

charged higher premiums, and 700,000 Ohioans—people in my State—now have health insurance they did not have 5 years ago.

So if we repeal the Affordable Care Act, somebody has to explain to those 700,000 people why they no longer have insurance, why those 100,000 young people are getting dropped from coverage; those families like the woman's who would lose her insurance because her child has a preexisting condition, and all the consumer protections the Affordable Care Act has been part of.

Last month I spoke with Charles McClinton, a Cincinnati resident who suffered from severe epilepsy and, as a result, was unable to work. After Ohio chose to expand Medicaid—and I give Republican Governor Kasich credit for that—Mr. McClinton qualified for health care coverage and was able to schedule surgery. Thanks to this life-saving coverage, he has returned to work.

Isn't that what we want? If people are ill, injured, sick, don't we want to take care of them so they can return to work? Mr. McClinton never wanted to miss work, but he had to. Because of the expansion of Medicaid, because of the Affordable Care Act passed by a Democratic Senate, signed by a Democratic President, because of a Republican Governor in Ohio expanding Medicaid, unlike Republican Governors in many States, people such as Charles McClinton can now go back to work and live a healthier, more productive life and pay taxes.

Since its creation in 1965, Medicaid has been a joint Federal and State program, providing free or low-cost health coverage to qualified individuals. One of the key components of the Affordable Care Act expanded both the eligibility and the Federal funding for Medicaid. States were given the opportunity to expand Medicaid to individuals with incomes of up to 130 percent of the Federal poverty level. Many people on Medicaid who are now on the expanded Medicaid in Ohio and Kentucky and many other States hold jobs, just like the parents of the 130,000 Ohio children who now have insurance because of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Their parents are working at places such as Walmart and McDonald's, making \$8, \$9, \$10 an hour. Those companies generally don't provide health insurance and don't pay wages high enough to be able to buy health insurance.

What kind of society do we want to be? Where people are working every bit as hard as all of us as U.S. Senators work, with very little compensation, without health insurance, generally without pensions?

Do we want to say: Well, we don't care about you? If you weren't smart enough, if you weren't educated enough, if you weren't smart enough to get a good-paying job with insurance, then we are going to turn our backs on you? Of course we are not that kind of society. That is what the Affordable Care Act is about.

The expansion of Medicaid has saved Ohio about \$350 million. It also helped Ohioans who already have insurance. When people lack health insurance, someone has to pay for their care.

The Presiding Officer's State of Colorado is not much different, just smaller dollar amounts because it is a smaller State. But Ohioans spend over \$2 billion on care for people who can't pay. It is a hidden tax on the insured estimated to be about \$1,000 a year per insured family.

So prior to the Affordable Care Act, somebody who went to a hospital in Denver, Cleveland, Dayton or Colorado Springs or Pueblo or Youngstown—because those without insurance would go to hospitals and get care; that is what we do; we take care of people if they show up in an emergency room—because they were not paying, because they were low income, they were unemployed, and they had no insurance, the cost of their treatment got shifted onto those of us with insurance. Economists say pretty much everybody pays about \$1,000 additional for their health insurance because of the problems of the uninsured. So when we expand Medicaid, when we pass the Affordable Care Act, when we get people into the health exchanges, it means we are not charging people that \$1,000 hidden tax, so it is a savings to those of us with insurance. Ultimately it is better for taxpayers, ultimately it is better for our health care system, and ultimately, most importantly, it is better for a healthier society.

We should be helping Ohioans gain health care, not cutting them off. That is the importance of expanding Medicaid.

I urge the Ohio legislature to work with the Governor to include Medicaid expansion in the budget. I urge my colleagues here in this Chamber to end their grandstanding attacks on a law that is helping Americans such as Charles McClinton get the care they need. It helped him go back to work. It will help others live more healthy lives. It will help all our communities. We should be helping Ohioans gain health care, not cutting them off.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I call for the regular order with respect to the motion to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015.

Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, David Vitter, Jerry Moran, Daniel Coats, Michael B. Enzi, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, John Boozman, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, James Lankford, Jeff Sessions.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

#### CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY HONORING 1ST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE, THE "DEVIL'S BRIGADE"

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I had the honor of addressing the legendary World War II-era 1st Special Service Force, a joint American-Canadian special forces military unit called the Devil's Brigade, on the occasion of the surviving members of that elite unit receiving the Congressional Gold Medal. I ask for unanimous consent that my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

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

Sometimes, truth can be more impressive than fiction.

When it comes to the heroes we honor today, that's certainly the case.

Members of the elite "Devil's Brigade" excelled in rock-climbing and amphibious assault.

They advanced on skis and through the air. They survived by stealth, and trained in demolitions.

Some of their more daring mission plans would've made James Bond blush.

And through it all, they helped save a continent in chaos. They helped defeat some of the greatest menaces our world has known.

But this isn't just some Hollywood script. It's a true story about a fearless group of young Canadians and Americans—including many Kentuckians—who were willing to put their lives on the line in the truest sense of the term.

Some probably did it to protect neighbors and families. Others to defend cherished democratic ideals. Many likely fought for all these reasons.

And they volunteered for this danger. Here's how the force's recruiting slogan read: Vigorous training.

Hazardous duty.

For those who measure up, get into the war quick.

Typical Madison Avenue spin, this was not. But it was honest.

The fighting could be fierce. Conditions could be awful. The missions, seemingly impossible.

Yet, dark masses of boot polish and young courage—fighting knives gripped tightly in hand, elements purged consciously from thought—advanced against the Wehrmacht and held strong against forces of fascism.

The Devil's Brigade, heeding Churchill's call for "specially trained troops of the hunter class" who might unleash "a reign of terror" against the Nazis, became a feared adversary.

But these "Devils" only rented space in the shadows. They moved within darkness in order to defeat it.

And today, here they are. Champions of freedom. Heroes in two nations. Saviors to many others.

To you, we offer our most profound gratitude for distinguished service.

To the families gathered today, know that your loved one made a difference. Know that the veteran you've loved made a contribution to history that we as a people will not soon forget.

As the son of a World War II veteran, I'm particularly determined to ensure we don't.

That's why we will soon dedicate the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow.

It may only be a piece of metal, but it carries the gratitude of a nation.

May you always remember it.

#### KENTUCKIANS CELEBRATING THE VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish our friends in the Vietnamese-American community in Louisville, KY, and across the Commonwealth, a very merry celebration of Tet Nguyen Dan. Tet Nguyen Dan means "first day," and is the celebration of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year and the arrival of Spring. The Lunar New Year is the most important celebration in traditional Vietnamese culture. This year it falls on February 19.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year lasts for several days. It is seen as the precursor for events of the coming year, and therefore is celebrated by paying homage to one's ancestors, having family reunions, and paying old debts.

At midnight of the Lunar New Year, the event is celebrated with firecrackers, gongs, and drums. Children wear new clothes to visit their relatives, and elders offer children little red envelopes full of money.

The festival then continues for several days with special events on each day. Many traditional foods are served during the Lunar New Year celebrations, including banh chung, a dish made of sticky rice, and mung beans and pork, all wrapped in banana leaves.

Of course, one doesn't have to be in Vietnam to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Louisville has a strong and vibrant Vietnamese-American community that contributes to the mosaic that is the River City, and this year they will celebrate the Lunar New Year with great gusto. Celebrations are scheduled across the city for several days.

I know that Louisville and the Commonwealth of Kentucky are better off for the values that Vietnamese-Americans celebrate during Tet Nguyen Dan—love of family, appreciation of

one's elders and ancestors, and optimism about the times ahead. I convey to my friends in Kentucky's Vietnamese-American community my best wishes and I ask my U.S. Senate colleagues to join me in wishing them a happy, healthy, and prosperous Lunar New Year.

#### CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am a proud cosponsor of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act and am pleased my colleagues chose to support it unanimously. The bill is designed to help reduce—and hopefully eliminate—veteran suicides by improving access to and quality of mental health care for veterans.

An estimated 22 veterans a day take their own lives. That is twice as high as the general population. Veterans of all ages and from all wars are affected by conditions that can contribute to depression and thoughts of suicide. We are learning more and more, for example, about how common post-traumatic stress disorder is among our returning heroes. PTSD can surface years—even decades—after a veteran was in combat. It is one of many factors that contribute to this disheartening problem.

The number of suicides is disproportionately high, however, for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Young men and women just out of the service and receiving health care from the government committed suicide at nearly three times the rate of active-duty troops in 2012. We have to work harder to make sure our heroes have access to the help they need.

The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act will create a peer support and community outreach pilot program to connect transitioning service members with programs that could help them. The bill will create a pilot program to repay the loan debt of psychiatry students so it is easier to recruit them to work at the VA. It also will improve the accountability of VA mental health and suicide-prevention programs by requiring an annual evaluation.

Today, in a bipartisan fashion, the Senate said we need to do more to make sure our heroes have access to the assistance they need. I hope the step we took here today helps many veterans regain a path to wellness and happiness.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to commend my colleagues for swift passage of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This act will build upon the Veterans Choice Act and put in place needed measures to improve responsiveness, reporting, oversight and accountability for mental health outreach, intervention, treatment, and counseling in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Sometimes the greatest hurdle for ailing veterans is just getting started. There is nothing more frustrating and poten-

tially demoralizing and debilitating for a veteran in crisis to seek mental health care from the VA and be told he will have to wait weeks or months for an appointment because VA facilities lack sufficient personnel with an expertise in psychiatric medicine to provide timely care. Left to fend on their own, many veterans become depressed and feel powerless, some resort to high-risk behaviors, from isolation, self-medication with alcohol and prescription drugs, to suicide.

This bill authorizes a pilot program to expand the VA's capacity to help repay loans incurred by individuals who are eligible to practice psychiatric medicine and agree to serve the VA in that field. In doing so, we recognize that serving veterans is a noble cause that some are called to, but working in such a demanding field requires economic incentives, especially in areas where abundant career options exist or in more remote locales, where attracting talent is difficult for the VA.

The Clay Hunt Act also facilitates greater veteran's access through a consolidated interactive website, where veterans can visit from the privacy of their own home or wherever they may be when the need arises.

Most importantly, the bill directs VA to establish a pilot program for community-based support networks in the VA's Integrated Service Networks to ease the transition of veterans and provide peer-based support for those who are encountering difficulties coping with those life changes. These community outreach teams at each medical center will be aimed at getting care to the point of need with the least amount of delay and help those veterans who are unwilling or unable to seek professional help on their own.

Make no mistake, the suicides of our veterans are preventable with the right intervention and proper continuum of care. When a veteran takes their own life due to untreated mental pain, it is a stark and sobering sign that somewhere, someone who loved them was unable to reach them and recognize the warning signs to help or that the veteran just couldn't carry a heavy burden any longer and found stability or some greater peace and solace elusive. It is at these moments, with nowhere to turn and perhaps no one to trust, that some of our veterans want to escape life. The sooner we can fully transform the VA into a place where veterans in crisis at any time can find access to caregivers and peers ready to light the path to a better place in our society, the better outcomes we will see and the surer we will be that the promises we have made to them are being kept.

#### RECOGNIZING BURTON SNOWBOARDS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for generations, Vermonters have contributed to the global culture of winter sports. Whether the sport is snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling or