would go away. In other words, the Republican budget plan in my State across the river from the Presiding Officer's State would hand an \$89 million prescription drug bill tab to split among 139,000 Ohio seniors. Tens of thousands of Ohio seniors, thousands of West Virginia seniors, tens of thousands of seniors in the assistant majority leader's State of Illinois would be paying tens of millions of dollars in higher drug costs as a result of the Republican budget bill. The Senate voted that bill down, largely along party lines.

Republicans continue to want to privatize Medicare, to turn Medicare over to the insurance industry. It simply would put insurance companies in charge of Medicare. It would put insurance companies in charge of the health of our seniors.

Is that what we want? That is why we had Medicare in 1965, because insur-

ance companies were in charge of health care for seniors, meaning half of the seniors had no health insurance—people over 65 in the year 1965. Now roughly 99 percent of seniors have health insurance, and that is because of this program that most of us dearly love and the huge majority of our constituents in West Virginia, Illinois, and Ohio love, and that is called Medicare.

Now, Mr. President, put aside all I have said for a moment. Forget about vouchers, forget about privatization, forget about insurance companies even, and think in a personal way about what Medicare has done in this country.

Medicare was created in 1965, passed mostly by Democrats in the House and Senate, signed by President Lyndon Johnson in July of 1965. We have had Medicare for 45 years. Think about what it has done. Forget all the academic and policy questions. What Medicare has done is helped people in this country live longer, healthier lives. What that means is people have been able to get to know their grandchildren. Somebody who is 65 or 70 or 75 or 80, and enjoys generally good health, has had years—maybe decades—of helping to raise a grandchild, getting to know their granddaughter, getting to play with their grandson, all the things grandparents want to do. Senior citizens have had a greater quality of life because of what we call Medicare, and they have gotten to know their grandchildren better.

Think what that means to children. They have gotten to know their grandparents better and have gotten the kind of guidance only grandparents can give. Margaret Mead, the great anthropologist, a few decades ago said “wisdom and knowledge are passed from grandparent to grandchild.” Wisdom and knowledge are passed from grandparent to grandchild, because we all know if we have children, our kids don't always listen to us but our grandchildren do.

I have a 3-year-old grandson named Clayton who lives in Columbus, OH. When I am in Washington, my wife picks him up a lot of days after school. We don't live in Columbus, but she goes down there and picks him up after school. Every day Clayton gets to spend with his grandmother and, when I am home, every weekend with his grandfather. I get to see Clayton not as often as I want but fairly often.

What Margaret Mead said is right. Grandparents impart a special wisdom and knowledge to grandchildren. Think of the benefit grandchildren have because of their grandparents. I wouldn't have looked at it quite the same way until I had my first grandson 3 years ago, but I understand that now.

That, to me, is the real beauty of Medicare. It has helped this country's seniors live longer healthier lives and has helped this country's children be raised in a moral way, in a practical way, in an educational way, better than they would have if their grandparents hadn't been around.