

judged on whether the current hallmarks are maintained and remain dependable, universal, and available to the disabled as well as all elderly. In addition, we recognize the need for capitalization of the Social Security system. Americans need to have ownership in the system and politicians must have reduced access to the money they are taxing for our retirement savings. Some type of Personal Savings Retirement Accounts combined with the current system appear to be the best solution.

Some organizations would have you believe that Social Security can be saved with just a few adjustments. For 60 years, with little notice or fanfare, the government has been making adjustments to the system. If it was as simple as a slight adjustment, we would not have elected officials risking their political lives by addressing the need for dramatic, system-saving changes.

Now is the time honest debate and real reform. We are asking Congress and the President to leave a legacy of leadership behind them for this country. They must act to save the Social Security system for the elderly, the disabled, and current and future retirees. All Americans must take an active role on this issue, listen to all aides of the debate, and then call their elected officials and urge them to take action.

The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer, non-partisan, community service organization comprised of more than 100,000 men and women ages 21 to 39. 1-800-JAYCEES.●

SUPPORT OUR TEACHING HOSPITALS

● Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support for this country's teaching hospitals.

These institutions provide the critical experiences of internship and residency by which raw medical school graduates, who have learned the science of medicine, are converted into seasoned physicians who have learned the art and practice of medicine. We are all going to face illness at one time or another in our lives, and we want to make sure that there will be well-educated, conscientious, and compassionate physicians to care for us during those periods. The critical role of the teaching hospitals in molding the doctors of the future cannot be overestimated.

These teaching hospitals also serve as key participants in the medical research advances from which we all benefit enormously. We tend to forget that medicine is a relatively young science. Antibiotics, which we all take for granted, have been in use for only about 50 years. Heart bypass surgery and kidney transplants, procedures so commonplace that we hardly give them a second thought, were virtually unheard of 40 years ago. These and other medical advances have led to a tremendous increase in life expectancy in this country over the past 100 years. Yet all of these innovations would have been virtually impossible without the ongoing participation of teaching hospitals in programs of medical research and development.

Finally, these teaching hospitals provide a tremendous service to our communities. For many of the most vul-

nerable among us, the teaching hospitals represent their major, and often only, source of medical care. The homeless, the indigent, the elderly, the new arrivals to our country: for many in these groups, there would be no medical care at all if not for the care provided by the teaching hospitals, such as Christiana Care in my home state of Delaware.

So we should all agree that teaching hospitals are an absolutely essential resource for our society; we don't want to go back to 19th century medicine, we want to move ahead to 21st century medicine.

But there is a problem: the teaching hospitals' financial underpinning has become very precarious, and a number of the most reknowned teaching hospitals in this country are now losing money each year. We have come somewhat late to the unsurprising realization that the time and resources which the teaching hospitals devote to the education of future physicians, the research we need for better and healthier lives, and the care of the indigent and working poor, costs a lot of money.

These costs are going up every year for our teaching hospitals: new technology costs money, dedicated employees must be paid a living wage, and so forth. But the income of teaching hospitals is not coming close to matching these cost increases. Health insurance companies are reducing their payments to health care providers, including teaching hospitals. Teaching hospitals, with their obligatory high costs, are not able to compete financially for contracts to take care of HMO patients. A significant percentage of teaching hospital costs has been paid in the past by Medicare, but as Medicare finds itself facing future insolvency, its payment to teaching hospitals for training interns and residents has also declined. We in Congress contributed to the decline in teaching hospitals' income with several provisions in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, particularly the reductions in payments for indirect medical education and disproportionate share hospitals.

Everybody who gets health care in this country benefits from the work of teaching hospitals, but in the face of the financial straits that have overwhelmed our health care system, nobody wants to pay for them.

Mr. President, it is absolutely essential that this country's teaching hospitals remain vital and viable. Medicare may no longer be in a position to continue paying a disproportionately large share of teaching hospital expenses. In the long run, we must carefully reevaluate the funding mechanism for teaching hospitals to ensure their stability; if we all benefit from them, then perhaps we should all pay part of their costs.

These long-term changes are important, but we in the Senate must also be concerned about the here and now. Teaching hospitals that are currently

losing money may not be able to wait for the "long run"; they need help in the next few months. Senator DASCHLE has just introduced the Medicare Beneficiary Access to Care Act, which contains provisions that would benefit the teaching hospitals and their patients, and I understand that the Senate Finance Committee is currently working on proposals to address some unintended consequences of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, including those that have impacted on teaching hospitals.

But time is of the essence, and the key word is urgency. Next year may be too late. The Senate is working furiously to pass the necessary appropriations bills in the few legislative days we have remaining this session, but I implore my colleagues not to move to adjournment until we take action to make sure that the teaching hospitals will still be around next session. The teaching hospitals spend 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, working to make sure we live long and healthy lives, and it's time for us to return the favor. If we don't have enough time this session to complete the necessary major surgery on the payment system for teaching hospitals, the least we can do is set aside the few hours or days it would take to administer a little life-saving financial CPR.●

IN RECOGNITION OF "NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY"

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, October 17, 1999 is "National Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Day" and I want to take this opportunity to honor the 15 million American men and women who serve as Sunday school teachers. They are surely one of our nation's most valuable resources.

Since 1993, "National Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Day" has helped foster an increased awareness of the vital role Sunday school plays in the life of the local church and community. By marking this day, churches have an opportunity to nominate the cream of the crop of their Sunday school teachers for national recognition. An integral part of this campaign is the search for the "Henrietta Mears Sunday School Teacher of the Year." This award was established in honor of Dr. Henrietta Mears, a famous Christian educator who influenced the lives of such Christian leaders as Dr. Billy Graham, and many more.

Through their work, Sunday school teachers offer a wealth of information and guidance to America's youth. In the wake of incidents at Columbine High School and, more recently, at the Wedgewood Baptist Church in Texas, the importance of these volunteers, who help shepherd their communities through difficult times, only increases in value. Through community-based programs—and especially those deeply rooted in faith, such as Sunday School—our nation and my state of