

I have spent a great deal of time over here with my good friend and wonderful leader, Senator SHELBY, with Senator BOXER, with over 300 organizations, for over a year, to build a bill that is now part of the Transportation bill that, in addition to building highways in Florida and transit and roads in Alabama and Mississippi, will also for the first time in the history of our country—the first time—direct a significant portion of penalty money paid by a polluter, BP, that polluted the gulf coast—a good company in some ways but really messed up that well, though, and they just spilled gallons and gallons and millions of barrels of oil. We have shrimp that are coming in our nets with no eyes. We have turtles that are washing up on our shores dead. We have research needs in the gulf coast—that there has been no time in our history where we have needed that money more.

My question is to the gulf coast Republican Members and Democratic Members. What is it about this bill that is driving you so crazy that you can't accept \$10 billion that the Federal Government is trying to give you? Because that is what the RESTORE Act could potentially send to the gulf coast, a portion of the fine. We don't know whether that fine is going to be \$5 billion or \$10 billion or \$20 billion, but we do know it is going to be substantial because under current law they have to pay \$1,000 for every barrel spilled or \$4,200 if it was gross negligence.

In the Senate Transportation bill, this body showed rare bipartisan support and concern for the gulf coast, America's energy coast. We showed an understanding of the great erosion that is taking place in the delta of Louisiana, which drains 40 percent of the continent. We showed understanding that so much of our shipping and seafood industry relies on this coast—not that the other coasts are not vitally important—and we showed we understand the underinvestment that has been made. So 75 percent of the Senate basically stood and said: OK. Let's redirect this penalty money to where the injury is. That is the RESTORE Act, and that is in the Senate bill we sent over to the House, which they have absolutely just rejected.

I don't know what magic there is about the next 90 days, but I know what I am going to do. I am going to register my vote as no, and I am going to go home and work harder in Louisiana and along the gulf coast to explain to the people of our region how much is at stake by getting a longer term Transportation bill. Maybe 2 years is not as long as we would like to have, but it is better than 30 days, it is better than 60 days, and it is better than 90 days.

I will ask and explain that not only is the Transportation bill vital for Louisiana's projects but for approving the RESTORE Act, which I know the House has indicated their support for.

They have indicated a support for the concept of the RESTORE Act, but the act itself is in the Transportation bill.

So I am going to wrap-up. There are other Members on the floor who will speak. I thank the leader, BARBARA BOXER, who is here.

But for 90 days let's get back to work and go for a long-term Transportation bill that is a real jobs bill that will help the whole country but particularly the gulf coast with the RESTORE Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I see the Republican leader is on the floor, and I understand there may be a unanimous consent that is propounded, and I can offer some remarks in the context of an objection and a counter-proposal, if the minority leader would like to proceed now.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I would say to my friend from Rhode Island, I am not the one who will be asking consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak until I get a signal from the majority leader that he will seek recognition, at which point I will yield the floor.

I wished to follow in the footsteps of Senator LANDRIEU of Louisiana and reflect my own dismay and dissatisfaction with the situation we are in right now. The House extension on the highway bill, which we are going to be asked to proceed with, is going to cost—as far as the estimates I can see so far—around 100,000 jobs, and that is damage to our economy. That is a self-inflicted wound. More specifically, it is a House-inflicted wound, and I would very much like to see the Senate fight to force action on the Senate highway bill. It is a bipartisan bill with amendments and is fully paid for. This is a serious bill, as opposed to inflicting this kind of damage on our economy with a short-term extension.

Does the majority leader seek recognition?

Mr. REID. Yes, I do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2012

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to H.R. 4281, the Surface Transportation Extension Act, which was received from the House and is now at the desk; that the bill be read three times and the Senate proceed to vote on that matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. There are several of us who reserve our right to object. What the House has done is guaranteed job

losses for this country. They are already dithering on the Senate bill. Their not taking it up for a vote has cost us about 100,000 jobs. Thousands of businesses are at stake, and eventually we are talking about 3 million jobs at stake. The fact that they would do this without any commitment to get to conference, without any commitment to finish their job and run off on vacation is the reason I am reserving the right to object.

I ask that the unanimous consent request be modified so an amendment, which is at the desk, the text of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill, passed by the Senate on March 14, 2012, by a large bipartisan majority vote of 74 to 22, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request for modification?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The problem with accepting the Boxer amendment is that it would shut down the Federal-Aid Highway Program, which means States wanting reimbursement for projects will not get paid. It will cause already nervous State Department of Transportation directors to cut back further on the work because there will be no reimbursements on Federal projects, and it would cost the highway trust fund \$100 million per day for any day the gas tax is not collected, thereby adding to the deficit.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object, and I was listening to the distinguished Republican leader, let me challenge some of the assumptions so maybe we can get to a consent. In talking to Members of the House of Representatives, I am very confident there is ample support to pass not only the bipartisan surface transportation bill that passed this body by an overwhelming vote but a consensus bill that came out of our committees by unanimous vote in both the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Banking Committee. There is general agreement that this bill should be enacted into law.

I am confident that if the Speaker of the House brings this bill to the floor of the House of Representatives, it will be passed. There are adequate votes for it.

To my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, here is the problem: If we pass another short-term extension, we are going to lose jobs. In my own

State of Maryland, we cannot let the contracts on major maintenance projects with a 90-day extension. We cannot move forward with the planning of our highways, our bridges, our transit systems with another short-term extension. This takes us to the middle of the summer. We lose the construction season on getting transportation work done.

I urge the distinguished leader that we do have the opportunity to pass the bill right now, and if we stand firm and tell the House of Representatives we want to do what is right for the American people, that in the Senate we had a bipartisan bill, a consensus bill—what's happening in the House is extremely partisan. Let's get together on the most important jobs bill we can pass. It is thousands of jobs in Maryland, and it is millions of jobs in this Nation that are affected by passing a surface transportation bill.

With that, I am hoping I convinced the distinguished Republican leader.

I ask unanimous consent that the request be modified so that an amendment, which is at the desk, the text of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill, passed by the Senate on March 14, 2012, by a large bipartisan majority vote of 74 to 22, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will spare the Senate the repetitious repeating of my remarks with regard to the initial Boxer modification, but the principles remain the same.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleagues in trying to find a way to attach the Senate bill which passed this body better than 3 to 1, with a huge bipartisan majority, which is a good bill. It was paid for and had weeks of collegial work, back and forth, with bipartisan amendments, which is a serious bill that every major business group in the country, every major labor group in the country, and even environmental groups are supporting.

As the Senator from Maryland has said, it would certainly virtually be passed by the House if the Speaker would only bring it up, but for partisan reasons the House has refused to even bring it up for a vote. Instead, they sent us this extension which will cost 100,000 jobs.

It is my view that if we can send it back in this form, we will not experi-

ence the parade of horrors that the distinguished Republican leader has suggested because it will not come to that point. They will, in fact, pass the Senate bill and we will have a real highway bill and not a partisan extension that kills 100,000 jobs.

It is 1,000 jobs in my home State of Rhode Island. We have over 10 percent unemployment. This is a self-inflicted wound that hits Rhode Island, that hurts my home State. It makes no sense. Therefore, I ask, again—and I apologize for coming back to this, but I think it is important that we try to defend this body, which has worked well together, which has made a sensible, serious bill and is being infected by the dysfunction that is presently taking place in the House. This extension is a representation of that dysfunction.

So I again ask unanimous consent that the majority leader's request be modified so the amendment at the desk, the text of our highway bill, S. 1813, be added to the bill, that the text be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

I thank both the majority leader and minority leader for their patience.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. SCHUMER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am not going to object, but I wish to reiterate the comments of my colleagues from California, Maryland, and Rhode Island. I know my colleague from Louisiana will do the same. We have a broad bipartisan bill. Transportation and highways are a linchpin of our economic recovery, not only in the jobs they create now, rebuilding and building highways, but in making our economy more efficient.

China is building four times the infrastructure we are. India is building more infrastructure than we are, and in the Senate—to the credit of both sides—we have a broad bipartisan bill that moves us forward. It is not everything I would want or any of us would want. It was put together masterfully by Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE, who are political opposites.

The House, in its paralysis—because there is a small group who, frankly, don't believe the government should be an infrastructure at all—ties it in a knot and forces us with the awful choice of either shutting things down because they are not going to budge or just renewing an old bill which needs updating, which throws people out of work. They are creating paralysis in this country in the case of infrastructure and in many other cases.

If the public wants to know why the country is not growing at a greater rate, wants to know why there is such high unemployment in the construction industries, look at the ideologues over there and their refusal to face reality, to deal with their colleagues, and to put this country—not us—in a take-it-or-leave-it position. This 90-day extension is not the way to go. The way to go is to pass the Senate bill, and I hope those on the other side of the aisle, pushed by outside folks from business management and others all across the country, will see the error of their ways and change their ways over the next few months.

I thank my colleague, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original request?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. And I might object, because I think this is a very serious matter. I am reserving the right to object because, as the majority leader well knows, if we would follow Senator BOXER's leadership, sending the Senate bill back to the House, we would not only not lose any jobs, we would create 1.9 million jobs, and for the Restore Act, which is very important to the gulf coast, it would create another 300,000 jobs.

The only action that is going to cause job loss is the action we are basically being forced to accept right now, sent over by a partisan House of Representatives, to go to another short-term extension. This country doesn't need short-term extensions, it needs long-term answers, and it needs jobs they can count on.

Every business in America relies on this Transportation bill. We have now been going to short-term extensions for 3 years. It is time to stop.

I want my leader, who is on the Senate floor, to know I may object in the next few minutes, but I absolutely will object to any other short-term resolution on this bill for as long as this Congress is in session. This is enough.

Now, had this bill gotten out of here with just Democrats on it, I would say we don't have a leg to stand on because we don't have a balanced bill, and we can't jam this through on the other side. But this bill got out of here with 75 or 76 votes. Now, 2 years is not 5 years, but it is better than 3 months. It is a bill we could pass and build on. It is a bill that assures people can go to sleep tonight knowing they have a job tomorrow.

So I object to the minority leader's comments about this bill, that our action is going to lose jobs. No, we have been here working hard to save jobs. I hope when the Republicans go home they will hear from the business community, from the right, the middle, and the left; I hope they will hear from environmental groups: What are you guys doing?

The final comment I want to make as I am objecting is, if the House had a bill, then this would be a negotiation between two bills. The problem is they don't even have a bill. How do we negotiate with a group that doesn't have a bill? They have ideas, they have philosophies, they have platforms, and they have speeches, but they don't have a bill. We couldn't negotiate with them if we wanted to. There is no bill.

This is why we are telling the country: Look, we don't know what their problem is—they have many—but we have a bill. So if they can't get their bill together, take the one we put together. But, no, that is too simple for them.

So I am reserving the right to object. I am going to listen to what my leader has to say, and I might object. I know everybody wants to go home. I know we want to have this unanimous consent agreement. But my State not only has its transportation money wrapped up in this, it has its hope for the future wrapped up because the Restore Act is in that bill.

For the first time, this Senate stood up since I have been here and said: You are right, gulf coast. You do a lot. You have been injured a lot, and we are going to help you. So that bill is in there too, which is why I am hard-pressed to say I will vote for a 90-day extension.

So reserving the right to object, I ask unanimous consent the request be modified so an amendment, which is at the desk, the text of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill, passed by the Senate on March 14, 2012, by a large bipartisan majority of 74 to 22 be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request of the majority leader?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4281) to provide an extension of Federal aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a multiyear law reauthorizing such programs.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill, having been read the third time, the question is on the passage of the bill.

The bill (H.R. 4281) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this has been a difficult time for everyone, and we have what none of us wanted. Our bill was passed in the Senate by a very nice bipartisan margin. I hope during the Easter recess, the House will be able to come back with something they

can—as Senator LANDRIEU mentioned, at least have some piece of legislation they can give to us and try to work toward a conclusion or accept our bill, which is our preference.

So I appreciate very much the comments of my colleagues, and I appreciate their patience and understanding of the situation we find ourselves in, which is not a good one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I know my colleague Senator COLLINS is waiting to speak. I will be very brief.

Let's be clear what just happened. What just happened is the House sent us a 90-day extension of our transportation programs with not one dime of revenue in there to fund those, and the highway trust fund is on the road to bankruptcy. So they are the first in my memory—the first legislative body in the Capitol—to ever extend for this period of time without a dollar, which means an acceleration of bankruptcy of the trust fund.

What else did they do? They just guaranteed 100,000 people are not going to get their jobs, and they guaranteed hundreds of businesses are not going to get jobs. They sent out a signal that America should be ready for hardship because they didn't even have the decency to put in that extension a written commitment to produce a bill, to get to conference with us, and to get a bill to the President. No, they run off on their vacation and leave people twisting in the wind.

Well, I want it to be known I am one of the chairs who worked on the bill. There are many other people who were fantastic on this bill from both sides of the aisle. I know—I spoke to Senator INHOFE today about this—we want this bill done. I am going to use every tool at my disposal as one Senator to keep the pressure on the Republican House.

Speaker BOEHNER: You are not Speaker of the Republicans, you are Speaker of the House. Reach your hand across the aisle, as Senator INHOFE reached across the aisle to me and I reached across to him; and JAY ROCKEFELLER reached across to Senator HUTCHISON and she reached across; and TIM JOHNSON reached across to SHELBY and he reached across; and MAX BAUCUS had an array of Republicans work with him in the Finance Committee. We know we can do this.

But what the House has done is send a very clear message of job loss and hardship. It is unacceptable. I look forward to working on this every single day. Now we have 90 days. Tomorrow it will be 89, and then 88. We are going to count down, and we are going to keep the pressure on, and we are not going to let this transportation program go up in smoke because it has been in place since Dwight Eisenhower was President.

It is a sad day for America today, a very sad day. But we will never give up over here, and JAMES INHOFE isn't going to give up, and we are going to fight hard to get a bill.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the revenue title to the highway bill that the Senate passed earlier this month.

Gandhi said: "Truth quenches untruth."

I rise to quench untruth. I understand some of our colleagues in the House have mischaracterized the Senate's highway bill by saying that it wasn't paid for.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Senate highway bill is fully paid for and supports more than 1.6 million jobs across the country. It will also ensure there is still money in the Highway Trust Fund at the end of the bill's 2-year authorization.

I want to explain exactly how we fund this bill so everyone is clear.

As chairman of the Committee on Finance, I worked very hard with members of both parties to put together a funding package that would:

First, pay for a reauthorization bill through September of 2013;

Second, not add a single dime to the deficit or the debt; and,

Third, not leave the Highway Trust Fund bankrupt at the end of the proposed reauthorization.

According to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office and the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Highway Trust Fund needs \$5.6 billion to pay for the Senate's proposed reauthorization.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation said we need a so-called "cushion" of extra money in the Highway Trust Fund at the time of the bill's proposed September 30, 2013 expiration.

I am pleased to report that Senate Republicans and Democrats ultimately came together to put \$9.2 billion into the Highway Trust Fund within the next two years, paying for the bill and leaving a sizable \$3.6 billion cushion at the end of the authorization period.

Actually, in total, we put \$14 billion into the Highway Trust Fund within the budget window of the next 10 years.

Focusing on the nexus to transportation and energy, we were able to transfer an immediate \$3 billion surplus in the Leaking Underground Storage Tank trust fund—the so-called "LUST Fund"—into the Highway Trust Fund. This was an idea offered by a number of Finance Committee Republicans. Like the Highway Trust Fund, the LUST Fund relies on the fuel tax for funding.

In addition, Finance Committee Republicans also proposed routing a third of the future fuel tax revenues intended for this storage tank fund into the Highway Trust Fund. This raises nearly another \$700 million over 10 years.

Next, we transferred into the Highway Trust Fund revenues that the general fund would receive from fees on cars that don't comply with fuel efficiency standards and the tariff on foreign automobile imports.

Together, these provisions provide nearly \$5 billion for the Highway Trust

Fund, with about \$1.6 billion coming in the first 2 years.

Then, we replenished the general fund for the amounts we moved into the Highway Trust Fund. We did this by clamping down on tax cheats and unscrupulous Medicare providers, as examples.

Finally, after accommodating Republican Senators' concerns at markup to rework some elements of our proposal, we accepted a widely supported idea to stabilize required contributions into pension plans.

The pension plan beneficiaries will still be able to rely on the plans getting funded, but employers will have a more predictable and realistic schedule for how much to contribute.

This provision raised sufficient revenue to enable us to then transfer another \$4.5 billion into the Highway Trust Fund in the first 2 years, bringing the 2-year total to about \$9.2 billion, well more than the \$5.6 billion needed to just pay for the bill.

This pension stabilization provision raised more than \$9 billion in total, which also enabled us to accept a Republican amendment to put additional money into the Highway Trust Fund in future years. This brought the 10-year total to approximately \$14 billion, as I stated earlier.

My understanding is that this increase in general fund revenue to plus up the Highway Trust Fund would be considered acceptable under the House Republicans' proposed budget with its "Reserve Fund."

It is also my understanding that the House's proposed 5-year bill will leave the Highway Trust Fund at the brink of insolvency by the bill's proposed conclusion, unlike the Senate's carefully crafted compromise that I have just described.

The House leadership should not make inaccurate claims about the Senate's bill to camouflage their own inability to pass a long-term bill and unwillingness to work out compromises.

We just passed yet another short-term extension to provide funding for only 90 days. We can't keep kicking the can down the road. Pretty soon there will be no road left to kick the can down.

The easiest way to work together and forge a solution to create jobs and fund our Nation's highway system is for the House to take up the Senate's bill. It's a good bill. It provides certainty so businesses and communities can plan construction projects and create jobs.

It is fully paid for. In fact, it ensures the Highway Trust Fund will remain solvent even after the end of the bill. It gives us time to address the longer-term needs of our national program, and how we are going to pay for it.

The House Republican leadership should set partisanship aside. They should realize there are no Republican or Democratic roads or bridges. There are only American ones. It is time to work together and not leave the Highway Trust Fund insolvent.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, during the past week, the Supreme Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of President Obama's health care law. This week also marks the 2-year anniversary of the President's signing that law.

There is no question that our health care system required and still requires significant reform. In passing this law, however, Congress failed to follow the Hippocratic oath of "first, do no harm." The new law increases health care costs, hurts our seniors and health care providers, and imposes billions of dollars in new taxes, fees, and penalties. This, in turn, will lead to fewer choices and higher insurance costs for many middle-income American families and most small businesses—the opposite of what real health care reform should do.

I find it particularly disturbing that President Obama's health care law does not do enough to rein in the cost of health care and to provide consumers with more affordable choices. In fact, Medicare's Chief Actuary estimates the law will increase health care spending across the economy by more than \$300 billion. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says the law will actually increase premiums for the average family plan by \$2,100. Moreover, a recent report issued by the CBO found that the new law will cost \$1.76 trillion between now and the year 2022. That is twice as much as the bill's original 10-year pricetag of \$940 million.

The new law will also mean fewer choices for many middle-income Americans and small businesses. All individual and small group policies sold in our country will soon have to fit into one of four categories. One size does not fit all.

In Maine, almost 90 percent of those purchasing coverage in the individual market have a policy that is different from the standards in the new law.

I am also very concerned about the impact of the law on Maine's small businesses, which are our State's job creation engine. The new law discourages small companies from hiring new employees and from paying them more. It could also lead to onerous financial penalties even for those small businesses that are struggling to provide health insurance for their employees.

According to a Gallup survey taken earlier this year, 48 percent of small businesses are not hiring because of the potential cost of health insurance under the new law. The Director of the Congressional Budget Office has testified that the new health care law will

mean 800,000 fewer American jobs over the next decade.

Even when the law tries to help small businesses, it misses the mark. For example, I have long been a proponent of tax credits to help small businesses afford health insurance for their employees. The new credits for small businesses in the health care law, however, are so poorly structured and phased out in such a way that businesses will actually be penalized when they hire new workers or pay their employees more. Moreover, they are temporary. The tax credits are temporary and can only be claimed for 2 years in an insurance exchange.

I am also very concerned that the new law is paid for, in part, through more than a \$500 billion cut in Medicare—a program which is already facing serious long-term financing problems. It simply does not make sense to rely on deep cuts in Medicare to finance a new entitlement program at a time when the number of seniors in this country is on the rise. We need to fix and save Medicare, not add to its financial strains.

Moreover, according to the administration's own Chief Actuary, those deep Medicare cuts could push one in five hospitals, nursing homes, and home health providers into the red. I am particularly concerned about the impact on rural States like Maine. Many of those providers could simply stop taking Medicare patients. That would jeopardize access to care for millions of our seniors.

It did not have to be that way. The bitter rhetoric and the partisan gridlock over the past few years have obscured the very important fact that there are many health care reforms that have overwhelming support in both parties.

For example, we should have been able to agree on generous tax credits for self-employed individuals and small businesses to help them afford health insurance. That would have reduced the number of uninsured Americans. We should have been able to agree on insurance market reforms that would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage to children who have preexisting conditions, that would permit children to remain on their parents' insurance policies until age 26, that would require standardized claim forms to reduce administrative costs, and that would allow consumers to purchase insurance across State lines. Those are just some examples of health care reforms that would enjoy and do enjoy widespread bipartisan support.

We also should be able to agree on delivery system reforms that reward value over volume and quality instead of quantity. We should be able to agree on reforms that increase transparency throughout the health care system so consumers can compare prices and quality more easily.

I know the Presiding Officer's State, and Dartmouth College in particular, has done a great deal of work in this