

I know it has been suggested that our system is untried. That is not true. We benefit from a system that is comparable to what we have designed in the tripartisan proposal, and it offers the maximum choices to our seniors. We think it is important to create as a permanent part of the Medicare Program.

To provide for any limitation of that type is doing a disservice to our seniors. It is giving them a false hope to say that your benefit expires in 7 years, unless, of course, future Congresses decide to make a change. So we are predicating their future, their health care, on whether or not a future Congress might decide to extend that program. I really don't think that is the type of precedent we want to take. We have never created a temporary benefit under the Medicare Program—never. We have never created a temporary benefit, and we should not start now.

I know there has been some question about the assets test included in the tripartisan proposal. First of all, this assets test was not something that was newly created. It is included in the Medicaid Program. Yes, this assets test is used for some Medicare beneficiaries, the dual eligibles, the qualified Medicare beneficiaries, QMBs, and specified low-income Medicare beneficiaries. So an assets test was included in our legislation that is the equivalent of the assets test in the Medicaid Program that was supported by this Senate back in 1987 and 1986 with overwhelming support. So this is not unprecedented. It is not unusual. It includes the same type of waivers that are included in the current Medicaid Program.

I welcome the debate that has developed between the two competing proposals regarding prescription drugs. It is my sincere hope that we will have the ability to work through our differences beyond the threshold of tomorrow, the 60 votes. I hope, again, that this system and this process are not designed for failure, that neither side gets the 60 votes and, therefore, we move on to other issues and we defer this to another year. It has happened far too often.

This benefit is long overdue for our Nation's seniors. We negotiated this compromise in good faith, in the hopes that we could have worked through with our colleague from Florida, who I know has worked very hard, who is very genuine in his interest in developing a prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries—I would have hoped we could have worked through the process in committee, but that was not to be. So we are at a point now of whether we can reconcile our differences to move beyond the 60 votes and be able to work through the various amendments and reach a conclusion.

The seniors of this country deserve that. I honestly don't understand why we can't at this point in time agree to pass a prescription drug benefit pro-

gram for Medicare beneficiaries. Our compromise wasn't designed to be an all or nothing or lines drawn in the sand. It was really an attempt in good faith, in the spirit of consensus building and compromise, because you can't do it without the other side of the aisle; there is no way you can possibly do it. That is why we started more than a year ago to develop this tripartisan proposal with the hope that we could have made this a reality for our Nation's seniors.

I urge my colleagues to give very serious consideration to what we have provided in this particular proposal for our seniors. Hopefully, we can come together and pass this legislation that is such an urgent need for the more than 44 million Medicare beneficiaries.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for a period not to exceed 10 minutes each.

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

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### THE KETCHIKAN VENEER PLANT

• Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I offer my congratulations and state my full support for the actions taken this week by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough in acquiring the idle veneer plant at Ward Cove. At a time when the regional economy is reeling from a long series of blows that go back to 1993 when the first pulp mill closed, the Ketchikan Borough showed exceptional leadership by stepping to the plate to retain this vital manufacturing facility in the community.

The importance of encouraging an increase in healthy wood products manufacturing facilities in Southeast Alaska cannot be overemphasized. Such plants are vital necessities for Southeast Alaska to have good, year-round, family wage jobs providing the economic backbone to its communities. Proof of this is readily seen in the current jobs picture. As a consequence of the Clinton Administration's actions, Alaska's 2 pulp mills and several sawmills were forced to cease operation, costing the region more than 3,500 direct timber jobs in the last 10 years. Add to that the loss of countless indirect jobs and you have a formula for economic disaster.

With Ketchikan's action, we now enter a new era. Its leadership will help Southeast Alaska embark on a much-needed recovery phase in which real jobs for real people can bring new life back to litigation-weary communities. I congratulate Ketchikan and pledge to help in any way I can.

A critical component of making the veneer plant a viable operation will be economic timber supply. A spate of lawsuits by environmental groups has artificially driven down the supply of timber and has even stopped timber sale planning on the Tongass. As quickly as possible, the Borough needs to conclude an agreement with a company to operate the veneer mill and together we must address the supply issue with the U.S. Forest Service.

To that end, I am calling today for the Alaska Regional Forester, Denny Bschor, to meet in a timely manner with Borough officials to reach an agreement to ensure a stable and sufficient supply of economic timber to enable the veneer plant and the sawmills of Southeast Alaska to succeed. The new Bush Administration owes Ketchikan a commitment to bargain in good faith to help the community succeed in rejuvenating its economy.

The Regional Forester has the statutory authority to offer timber under 10 year contracts, and I urge the Forest Service to conclude agreements using that authority. Furthermore, I call on all Alaskans to join me in supporting a 10 year sale for Ketchikan in recognition of the community's substantial leadership in restoring the regional economy.

The biggest impediment to making timber available is the plethora of lawsuits that have been systematically leveled against the agency. Those lawsuits, if not resolved soon, will result in more mill closures and further unemployment. The recent court injunctions on timber sales that have already passed environmental review highlight the need for longer term agreements.

The Tongass National Forest is fully capable of supporting the level of harvest needed to supply the region's mills without affecting the other legitimate uses of the forest. Less than 400,000 acres, only 2.4 percent of the Tongass, have been harvested since industrial harvest began in the 1950s. Moreover, each year about 800 million board feet of timber is lost to natural tree mortality on the Tongass. That is nearly 4 times the maximum annual harvest under the current management plan and 16 times the amount cut last year.

