

did so much for us, including giving us life and love. We want to make sure we are doing everything possible to provide them with the quality care they deserve when they reach the age of 65 or older.

We know Medicaid provides older beneficiaries the dignity in their later years that they should have a right to expect, as well as the flexibility to design where they receive care.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, over 40 percent of Medicaid spending on long-term services and supports goes towards home and community-based care. Many assume the Medicare Program—Medicare, not Medicaid—will cover long-term care. In fact, it is Medicaid that is the largest single provider of long-term care in America—not Medicare, but Medicaid.

Medicaid covers approximately 40 percent of all long-term care services provided in the United States, and 4 out of 10 people is a big number, obviously. It is lots of folks we care about and interact with in the course of a day, whether they are neighbors or family members or coworkers across the board.

As enrollment continues to grow, more Americans are relying upon Medicaid than ever before. Medicaid is the major long-term care program for the middle class. So I would ask we all keep that in mind as we consider the determinations made through the budget process.

Let me give one example of a man living in Philadelphia—his example and his mother's. After her husband's passing, this individual's mom had health problems and her health deteriorated quickly. Kidney problems forced her in and out of the hospital. She was living on a fixed income, with medical bills piling up. She sold her apartment and used that money to pay for a few more years of care. This woman and her son were using every penny they could to help with her care, but it wasn't enough. She needed constant assistance. Her son, as the only child in the family, couldn't do it himself while raising his own two children.

Eventually, this man's mother received Medicaid benefits and moved into a nursing home in Philadelphia. Her son says he doesn't know what his family would have done without Medicaid. Paying for nursing home care would have quickly eaten his salary, and he would have had to sell his family home. Again, he was raising two children. Medicaid allowed him to avoid that vicious cycle.

Like millions of Americans, this man went to school and worked hard to get a good job so he could make a decent living. But despite being employed as a professional, without Medicaid to help his mom, he would have had to impoverish his own family—his two children—to care for his aging mom. This would have put his children's future at risk.

Medicaid offered this individual some help—obviously, his mother some

help—in providing for his family and offering a way to have his mother get the care she needed.

This is not atypical. This is reality for so many families. Here is one quick statistic. Then I will move to children, and then I will wrap up.

In Pennsylvania, seniors accounted for just 10 percent of Medicaid enrollees but over 22 percent of spending in 2011. The national numbers aren't much different than that. The number of enrollees might be around 10 percent or in that lower range, but the spending, because of the kind of care they received, is of a higher cost.

Let me talk for a couple of minutes about children. Together, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, which we know as CHIP, served more than 45 million children in Federal fiscal year 2013, representing one in three children in the United States. So Medicaid plus CHIP is the health care for more than one in three children.

We know CHIP is the health insurance program that impacts a lot of middle-income or at least lower-income families with children. In Pennsylvania, for example, just the Medicaid Program covered 34 percent of children ages 0 to 18. So just a little more than a third of Pennsylvania children rely upon Medicaid—a critically important program for those children.

One of the groups here in Washington that tracks programs and policies for children is First Focus. They had a report in September of 2014 where they reported that in calendar year 2012, 47 percent of rural children were covered by public insurance, meaning Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program or maybe a third option. So 47 percent of rural children were covered by public health insurance and only 38 percent of urban children.

I know that sounds counterintuitive for some here, but rural children in America rely substantially upon Medicaid and the CHIP program. So improving access to health insurance for low-income children not only leads to better health outcomes in the short run and in the long run, but it also improves educational outcomes and government savings in the long term.

Compared to their uninsured counterparts, children covered by Medicaid or CHIP are more likely to complete high school and college. These important programs help children literally succeed in life because they stay in school, whereas they would not at that rate if they were uninsured.

Some claim Medicaid is a highly inefficient program—that is one of the charges against it—whose costs are growing out of control. In fact, Medicaid's cost per child is 27 percent lower than the per-child cost for private insurance. And Medicaid's costs per beneficiary have been growing more slowly—per beneficiary costs—than under private coverage. I would argue it is not only efficient but effective in delivering quality health care to our children.

We know there is more to be done. We know there are improvements that Medicaid could incorporate. We need to improve dental and behavioral health care for children and increase access to screenings and vaccinations to make sure our children are protected.

Let me just close with a couple of observations about children and pregnant women. We know that Medicaid is also an important addition for children, but it is very important for pregnant women, with prenatal, labor, delivery, and postpartum care.

Nationwide, Medicaid finances 45 percent of all births—45 percent. We have a lot of folks in both parties who say how much they care about pregnant women and children. Well, if 45 percent of all births are in Medicaid, we better protect Medicaid. It is vitally important.

Children who have health insurance, such as Medicaid and CHIP, are more likely to receive vaccinations, have regular medical checkups, and avoid preventable childhood illnesses.

So let me conclude with this thought. We know we have to find savings. We know we have to work towards a fiscally responsible budget. But I don't think anyone here believes the way to do that is to do it on the backs of children who are poor but receive good health care through Medicaid or to do it by way of short-circuiting or limiting substantially the opportunities that older citizens have to go to a nursing home. Everyone in this building knows someone who is in a nursing home solely because of Medicaid—not everyone, but plenty of people either we know and love or people we know and encounter during the course of the year.

So if we care about pregnant women, if we care about kids, if we care about older citizens and individuals with disabilities, we should think long and hard before we substantially cut, as this budget does, Medicaid.

With that, I yield the floor.

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week, the Senate is poised to pass the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. The law enforcement community is unified in its support of this program because it quite simply saves lives. To date, this program has provided more than 13,000 State and local law enforcement agencies with nearly 1.2 million bulletproof vests, including nearly 4,400 to officers in Vermont.

Senator GRAHAM and I have been working to address any and all concerns that certain Republican Senators have raised about the bill. We are prepared, for example, to accept an amendment from Senator LEE that would reduce the authorization level from \$30 million annually to \$25 million. Unfortunately, I learned yesterday that a single Republican Senator

continues to maintain a hold on this bill, continuing a pattern from the last Congress of unwarranted obstructionism. I have been in contact with a number of law enforcement groups representing officers around the country, and I know that they are all incredibly disappointed that this bill continues to be blocked.

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership has helped to establish protective vests as standard equipment for law enforcement agencies across the country. Yet, for far too many jurisdictions—especially rural and smaller agencies—vests still cost too much and wear out too soon. We know that bulletproof vests will not save every officer, but they have already saved the lives of more than 3,000 law enforcement officers since 1987. I have met with police officers who are alive today because of vests purchased through this program, and they will attest to the fact that this program saves lives. These vests also are a comfort for families, to know that their loved ones have them.

While I will keep fighting for passage of this bulletproof vest legislation, we must also make sure that our work to make our communities safer for all continues. Over the past few years, the Senate has come together to protect victims of sexual assault and domestic violence by reauthorizing and reinvigorating the Violence Against Women Act. We have worked to protect racial and religious minorities and the LGBT community when we passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act. We came together to pass the Innocence Protection Act and the Drug Free Communities Act. And just a few months ago, we came together to enact the Death in Custody Act to bring needed transparency to every death that occurs in police custody, and we need to do more to prevent such tragedies.

In the coming weeks, I hope that the Senate Judiciary Committee will turn its attention to the bipartisan effort to end mass incarceration. I am working with Chairman GRASSLEY on the importance of legal representation for those accused of misdemeanor offenses. Chairman GRASSLEY is working with Senator WHITEHOUSE and others to improve our juvenile justice system. Senator RAND PAUL and I are working to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences. I also support the work of Senators DURBIN and LEE, who are seeking to reduce mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug crimes. We have historic opportunity to restore the faith that Americans should have in the justice system. If we work together, I know we can make meaningful improvements so that our entire justice system lives up to its name.

MAY NOMINATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I support President Obama's nomination of Dr. Willie May as the Director of the National Institute of Standards and

Technology, NIST, at the Department of Commerce.

NIST sets the standards for innovation in technology from mammograms to motorcycles. NIST scientists have won a MacArthur Genius Award and four Nobel prizes—more than any other Federal agency—including one in my State of Maryland. In the 44 years that Dr. May has spent at NIST, including serving as Acting Director since last June, he has set his own standard for service, dedication, and leadership in this great agency.

