

role in helping to alleviate the Nation's teaching shortage. On a federal level, we can encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession and remain in the profession by providing tax relief to teachers for the costs that they incur as part of the profession.

Madam President, our teachers have made a personal commitment to educate the next generation and to strengthen America. While many people spend their lives building careers, our teachers spend their careers building lives. The Teacher Tax Relief provisions in this bill go a long way towards providing our teachers with the recognition they deserve by providing teachers with important and much needed tax relief.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with Senator COLLINS and so many others to eventually make our goal a reality.

I commend the leadership of the majority and the minority for their efforts. I have long supported the concept of having the stimulus package. While it may not be what each of us wanted, it is essential, particularly the unemployment provisions and the provisions about teachers, with which I have long been associated. I thank the leadership.

Madam President, I commend the President of the United States for his commitment, along with his several Cabinet officers who have fought so strongly for passage of a stimulus package. The American economy is, I believe, showing some signs of recovery, but I believe that this is an additional step to shore up the confidence of the people of this country in the economy.

Within the stimulus package we will vote on tomorrow are provisions that I worked on with Senator COLLINS and others for some time that relate to teachers. In my visits to educational institutions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, I have often learned—inadvertently, not because teachers come up to me and tell me about it, because they are rather modest—but, in fact, so many of our teachers, particularly those in the lower grades and those in schools which, for whatever reason, might not be as well financed as other institutions in our State, have taken from their own pockets, funds to buy school supplies which are needed to help their particular students in their classroom perform their educational responsibilities. Sometimes it is paper. Sometimes it is crayons, occasionally books. I find this extraordinary. As I say, they have not come to me and asked: Oh, we want this, we want that. They are very humble about it.

Senator COLLINS and I, and my colleague, Senator ALLEN, who has been very active in the entire area of education with me—I happen to serve on the committee for education in the Senate—but we have as a team, together with other Senators, have been working on this concept for some time.

The National Education Association took a pivotal role in seeing that this legislation was incorporated in the House bill. Now at long last, we do have a measure of success, and it is owed to the teachers and the National Education Association and other colleagues here who have worked on it with me.

I am delighted over the whole prospect of this being passed. It is only a \$250 above the line deduction. But at long last teachers can point to something—"this is our's; we helped make it happen, and we are proud of it."

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE VIRGINIA GARCIA MEMORIAL HEALTH CENTER

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, today I rise today to give tribute to some of the health care heroes in my home State of Oregon. They are the hard-working people who staff the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center in Cornelius, OR.

Virginia Garcia was a 6-year-old girl who died from a treatable infection in the 1970s. She died, not because she lacked health care, but because no one spoke to her family in the only language they knew—Spanish.

Access to health care involves more than insurance. Barriers to access continue to exist even when financial problems to health care are removed. Disparities in health care and health outcomes reflect these barriers.

For example, Latinos are twice as likely as White Americans to have diabetes, and twice as likely to have cervical cancer. They also trail other ethnic groups in childhood immunizations and health insurance coverage.

The Virginia Garcia Clinic does a wonderful job at bridging the large gap between access to coverage and access to care. The clinic serves nearly 8,000 patients a year, 80 percent of whom are Spanish speaking, and 90 percent of whom are below the poverty level. Patients in the clinic pay for their services on a sliding scale, sometimes as low as \$5 per visit.

Access to high quality, affordable, and culturally accessible care has saved many lives, and improved the quality of lives of many others. I have two true stories to relate to you today, though I really don't need to use their names, because they represent thousands of people across my home State. I will refer to them just as people in need of health care.

One woman who has benefitted from the good works of the Virginia Garcia Clinic came to the clinic after moving

to the U.S. from Mexico. She had suffered from breast cancer, and underwent a mastectomy and a long, expensive treatment of chemotherapy that had bankrupted her family. To pay for this treatment, they lost their home.

She turned to the Virginia Garcia Health Center for help. She needed very expensive medication, and the clinic managed to provide it to her. To make matters worse, she also had diabetes and other complicated health problems. Yet the Virginia Garcia Clinic manages her care and arranges for the specialty care that she requires. Without a safety net clinic such as the Virginia Garcia Clinic, she would very likely not get the care she needs to stay healthy for her children and family.

The staff at the clinic have also told me about a farm worker who came to the Virginia Garcia Clinic for an urgent care visit about a rash on his arm. During the exam, the nurse practitioner asked about a lump she noticed on his neck. He hadn't been concerned about it, but the staff at the Virginia Garcia Clinic persisted until he agreed to have a biopsy. The lump turned out to be lymphoma, so the Virginia Garcia Clinic arranged for his chemotherapy at the Oregon Health and Sciences University, where he was treated successfully.

Without a migrant community health center such as Virginia Garcia to provide outreach, the outcome of this story would likely not have been so positive.

Spending time at the Virginia Garcia Clinic, I have met with people with stories such as these and whose lives would have changed for the worse without the efforts of the hard-working and dedicated staff.

Truly, these people, these staff workers are health care heroes, and we desperately need them in our quest to ensure that every person in this country has access to health care.

So today, I salute the work and the workers of the Virginia Garcia Clinic, true heroes in the State of Oregon.

IN RECOGNITION OF SERGEANT PHILIP SVITAK

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, this week during the war against terror in Afghanistan America lost eight soldiers and Nebraska lost a native son. These soldiers died valiantly protecting the rights, ideals, values, and way of life that Americans enjoy.

Sgt. Philip Svitak, a member of the Second Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, was born in Lincoln and raised in Fremont. He graduated from Fremont High School in 1989 and entered the Army where he served in the Gulf War.

Sgt. Svitak's parents have said that growing up, he dreamed of a career with the military service. His favorite gifts would be colored the familiar green olive drab. But he also enjoyed