Under the Tongass plan, an average of less than one-half of 1 percent of the Tongass can be harvested in any given year. If offered in economic packages, that small part of the available resource can be sufficient for the needs of the existing industry. There is simply no reason the Forest Service should not make sufficient economic volume available to run a veneer mill and provide logs to the sawmills of South East Alaska. This action is essential to the

operation of the veneer mill and saw-mills, providing jobs and protecting families.●

#### RECOGNIZING MONTANA'S LOCAL BROADCASTERS

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the important role that Montana's local broadcast stations play in informing and serving their communities.

Local broadcast stations across the country serve their communities in as many different ways as there are communities. A recent study by the National Association of Broadcasters found that American local broadcast stations gave almost 10 billion dollars in community service last year. In Montana, it is estimated that local radio and television stations contributed 78 million dollars. These impressive numbers represented stations' Public Service Announcements, donated airtime, money raised for local and national charities and non-profits, and other community work. Montanans are fortunate to be served by stations that are so dedicated to their communities.

Today, I would like to recognize two of those stations for their outstanding service.

In Helena, KMTX-FM provided more than \$15,000 to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's "Project Impact." This program works to promote local, grassroots initiatives that make American communities more disaster resistant. KMTX was so supportive that the station's general manager, Kevin Shaalure, was awarded the Outstanding Project Impact Media Individual. The local manager for Project Impact said, and I quote: "Kevin and KMTX embraced Project Impact from the start, working to give preparedness a high profile."

Montanans have a long tradition of helping those who are less fortunate and Montana broadcast stations exemplify this effort. KDBM-AM in Dillon, MT, collected 600 coats for area students in 2001 through its annual Coats for Kids drive. With collection boxes placed throughout Dillon and in neighboring Twin Bridges, the station encouraged its listeners to drop off coats, gloves, hats, and anything else to help keep local children warm. The coats were then distributed by school teachers to students and by the local Women's Resource Center, the Pioneer Youth Home and the food pantry.

I am proud of my local Montana stations. The United States system of free, over-the-air local broadcasting is the envy of the world and these stations show why. To them I offer my sincere congratulations.●

#### TRIBUTE TO COL. GERARD W. SCHWARTZ

● Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and pay tribute to Col. Gerard W. Schwartz, former Chief of Staff

of the Army Review Board Agency, who will retire on October 1. Colonel Schwartz's career spans three decades in which he distinguished himself as an outstanding soldier and leader.

A Utah native, Colonel Schwartz graduated from Weber State College and began his career in the Army as an enlisted soldier. Working his way up through the ranks, he earned his commission as a lieutenant of the Ordnance Corps through Officer Candidate School. During his career, he served in positions of increasingly greater responsibility, from battalion level through the Secretary of the Army. He has successfully trained and led America's soldiers at home and overseas.

Colonel Schwartz served in the Army during our operations in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq and Afghanistan. His contributions during this period contributed immeasurably to the successes achieved by our forces and will have a lasting effect on the Army in the years to come. Most recently, he served the Secretary of the Army as the Director of the Military Review Board that administers a number of boards available to current and former members of the Army. He made sure that each board was administered with justice, equity and compassion as expected by the Congress. His character, mature judgment, wisdom, and amiable demeanor have earned him the respect and confidence of his subordinates, fellow officers and the General Officers he served with during his illustrious career.

Throughout his career, Col. Gerard Schwartz has demonstrated his profound commitment to our nation, his selfless service to the Army, a deep concern for soldiers and their families, and a relentless commitment to excellence. Colonel Schwartz is a consummate professional whose performance, in over three decades of service, has exemplified the courage, competency, and integrity that our nation expects from its Army officers.

I ask my Colleagues to join me in thanking Colonel Schwartz for his honorable service to the people and the U.S. Army. We wish the Colonel and his family Godspeed and all the best in the future.●

#### CONGRATULATIONS ODYSSEY OF THE MIND FROM YARDLEY, PA

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a very bright and focused group of students: the William Penn Middle School Odyssey of the Mind Team from Yardley, PA. This team of seven children has returned from competition boasting first place out of nearly 700 teams from across the country and around the world. Their perfect score reflects their top performance in all categories of competition, and their exhibition of exceptional creativity has earned them the Ranatra Fusca Award for which the team's name will be placed on a trophy at the Smithsonian Institute.

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving program for children of all ages, from kindergarten through college. Through regional, State, country, and international competition, participant groups spend the better part of a year working on a solution to one of five problems as devised by the program. Contestants compete with students of similar age and must meet a number of criteria which include: limiting expenses to a strict budget, building mechanical creations to accomplish specific tasks, writing and staging an original performance, and earning points from the judges based on their solution to the problem they have chosen, style in solving the problem, and their ability to spontaneously answer a problem on the day of competition.

Recycling trash and other discarded materials to build a set and costumes for their performance and to engineer a vacuuming contraption and a water quality enhancer, the Yardley team focused on the issue of environmental preservation. With a theme based on "The Wizard of Oz," the characters of the team's sketch worked on cleaning up an imaginary environment found under a child's bed. The vision of Katie Barberides, Colleen Considine, Andrew Ettenger, Jamie Hale, Greg Plumb, Brianna Pollock, and Evan Verdini was awarded a perfect score from the judges on the three scored fronts. These seven critical thinkers clinched first place at the World Finals in their division, participants under 15 years of age.

I invite my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating these young intellectuals on their enthusiasm for creative learning and the hard work they put into this problem-solving program. They represent the American spirit of ingenuity and should be very proud of their individual and team accomplishments. I wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors, and I hope they continue to enjoy learning skills through other innovative opportunities.●

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of last year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred August 23, 1993 in Brooklyn, NY. An Irish Gay and Lesbian Organization leader was stabbed. The assailant, a minor, yelled an anti-gay slur during the incident.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe