

just said about the Congressional Budget Office, it indeed has been frustrating and bedeviling to run up against their inability to project these savings in a way that would allow us to—what we call in Washington—score them and get budget credit for them. But even though they have that difficulty, there are some very serious organizations that project that very significant savings of the kind I have mentioned—the \$1 trillion savings—are possible.

Some years ago the President's own Council of Economic Advisers estimated that we could do savings of \$700 billion without affecting the quality of care in any way for the worse.

The National Institute of Medicine has made several regular projections. The most recent one is \$750 billion a year. The Institute of Medicine is pretty serious folks, and they are entitled to respect when they say we can have those kinds of savings.

RAND Corporation—a lot of people know a lot about it—is a very expert organization. They have done two things. They looked at what we can save in health care, and then they looked at what we can save in health care plus an additional bit for dealing with waste and fraud. They gave ranges for the two. The midpoint of the range for savings is about \$730 billion. If we add their suggestions on waste and fraud, the midpoint of their range goes to about \$910 billion a year.

The Lewin Group, which is another respected think tank that looks at health care issues, wrote a piece some time ago with George Bush's former Treasury Secretary, and they said it was \$1 trillion.

So is it \$700 billion a year? Is it \$750 billion a year? Is it somewhere between \$730 and \$910 billion a year depending on how you score the waste and fraud? Is it \$1 trillion a year? Either way, I will take it. Those are big numbers, and wherever it falls in that range, we should be energetically fighting for it.

I will close with the request I always make in these speeches—and this is a request to the President and to his administration—and that is to inspire us and set a bold national target. Sure, CBO, OMB, and our actuarial and accounting organizations cannot predict what these savings are going to be, but, by gosh, the President can direct his administration to target a savings goal and to go after it. I think if the President were to set a hard date and dollar target for delivery system savings—a couple of years out so we have a chance to do that—that would make a big difference.

The example that I use is of President Kennedy. Back in 1961, when it looked as if we were losing the space race to the Soviet Union, President Kennedy declared that within 10 years—he put a date on it—he would put a man on the Moon and bring him back safely. He had a hard target, something specific so you would know if it was or wasn't achieved. The mes-

sage was clear, the mission that was outlined was clear, and the result was a vast mobilization of private and public resources to achieve that purpose.

It is not enough to talk about bending the health care cost curve. That catchphrase should be jettisoned and discarded. We should have a hard date and dollar figure, and that should be a target the entire administration aims toward.

Had President Kennedy given that speech back in 1961 and declared as his purpose to bend the curve of space exploration, I very much doubt we would have put that man on the Moon within 10 years. It was his exercise of Presidential leadership and challenge—ahead of what the scientists knew could be done but with confidence and faith in our ability to achieve big things—that put the executive branch of government into focus so we could achieve exactly what he had directed. We can do the same with health care. We should do the same with health care. There is no downside to it because this is a win-win area, as I discussed with Senator CANTWELL.

On that note, I yield the floor and 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. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I asked my colleague from Rhode Island to stay on the floor for a couple of minutes because I wanted to thank him for the erudite and eloquent explanation he has just given for why our focus should be so aggressively and unrelentingly on the tremendous opportunities for saving health care costs and raising health care quality at the same time. I am very proud to have joined him and other colleagues in a task force that is seeking common-sense solutions to lower the costs of health care and at the same time increase its efficiency and quality. The two go together.

The phenomenon he just discussed of reducing readmissions to hospitals once patients are discharged also means that the quality of those discharges, the rehabilitation plans and hand-offs to primary physicians, and the suffering and pain for those patients is reduced, and that is just a microcosm of one example of how this goal can be accomplished.

We are late in this year, and we have no real time remaining before the end of this year to do the kinds of reforms legislatively that will help advance this ball. But the attention we need to devote to this issue is clearly beyond this year and beyond the next year.

We are making progress, and the graphs show it, but there is so much progress to be made in extending life-

spans and quality of life as well as reducing the cost of health care.

We need to make sure we seize this historic moment to show the rest of the world that we can do better and we will do better in providing health care delivery. The cause of health care delivery reform is one that cries out for a focused effort involving both branches of our government, executive and legislative, and both parties, as well as both Houses of this legislature.

The kind of focus given by Senators CANTWELL and WHITEHOUSE so penetratingly and powerfully today is the kind of focus we should maintain. I hope in the days or months ahead we will devote more attention by coming to the floor, doing events in our States, and making sure the administration is aware of our concern in meetings. I look forward to continuing that effort in the time ahead.

Again, I thank my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE, as well as others, such as Senator SCHUMER and my colleague from Connecticut Senator MURPHY, as well as Senator CANTWELL, for their devoted efforts. I am very proud to be working with them.

I see my colleagues are on the Senate floor. It is late in the day, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I would point out that the distinguished Senator from Delaware was on his way to speak and has graciously offered to defer for moment or two while I make my brief remarks.

U.S. DELEGATION TO THE SOCHI OLYMPICS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to speak briefly about the delegation chosen by President Obama to represent the United States at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. I would also like to offer a few suggested additions to the delegation.

As Members know, Janet Napolitano, former Secretary of Homeland Security, will lead the U.S. delegation to the opening ceremonies on February 7. Our Deputy Secretary of State, William Burns, will lead our delegation to the closing ceremonies on February 23. Our two delegations will include tennis legend Billy Jean King, gold medalist figure skater Brian Boitano, gold medalist figure skater Bonnie Blair, silver medalist hockey player Caitlin Cahow, and Olympic gold medalist speed skater Eric Heiden. These individuals are American sports figures who should be lauded for their contributions. I am confident they will represent us well.

May I suggest with all seriousness that this delegation could well be expanded. Some have asked what message the President might be trying to send to Russia in choosing this delegation. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney asserted this morning that “in the selection of the delegation, we are

sending the message that the United States is a diverse place.” Whether we are sending a message or simply pointing to our diversity, I submit our official delegation would be enhanced by adding the following: an American citizen of Russian parentage, perhaps a Russian orphan adopted and raised to adulthood by loving parents in the United States would be a good addition to this delegation or a Syrian American who has fled the barbaric and treacherous rule of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. In addition, an Iranian-American exile from the oppressive and murderous regime in Iran might make an outstanding addition to this delegation. I would also suggest that LTG Keith Alexander, the Director of the National Security Agency in this administration, would be an appropriate representative also of the United States of America.

So whether it is messaging that is taking place or simply diversity, I strongly suggest this outstanding delegation could be improved by these individuals and perhaps others.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

THE BUDGET

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to speak tonight on two subjects. The first is the budget resolution, the bipartisan, bicameral budget resolution conference report we approved today. This is the first time in a number of years we have actually been able to debate and find some consensus on a bipartisan blueprint for spending for the balance of this fiscal year. I commend Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN for their work and for their leadership and their willingness to find the middle.

My wife and I celebrate our 28th anniversary in about 2 weeks. Actually, it is a few minutes after midnight on New Year's Day. One of the things I love to do when I talk to people who have been married a lot longer than we have is to ask them the secret for being married a long time. I have heard all kinds of answers—hilarious answers, some very poignant answers. The best answer I ever heard is the answer of the two Cs. The first time someone said that to me I said: What are they? They said: Communicate and compromise. Communicate and compromise. As it turns out, that is not just the secret for a long marriage between two people, but it is also the secret for a vibrant democracy. If we are to continue to thrive as a nation and to meet our responsibilities, it will be by doing what our leaders on the Budget Committees have done; that is, communicated at great length with one another, developed a sense of trust with one another, an understanding of the other's views, and being willing to compromise and find their way to the middle.

Everyone here could fault some aspect of the agreement that was struck.

I can, and I know others can. But I wish to commend them and thank them for the effort that went into getting this one.

