

victory. He sat in the press box at countless Falcons games at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium and covered the Olympics, both winter and summer. He even had a hand in bringing professional sports teams to Atlanta.

He wrote 11 books, including co-authoring two editions of a Hank Aaron autobiography. And at The Masters Tournament in Augusta every April, Furman reigned among the azaleas and oaks as the dean of the sports press corps.

In a testament to his longevity in a tough business, until his retirement, Furman covered every Kentucky Derby since 1950, and every Super Bowl but the first one.

He even branched out into TV. Although I did not grow up in Atlanta, I have heard from many people that preachers across the city would cut sermons short so that their congregations could be home for Furman's kickoff on "Football Review."

Along the way, he earned the respect of his colleagues and the loyalty of his readers, garnering writing awards too numerous to mention. He served as president of the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association from 1974–1976, and of the Football Writers Association of America from 1959–1960. His features appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Golf Digest* and *Sports Illustrated*, to name but a few.

In 1961, *Time* magazine named him one of the five best columnists in the Nation. I would argue that that honor fit until the very end.

No less than the great Jack Nicklaus said of Furman's retirement: He might be turning in his last column for the newspaper, but Furman will never stop writing or giving his opinion. I guess you could say that when it comes to the last writings of Furman Bisher, I will believe it when I don't see it.

Furman would close every column with a single valediction—the word "selah"—a Hebrew word that ends many Psalms and that exhorts the reader to reflect.

It is appropriate, then, to reflect on Furman's long, fruitful life and career, one that began in Atlanta as the Korean War was starting, when Joe Louis was still boxing, when the Minneapolis Lakers were the NBA champs, before Willie Mays had joined the major leagues and before *Sports Illustrated* magazine even existed.

In all the ensuing years, Furman chronicled the triumphs and the travails of the sports world and its often-all-too-human heroes. As Furman would say, "Selah."

I am thankful for Furman Bisher. I am pleased to have been the recipient of reading many of his articles through the years and also very proud to have called him a very good friend over the years. He was a gentleman who will be missed for his professional career as well as just being a great person and a great individual.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. The political world this week has been focused on the U.S. Supreme Court and the arguments that have taken place over there with respect to what has been referred to as *ObamaCare*.

I rise today to discuss how the 2-year-old health care law is forcing more government intrusion into the lives of Americans.

After all, what could be more intrusive than the Federal Government telling you the type of health care coverage you must purchase? "Purchase this product or face a penalty."

With this law, I believe the American people have recognized that Congress has exceeded its constitutional authority. Just this week, a poll conducted by The Hill found that 49 percent of likely voters believe that the Supreme Court will rule against the constitutionality of the health care law, while only 29 percent believe it will be upheld. The American people have to ask themselves whether we should be able to punish citizens based whether they purchase a product from the private sector.

The Commerce Clause only allows the Federal Government to regulate "existing activity" that affects interstate commerce. I hope this distinction will be recognized by our justices on the Supreme Court. With no end in sight to escalating health care costs, Republicans want to see innovation within the private sector to bring about changes to our health care system. Today, Medicare and Medicaid are running up our national debt and bankrupting our states. One would think less government involvement, not more, would help bring health care costs under control. Instead, the health care law builds on this administration's desire to have the Federal Government control Americans' health care decisions. To this end, the Obama administration has created 159 new boards, bureaucracies and programs under *ObamaCare*.

As of this month, the administration has released more than 12,000 pages of regulations related to the law. The secretary of Health and Human Services will have the power to make more than 1,700 rulings affecting Americans and the health care they seek. Time and time again, my colleagues and I have warned that adding more red tape and bureaucratic oversight that will affect the relationship between you and your doctor is not the prescription Americans are looking for.

We want to protect the relationship between the patient and physician. Consultation between the patient and the physician should be the determining factor in what procedures that patient chooses, not someone who sits on a panel in Washington, DC.

However, this may well be the case as the health care law concentrates power in the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. This is the same task force that in November 2009 recommended that

women between the ages of 40 and 49 no longer obtain annual mammograms. These are the types of recommendations that Washington bureaucrats could make in the future. I especially understand the importance of early detection of cancer, having been there myself, and will fight to see that individuals, through the recommendations of their doctors, are in charge of determining their own health care procedures.

Throughout the debate 2 years ago we constantly heard from folks on the other side of the aisle that if you liked your health care coverage, you could keep it. Well, guess what. According to the latest CBO estimates, you can ask 5 million people who will see their employer-sponsored health care end in 2016 whether they had the opportunity to keep what they like.

Further, the incentives for employers to drop their coverage and move employees onto a taxpayer-subsidized plan means we could see up to 35 million Americans lose their current coverage over the first 10 years of implementation of this law.

Washington is now in the business of reducing the flexibility of consumer-driven health care policies such as health savings accounts and flexible spending arrangements. Congress created health savings accounts to allow health care consumers who wish to participate in the program more control over their own money and how they choose to spend that money for health care services. Now contributions to these arrangements will be limited to \$2,500 per year, and over-the-counter medications will require a prescription if they are purchased within these tax-free dollars. This is already leading to doctors having to fill out more paperwork so an individual can walk into a drugstore to purchase aspirin or cold medicine. Yet again this is another glaring example of bureaucratic meddling in the lives of American consumers.

Small businesses are also feeling the intrusive effects of *ObamaCare*. In the most recent survey of small businesses by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, an astounding 74 percent of small business owners surveyed said the health care law makes it harder for businesses to hire more employees. Think about that for a moment. Three out of four small business owners are having difficulty hiring because of the uncertainty of health care costs.

