

say everything will be fine when millions of Americans are losing their existing health coverage as a direct result of the health care law. They can't say everything will be fine when health care costs are continuing to skyrocket even though the President claimed his health law would bring costs down. And they can't say everything will be fine when consumers' personal information is at serious risk because the administration didn't take the proper precautions with its new data system.

As I said, the healthcare.gov Web site has been a debacle and the President is right to recognize it as such, but it would be a huge mistake to simply write off the problems with ObamaCare as a simple IT problem.

My own position on ObamaCare is very clear. I support repealing the law in its entirety. As more and more Americans lose their health coverage—coverage they shopped for and liked—and face outlandish costs as a result of the law, I believe that position will eventually be vindicated. In the meantime, I think we can all agree that the law is simply not ready for prime time and that at the very least it should be delayed so we can protect the American people from further harm.

I have made this call before and I am sure I will make it again. Today, with all the new information we have received—the broken Web site, the security problems, the skyrocketing costs, and the millions of Americans losing existing coverage—I hope my friends on the other side of the aisle will begin to see the light. I hope they will finally see what happens when one party tries to take on something as vast and as complicated as our health care system all on its own without any help from the other side.

I hope that they would work with us to come up with real solutions to our Nation's health care problems. I will keep waiting, and if the problems we have seen in the last few weeks are any indication, I should not have to wait too much longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is yielded back.

The question occurs on the nomination.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

At the moment there is not.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I suggest the absence of quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENATOR THAD COCHRAN'S 12,000TH VOTE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, our good friend, the senior Senator

from Mississippi, is about to cast his 12,000th vote, a truly remarkable accomplishment by a remarkable man. He was the first Republican to be elected to the Senate from Mississippi since Reconstruction. A few years ago he was named by Time magazine as one of the 10 most effective Members of the Senate, and they called him "the quiet persuader."

For those of you who have recently arrived at the Senate, if you have not had any dealings with Senator COCHRAN yet, you will find that indeed he is the quiet persuader. In fact, it may be the secret to his success.

He has had an extraordinarily accomplished career here in the Senate, and I wanted to take a few moments to congratulate him, not only on his service to his State and the Nation but to our institution.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am sorry I am a little late here. I see my colleague, the senior Senator from Mississippi. I have had the pleasure of knowing THAD COCHRAN during my entire stay in Washington. He is a fine man. He has had experience in the House and the Senate, as I have. I have always appreciated his courtesies. He is just such a fine human being.

Before his election to Congress, he served honorably in the U.S. Navy. He was a lieutenant in the Navy. After his tour of duty, while attending law school at Ole Miss, Senator COCHRAN returned to active duty for his naval work, even while he was going to law school. After graduating from law school in 1965, he joined the very prestigious law firm Watkins & Eager in Jackson, MS, and in less than 2 years he became a partner in that law firm—which was remarkable. It speaks well for his acumen in the law and for being a nice person.

His break from public service did not last long, though. From the Navy he ran for Congress in 1972 and served in the House for 6 years before running for the Senate. He served as Chairman of the Republican Conference, the Agriculture Committee, and the Appropriations Committee.

Throughout his time in Congress, Senator COCHRAN has promoted the best interests of Mississippi's citizens. Even when we were on different sides of the issues, I always respected Senator COCHRAN's service to his country, his dedication to the people of Mississippi and to the people of this country. I congratulate him on this impressive milestone and appreciate most of all his friendship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and

consent to the nomination of Richard F. Griffin, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 222 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Baucus	Heitkamp	Pryor
Begich	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rockefeller
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	
Harkin	Murray	

NAYS—44

Alexander	Cruz	McConnell
Ayotte	Enzi	Moran
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Chambliss	Hatch	Rubio
Chiesa	Heller	Scott
Coats	Hoeben	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Corker	Kirk	Vitter
Cornyn	Lee	Wicker
Crapo	McCain	

NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business for debate only until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1590

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, before the Internet, RCA knew how many records Elvis was selling every day. Before the Internet, Ford knew how many cars they were selling every day. Before the Internet, McDonald's could tell you how many hamburgers it sold each day. Yet the Obama administration cannot tell us how many Americans have tried to sign up for ObamaCare. They can't tell us how many people have tried to sign up for ObamaCare. They haven't told us what level of insurance they bought or in what ZIP Code they live. Not only can they not tell us, they have done their best to keep us from finding out.

With WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden spilling our beans every day, what's happening on the ObamaCare exchanges is the only secret left in Washington. The National Security Agency should learn some lessons from Secretary Sebelius.

We shouldn't have to rely on anonymous sources to get basic information about what's happening with the ObamaCare exchanges.

Yesterday I introduced legislation to require the administration to tell Congress and the American people how many people have tried to sign up, how many did sign up, what level of insurance did they buy, in what ZIP Code do they live, and what the administration is doing to fix the problems. This isn't complicated information. In the Internet age, the administration ought to be able to provide this information every day. They should be able to provide it really every minute. We shouldn't have to pass a law to find these things out.

So I hope every Senator will support my legislation. It is a six-page bill. It has been available to the public now for 24 hours. It is easy to read. The stakes are high for every American.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 1590, a bill to require transparency in the operation of the American health benefit exchanges, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, my good friend from Tennessee has raised just another effort to divert resources from the implementation of the Affordable Care Act which we can then use to fix the very problems he has mentioned. I will point out that we report jobs data on a monthly basis, and this is going to be a different standard. I might also point out that in Medicare Part D, we release those data on a monthly basis.

I agree with my friend that there should be accountability for the mistakes that have happened and the im-

plementation of the law going forward. In fact, right now, the Department is giving us daily updates on their progress in fixing the Web site.

So, again, let's get on with business. I think enough focus has been placed on the mistakes. Hearings are ongoing. There will be hearings in the Senate also. Let's get the problems fixed and move ahead on enrollment without diverting resources.

I thought about my friend's proposal, and I thought maybe we should amend it to say we will put in more money and get more people. I don't think my friend would want to do that, either, so we can take care of it.

So the people there need to get the problem fixed, and let's move ahead aggressively to get people enrolled in what is going to be a positive change for health care in America.

On that basis, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I thank my friend, the Senator from Iowa. I'm disappointed—this administration described itself as the most transparent in history. All we have asked for is how many people are signing up, how did they do, where do they live, and what level of insurance do they have. We ought to know that. Taxpayers ought to know it. So we'll keep trying other ways to get the information the American people deserve to have.

I thank the President, yield the floor, and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FINDING A BUDGET SOLUTION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I read with great interest the recent opinion piece on congressional budget negotiations written by my good friend Kent Conrad, our former colleague here in the Senate and distinguished chair of the Budget Committee.

I have been fortunate to serve in this Chamber for the past 38 years with principled leaders like Kent Conrad. I was elected to the Senate in 1974, the same year the Congressional Budget Act passed into law, and I have served here with all of the Budget Committee chairs—from Edmund Muskie to PATTY MURRAY.

I think Kent Conrad is right that at this critical juncture we need to have a grown-up discussion about our Nation's finances—both about the debts we incur and the ways in which we pay for them. We have all heard a lot of talk in the last few years about getting our fiscal house in order. It makes for a great campaign slogan. But I am afraid

that too many are not following through on their responsibility to govern.

After jumping from one manufactured crisis to another for the past few years, which has hurt the U.S. economy and America's standing in the world, it is time for reason and sanity to return to the Senate—on the budget process, on nominations, and on a whole host of other issues. Returning to regular order on the budget conference—and letting conference members from the House and the Senate work out a final agreement free from rigid ideological positions—would be a good first step to bringing some comity and order back to this body so we can serve the American people.

I remain ready to work with people on both sides of the aisle in the hopes that we can find a workable budget solution in the coming weeks, and I suggest that everyone heed the calls for bipartisanship and compromise made by Senator Conrad.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that Kent Conrad's full opinion piece from the October 24, 2013, Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 24, 2013]

OPINION: A FAIR TRADE FOR ENTITLEMENT
REFORM INCLUDES INCREASED REVENUE
(By Senator Kent Conrad)

Kent Conrad, a Democrat, represented North Dakota in the Senate from 1987 to 2013.

The Post's Oct. 20 editorial on the budget challenge ["A fiscal quid pro quo"] made important points but was way off-base on the issue of revenue. It suggested that a fair trade would be reductions to the "sequester" budget cuts in exchange for reforms to Medicare and Social Security and said that Democrats should not insist on additional revenue because that's a non-starter with many Republicans. Democrats would make a serious mistake by following that advice.

Our country needs more revenue to help us get back on track. Citing Congressional Budget Office calculations, The Post said that "federal revenue as a share of [gross domestic product (GDP)] will hit 18.5 percent by 2023, near the upper-end of the postwar range." That's true, but the last five times our country had a balanced budget, revenue averaged 20 percent of GDP. The Bowles-Simpson plan, which The Post strongly endorsed, achieved revenue of 20.6 percent of GDP—not by raising tax rates but by broadening the tax base and lowering tax rates.

Tax reform should be part of any budget deal. Tax reform is necessary to unlock the full potential of our economy. The current tax system is not fair and damages U.S. competitiveness. A five-story building in the Cayman Islands claims to be home to more than 18,000 companies. Is it the most efficient building in the world? No! That and other tax scams cost our country more than \$100 billion each year, the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has found.

If we don't fix the revenue side of the equation at the same time as we repair Social Security and Medicare, it will never happen. To suggest, as The Post does, that Democrats should trade adjustments to the sequester for reforms to these programs assumes that the sequester affects only Democratic priorities. More than half of the \$1.2 trillion in sequester cuts are to defense, long a Republican priority.