Dr. May grew up in Birmingham, AL, graduated from Knoxville College in 1968, and upon graduating with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry, took a job with a Federal laboratory in Oak Ridge, TN. In 1971, Dr. May came to Maryland to work for NIST's predecessor, which was then called the National Standards Bureau. He completed his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Maryland while working full-time at NIST and earned his doctorate in 1977. His research on trace organic analytical chemistry has been covered in more than 100 peer-reviewed journals around the world.

His colleagues know him not only for his brilliance in the lab but for his commitment to NIST's mission and employees. He is respected by the scientists at NIST but also by the engineers, lab workers, IT experts, and building staff. His vision will help NIST's 3,000 dedicated employees continue to be the world's leading experts in innovation, from quantum cryptography to 5G communications.

I join my colleagues in supporting Dr. Willie E. May as Director of NIST.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably detained for rollcall vote No. 169 on the nomination of Willie E. May to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

RECOGNIZING FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I wish to honor 52 high school seniors in Southern New Jersey for their commendable decision to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces. Of these 52, 13 have elected to join the U.S. Army: Mark Beverley, Thomas Connor, Jose Espinal, Luis Mansilla, Tyler Trapanese, Luis Rodriguez, Alexander Wallingford, Jacob Hoey, Karl Steinbach, Jason Jastillana, Marlett Eilenberger, Cordell Huesser, and Lorenzo Morales. Six have joined the U.S. Navy: Imani Glover, Jasmine Wilson, Kevin Pawlowski, Michael Livesey, Rebecca Herrera, Darrian Shufford. Four have elected to join the U.S. Air Force: Angel Gomez, Roselynn McPherson, Cachina Stevenson-Bisom, Christopher Pugliese. Thirteen have elected to join the U.S. Marine Corps:

Ramon Paige, Jonathan Balonaguilan, Garrett Gudauskas, Nakee King, Howard Morgan, Christian Lidel, Aliyah Ortiz, Christian Godshall, Nhiem Bien, Cheavin Kim, Danvil Coombs, James Boyd, Policarpo Tovar. Sixteen have elected to join the New Jersey National Guard: Andrea Perez, Nini Tran, Thang Ngo, Edward Hutchinson, Muquim Shah, Troy Logan, Michael Wallace, Jr., Richard Scott, Ethan West, Jabari Ashanti, James Bartleson, Paul Mueller, Jr., Kristoffer Flores, Kelsey Hohenberger, Michelle Rivera, Dominic White. These 52 will also be honored on May 19, 2015 at an "Our Community Salutes of South Jersey" recognition ceremony in Voorhees Township, NJ.

The future of our Nation remains strong because of young men and women, like these 52 individuals, who have decided to step forward and commit themselves to the defense of our Nation and to upholding the ideals upon which it was founded. Indeed, these New Jerseyans represent the very best of America, and they should rest assured that the full support of the Senate as well as the American people, are with them in whatever challenges may lie ahead.

It is thanks to the dedication of untold numbers of patriots like these 52 that we are able to meet here today, in the Senate, and openly debate the best solutions to the many and diverse problems that confront our country. It is thanks to their sacrifices that the United States of America remains a beacon of hope and freedom throughout the world. We owe them, along with all those who serve our country, a deep debt of gratitude.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO'S INTEGRATIVE COMMUNITY STUDIES PROGRAM

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate 11 students who will be graduating tomorrow at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. While celebrations will abound across our country for the class of 2015, I want to highlight this very special group who, I must say, stands above the rest for their achievement.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro works with its nonprofit partner Beyond Academics to provide students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities a 4-year course of study that promotes self-determination, life planning, and career development. They call it the Integrative Community Studies program. These students learn how to build their own lives through employment and self-sufficient living. I have long supported these efforts and believe that anyone who cares about outcomes for individuals with disabilities should look no further than UNC-G and Beyond Academics as an example for promoting success.

This is a particularly special graduation day as it is the fifth graduating