Finally, our States are also feeling the heavy hand of more government control. The Medicaid expansion that begins in 2014 will make it increasingly difficult for State leaders to balance their budgets due to strict maintenance of effort requirements. These requirements prevent States from designing health care programs specifically tailored for their own citizens.

Medicaid currently consumes about one-quarter of State budgets and *ObamaCare* creates the largest expansion of the program since its inception.

Through 2023, the cost to States is now estimated to be an additional \$118 billion. In my home State of Georgia, the expansion will cost the State about \$2.5 billion through 2020. Money in the budget to pay for this expansion will come at the expense of higher education, transportation, and law enforcement services. Nationally 24.7 million people who will be added to the Medicaid rolls will be entering a broken system where patients are denied access to about 40 percent of the physicians because reimbursement rates do not keep up with medical costs.

Two years ago the legislative process that unfolded before us was not something any Senator should be proud of today. Backroom deal making and forcing legislation through under a subversive process left the American people angry and upset with Congress. If we don't understand that, just look at the approval rating of Congress today, and this played a major role in that approval rating.

I hope in the future we will have an opportunity to revisit the system. Our system does need reforming, but it needs to be done in the right way and it needs to be done in a very transparent way. I hope we can come up with a solution that is actually supported by the American public, not solutions that make the American public angry.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

OBAMA/MEDVEDEV EXCHANGE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today greatly disturbed and upset, as are many Americans, by the comments President Obama made on Monday to outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev at the nuclear security summit in Seoul, Korea. The exchange, which was accidentally recorded by a Russian journalist, suggests that President Obama's stance on missile defense will change after the November election. It implies that the President is willing to make more concessions to an authoritarian government that has caused Americans concern time and time again. It raises questions about what else might be hidden on the President's agenda if he secures a second term in the White House.

Americans can view the recording themselves as President Obama tells Mr. Medvedev:

On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this can be solved but it's important for him [Putin] to give me space.

"Him" meaning former and future President Vladimir Putin. Mr. Medvedev responds by saying:

Yeah, I understand. I understand your message about space. Space for you.

President Obama then goes on to say:

This is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility.

It is unbelievable and chilling that President Obama would make his election a factor in how he deals with an important national security issue that could have dangerous implications for America and its allies. Even the hint of compromising on our missile defense capability is reckless when the prospect of nuclear-armed missiles is a real and growing threat.

Equally alarming is the looming question lingering over what the President actually means when he says "more flexibility." The administration continues to press for resetting bilateral relations but fails to follow through on an approach that takes into consideration how Russia has not made good on its promises in the past. Simply put, we cannot trust the Russian Government to keep its word. We have no reason to believe that greater cooperation will come from giving the Russians what they want.

The question now arises: How can we trust our own President not to say one thing before the election and yet do something entirely different afterwards? Let us not forget the Russian Ambassador vetoed two United Nations Security Council resolutions supporting the Syrian people, a move that prompted the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, to say that Russia decided to stand with a dictator. Indeed, Russia seems comfortable standing beside a dictator.

In addition, Russian officials rejected the idea of tougher sanctions against Iran despite a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency reinforcing concerns about Iran's nuclear program. Russia also voted against the United Nations General Assembly resolution expressing concern over the "violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights" in North Korea.

Many of my colleagues and I have come to the floor on multiple occasions to express our concern with Russia's deteriorating rule of law and respect for human rights. This is not the kind of relationship President Obama promised when he pressed for passage of the new START treaty in late 2010 over strong objections from many of my colleagues. It sends the wrong signal to our allies throughout Europe who are worried about undue pressure from Russia. At the end of the day, better U.S.-Russian relations are not a foregone conclusion, and President Obama would be wise to remember that one-sided promises are not the means to get there. He should also not forget that the Constitution requires the advice and consent of the Senate on foreign policy decisions.

Over the coming months the Senate will likely take up several issues related to Russia, and I look forward to having a frank discussion about the President's ideas and the President's intentions. Mr. Obama's comments in Seoul are only one instance of the

President pledging to have more flexibility after election day, but they rightly cause us to speculate about what else he expects to do. Americans are right to wonder what other promises are being made that we do not know about.

At the end of the exchange in Seoul, President Obama and President Medvedev clasped hands and Mr. Medvedev promised, "I will transmit this information to Vladimir." In other words, but for the accident of an open microphone, the President's intentions would have been known by Mr. Putin, but not known by the American people. Mr. Medvedev's reply is a grim reminder of what happens when one person is able to seize unrestrained power, as Mr. Putin has demonstrated, and should be a lesson for all of us. It also should give all Americans pause as we approach this fall's election.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REID). Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMPOSING A MINIMUM EFFECTIVE TAX RATE FOR HIGH-INCOME TAXPAYERS—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 339, S. 2230 is now pending; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 339, S. 2230, a bill to reduce the deficit by imposing a minimum effective tax rate for high-income taxpayers.

Harry Reid, Sheldon Whitehouse, John D. Rockefeller IV, Barbara Boxer, Patrick J. Leahy, Jeff Bingaman, Richard J. Durbin, Daniel K. Akaka, Al Franken, Jack Reed, Mark Begich, Sherrod Brown, Carl Levin, Richard Blumenthal, Bernard Sanders, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived and the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 2230 occur on Monday, April 16, when the Senate resumes legislative session immediately following the vote on the confirmation of Stephanie Dawn Thacker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?