The Presiding Officer has heard me say once or twice in the last year or so that there are three key ingredients to making real progress, major progress, on deficit reduction, and one of those is entitlement reform which saves the programs for future generations, saves money, and does not savage old people or poor people. The second is tax reform, which helps us lower some of the corporate rates a bit as well as generates revenues for deficit reduction. The third element is the notion of looking at everything we do in Federal Government—everything we do—and answer this question: How can we get a better result for less money or the same amount of money?

As we approach the next budget resolution next spring and the next opportunity to revisit these issues of spending, including domestic spending, defense spending, entitlement spending, and revenues, my hope is that we will be able to make even greater progress by focusing also on those three critical elements. So that is one of the things I wanted to speak about.

MAYORKAS NOMINATION

The other issue I wish to speak about actually is a person; that is, a fellow named Alejandro Mayorkas. He has been nominated by the President to serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. He was nominated some 8 months ago.

As the Presiding Officer may recall, I have the privilege of chairing the committee of jurisdiction over Homeland Security, the Committee on Homeland and Government Affairs, and we are responsible for working with the administration. We are also responsible, as are a lot of other folks in this country and outside of it, to help protect our Nation's security both at home and abroad. At the same time we strive on our committee to make sure Federal agencies work better, work smarter, and more efficiently with the resources we entrust to them. We are an oversight committee.

During my years in public service, I have learned that the most important ingredient in enabling organizations to work well is leadership. That is the case both in government and in the private sector, in organizations large and small. Part of our shared responsibility is ensuring that we have effective leaders in place across our Federal Government. It is every Senator's constitutional role to provide advice and consent on the President's nominees in a thorough and timely manner as part of the Senate's confirmation process. While we in Congress hope to soon wrap up our 2013 session, it is going to be with far less to show than many of us would have liked, but at least the Senate will have had an opportunity to fill some key leadership positions across the Federal Government and to confirm a number of judges in many courts where they need a judge or two.

One of the roles that needs to be filled, again, is that of Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. This Department, as we know, plays a critical role in protecting our Nation and its citizens from harm. Whether the threat relates to terrorism from abroad, to homegrown extremists, to cyber attacks or natural disaster, this Department and the folks who work there are on the frontline for us.

Because of the Department's significant role in the security of our country, I have been very concerned—very concerned—for many months about the high number of senior level vacancies at the Department of Homeland Security. In fact, the Department has been without a Senate-confirmed Deputy Secretary since April and without a Senate-confirmed Secretary since I think late last summer.

Earlier this week, we took an important step to address this problem by voting to confirm Jeh Johnson, a good man, as the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. I wish to thank our Republican colleagues for joining us in that vote. That is good news. But we should not stop there. We need to ensure that Secretary Johnson has a Senate-confirmed leadership team in place and that certainly includes Alejandro Mayorkas as his Deputy.

I wish to take a few minutes, if I could, to speak in strong support of the nomination of Director Mayorkas' nomination and explain why I am convinced he is one of the leaders we urgently need at the Department of Homeland Security. As of this week, more than 8 months have passed since former Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute stepped down from her post at DHS, and nearly 6 months have passed since the President has nominated this man, currently the Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, for that post. It is time to put in place Senate-confirmed leadership in this very important Deputy Secretary position.

The former Deputy Secretary—the last Senate-confirmed Deputy Secretary for this Department—was a woman named Jane Holl Lute, a very impressive leader in her own right and widely respected not just by members of the committee but by many of our colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, in the Senate for her leadership, management skills, expertise, and for her candor. She helped DHS make strides in many areas; for example, in narrowing the operational and management issues identified as high risk by the Government Accountability Office. Ever since the Department of Homeland Security was created, it has been on the high-risk list every other year by GAO. They put it out at the beginning of every Congress, and one of the leaders, if you will, in terms of getting a lot of mentions on the high-risk list, is the Department of Homeland Security.