

Finally, I am very concerned that the new law is paid for, in large part, through more than \$500 billion cuts to Medicare, a program which already is facing 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 Medicare beneficiaries is on the rise.

Moreover, according to the administration's own Chief Actuary, these deep cuts could push one in five hospitals, nursing homes, and home health providers into the red. Many of these providers could simply stop taking Medicare patients, which would jeopardize access to care for millions of seniors.

It doesn't have to be this way. The bitter rhetoric and 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 be able to agree on generous tax credits for self-employed individuals and small businesses to help them afford health insurance, thus reducing the number of uninsured. We should be able to agree on insurance market reforms that would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage to children who have preexisting conditions, permit children to remain on their parents' policies until age 26, require standardized claim forms to reduce costs, and allow consumers to purchase insurance across State lines.

We should be able to agree on delivery system reforms that reward value rather than volume and quality over quantity and that increase transparency throughout the health care system. And we should be able to agree on ways to address the serious health care workforce shortages that plague rural and smalltown America. Simply having an insurance card will do you no good if there is no one available to provide the care.

In short, we should repeal ObamaCare so that we can start over to work together to draft a health care bill that achieves the consensus goals of providing more choice, containing health care costs, improving quality and access, and making health care coverage more affordable for all Americans.

BETTER HEALTH REWARDS PROGRAM ACT OF 2012

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to advocate for legislation my colleague, Senator PORTMAN, and I have coauthored that focuses on driving better health outcomes for America's seniors through the use of real, positive financial incentives.

I think we can all agree on a theory—the best health care is often the least expensive, and it is often health care you can have real control over—prevention.

According to the Hastings Center, 76 percent of Medicare spending is on pa-

tients with five or more chronic diseases: stroke, heart disease, diabetes and cancer lead the way. And with \$2.7 trillion spent annually on health care, one of the best ways to slow the growth of that spending is to keep Americans healthier, and to do that, we have to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease.

I think Medicare can help spark that transformation. It is a large Federal program, some of the smartest health policy links the Federal Government and the private sector, and, most important, the Federal Government already pays for seniors to have an annual physical.

At present, when seniors leave that physical, too often there is no game plan or specific steps a senior can take to get healthier in the year ahead. Seniors get a bunch of numbers about their tests, possibly a prescription, and some medical lingo about their general health, but mostly everyone just hopes things will turn out OK at the next physical. Maybe it was an OK year, and that extra dessert wasn't a problem after all.

We believe that if the Federal Government is already paying for that physical, it is only common sense to wring every possible advantage for seniors out of it, specifically by giving seniors the tools to make changes that promote good health and reward them for staying motivated.

That is exactly what the bill I have written with Senator PORTMAN does. Typically, the assumption has always been that preventive care means more services. But in this case, government already pays for the service—the \$3.8 billion on the annual wellness visit—and we are saying, let's get more out of that visit.

Here is how our legislation—the Medicare Better Health Rewards Program Act—would do that:

First, it is voluntary. Since we hear a little discussion about mandates these days, this is voluntary.

In year 1, a senior has their physical, has their tests run, and their health provider has a conversation with them about their health. They come up with a plan to use the next year so that the senior can get healthier. The provider then lets Medicare know their patient is participating.

In year 2, the senior comes back for their next annual wellness visit. Again, tests are run, and they discuss the changes that may have occurred over the last year. If they have gotten healthier and their provider confirms it, they are eligible for a Healthy Reward. If they haven't, they still had their physical at no out of pocket cost to them. Their provider still gets paid. The same happens again in year 3.

Finally, the money to pay these rewards comes from the fact that as participating seniors get healthier, Medicare is spending less money on them. They are saving the system money. If that occurs, those seniors who are getting healthier will be able to share in the savings.

Bottom line: Innovation is rampant in American health care, and we are here with a new strategy to bring a fresh wave of innovation to Medicare.

I would like to thank Senator PORTMAN for working with me on this new approach to Medicare reform, and I urge my colleagues to join us in co-sponsoring our legislation.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EMANCIPATION DAY

Mr. CARDIN. When Congress returns to session on Monday, April 16, 2012, we will recognize an important anniversary and holiday here in Washington. That day will be the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day. Nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1862, the President signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act. The act ordered the release of the 3,100 enslaved persons of African descent held in the Nation's capital. District of Columbia residents were therefore known as the "First Freed" slaves by the Federal government during the Civil War.

In 1865 the Confederacy surrendered and the Civil War ended, and later that year the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, which states that: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Emancipation Day celebrations were held annually in the District of Columbia from 1866 through 1901, and resumed in 2002. In 2005 Emancipation Day was made an official public holiday in the District of Columbia.

On March 6, 2012, the District of Columbia City Council adopted ceremonial resolution 19-207. The resolution finds this anniversary to be "an important, historic occasion for the District of Columbia and the nation and serves as an appropriate time to reflect on how far the District of Columbia and the United States have progressed since institutionalized enslavement of people of African descent. Most importantly, the 150th anniversary reminds us to reaffirm our commitment to forge a more just and united country that truly reflects the ideas of its founders and instills in its people a broad sense of duty to be responsible and conscientious stewards of freedom and democracy." I ask unanimous consent to place a copy of this resolution in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

(See exhibit 1.)

In the recent past, we have been blessed to celebrate numerous historic achievements for African-Americans in Washington, DC and throughout the Nation, including the election of the first African-American President of the United States, the dedication of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and the groundbreaking for the

National Museum of African American History and Culture. I congratulate the District of Columbia government and its residents on this historic anniversary.

EXHIBIT 1

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION: 19-207—IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, MARCH 6, 2012

To recognize and preserve the cultural history and heritage of the District of Columbia; to formally recognize the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day on April 16, 2012, as an important day in the history of the District of Columbia and the United States in that, on April 16, 1862, 9 months before President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 to begin to end institutionalized slavery in America, President Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act to release the 3,100 enslaved persons of African descent held in the nation's capital, making them the "first freed" by the federal government, at a cost of nearly \$1 million, in 1862 funds, paid to the people who enslaved them; to recognize that, after the Civil War, formerly enslaved people and others commemorated the signing of the 1862 act by parading down Pennsylvania Avenue in festive attire, with music and marching bands, proclaiming and celebrating freedom in the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade, which was received by every sitting President of the United States from 1866 to 1901; and to recognize that, on March 7, 2000, the Council of the District of Columbia voted unanimously to establish April 16th as a legal private holiday, the Emancipation Day Parade resumed in the nation's capital in 2002, and, on April 5, 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day was made a legal public holiday, recognized annually on April 16th.

Whereas, on April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act ("Emancipation Act") during the Civil War;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act provided for immediate emancipation of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent held in bondage in the District of Columbia;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act authorized compensation of up to \$300 for each of the 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children held in bondage by those loyal to the Union, voluntary colonization of the formerly enslaved to colonies outside of America, and payments of up to \$100 to each formerly enslaved person who agreed to leave America;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act authorized the federal government to pay approximately \$1 million, in 1862 funds, for the freedom of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent in the District of Columbia;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act ended the bondage of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent in the District of Columbia, and made them the "first freed" by the federal government during the Civil War;

Whereas, nine months after the signing of the Emancipation Act, on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, to begin to end institutionalized enslavement of people of African descent in Confederate states;

Whereas, on April 9, 1865, the Confederacy surrendered, marking the beginning of the end of the Civil War, and on August 20, 1866, President Andrew Johnson signed a Proclamation—Declaring that Peace, Order, Tranquility and Civil Authority Now Exists in and Throughout the Whole of the United States of America;

Whereas, in December 1865, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified establishing that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction";

Whereas, in April 1866, to commemorate the signing of the Emancipation Act, the formerly enslaved people and others, in festive attire, with music and marching bands, started an annual tradition of parading down Pennsylvania Avenue, proclaiming and celebrating the anniversary of their freedom;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade was received by every sitting President of the United States from 1866 to 1901;

Whereas, on March 7, 2000, at the Twenty-Seventh Legislative Session of the Council of the District of Columbia, Councilmember Vincent B. Orange, Sr. (D-Ward 5) authored and introduced, with Carol Schwartz (R-At Large), the historic District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2000, effective April 3, 2001 (D.C. Law 13-237; D.C. Official Code §§ 1-612.02a, 32-1201), and on that same date moved an emergency version of the legislation that established April 16th as a legal private holiday;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Emergency Amendment Act of 2000, which established April 16th as a legal private holiday, was passed unanimously by the Council on March 7, 2000, and signed into law on March 22, 2000 by Mayor Anthony A. Williams;

Whereas, on April 16, 2000, to properly preserve the historical and cultural significance of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day, Councilmember Orange hosted a celebration program in the historic 15th Street Presbyterian Church, founded in 1841 as the First Colored Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, on April 16, 2002, after a 100-year absence, the District of Columbia, spearheaded by Councilmember Orange with the support of Mayor Anthony Williams, returned the Emancipation Day Parade to Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., along with public activities on Freedom Plaza and evening fireworks (D.C. Official Code § 1-182);

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade and Fund Act of 2004, effective March 17, 2005 (D.C. Law 15-240; D.C. Official Code § 1-181 et seq.), established the Emancipation Day Fund to receive and disburse monies for the Emancipation Day Parade and activities associated with the celebration and commemoration of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2004, effective April 5, 2005 (D.C. Law 15-288; D.C. Official Code § 1-612.02(a)(11)), established April 16th as a legal public holiday;

Whereas, on April 16, 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day was observed for the first time as a legal public holiday, for the purpose of pay and leave of employees scheduled to work on that day (D.C. Official Code § 1-612.02(c)(2));

Whereas, April 16, 2012, is the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day, which symbolizes the triumph of people of African descent over the cruelty of institutionalized slavery and the goodwill of people opposed to the injustice of slavery in a democracy;

Whereas, the Council of the District of Columbia remembers and pays homage to the millions of people of African descent enslaved for more than 2 centuries in America for their courage and determination;

Whereas, the Council of the District of Columbia remembers and pays homage to President Abraham Lincoln for his courage

and determination to begin to end the inhumanity and injustice of institutionalized slavery by signing the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act on April 16, 1862;

Whereas, the alignment of the (1) election of the first African-American President of the United States, Barack H. Obama; (2) dedication of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial; (3) groundbreaking for the National Museum of African American History and Culture; (4) 150th anniversary of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day; and (5) 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 2013, are historically important for the District of Columbia and for the United States; and

Whereas, the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day is a singularly important occasion that links the historic Presidency of Abraham Lincoln with the equally historic Presidency of Barack H. Obama, as the first President of the United States of African descent.

Resolved, by the Council of the District of Columbia, That this resolution may be cited as the "District of Columbia Emancipation Day—150th Anniversary Recognition Resolution of 2012".

SEC. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia finds the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day is an important, historic occasion for the District of Columbia and the nation and serves as an appropriate time to reflect on how far the District of Columbia and the United States have progressed since institutionalized enslavement of people of African descent. Most importantly, the 150th anniversary reminds us to reaffirm our commitment to forge a more just and united country that truly reflects the ideals of its founders and instills in its people a broad sense of duty to be responsible and conscientious stewards of freedom and democracy.

SEC. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.

FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, my friend and colleague from Wyoming, Senator ENZI, and I have once again submitted a resolution to designate April as "Financial Literacy Month" to raise public awareness of this important issue. I would like to first thank the cosponsors of the resolution, Senators BAUCUS, BLUNT, BROWN of Ohio, CARDIN, CARPER, COCHRAN, COONS, CRAPO, DURBIN, HAGAN, INOUE, JOHNSON of South Dakota, KOHL, LANDRIEU, LAUTENBERG, MENENDEZ, MURRAY, and WICKER. I appreciate their hard work and support in working to increase the level of financial literacy for people of all ages across America. I also thank the Senate for taking up this resolution and passing it with unanimous consent last night.

This is the tenth and final year that I have introduced this resolution, which highlights our Nation's need for investments in financial literacy, commends current efforts and initiatives to promote financial education, and encourages the administration and private institutions to continue to work toward creating a more financially literate public.

Financial literacy empowers individuals to be able to appropriately evaluate credit opportunities, successfully