

on the occasion of the 200th Habitat home constructed in South Dakota since 1990. I believe I speak for all South Dakotans when I say that their services have been invaluable to many families in our State.

The lack of affordable housing for the lowest income households is a serious problem across the country. According to the 2003 State of the Nation's Housing report issued by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, three in 10 U.S. households have housing affordability problems. More than 14 million households spend more than half of their income for housing, and 75 percent of them are in the bottom 20 percent of the population by income.

Having to pay a disproportionate share of income for housing frequently leads to other problems and tensions for many families. Too often, the available housing is substandard, and overcrowded. Many of these families live on the edge, financially, and live in fear of eviction or foreclosure. Families may have to sacrifice spending for other basics, including food and utilities. Children in these families also tend to pay a price. They suffer when their parents have to work two or more jobs, or odd hours, sacrificing family time. Unstable housing arrangements and frequent moves can also interfere with a child's ability to succeed in school.

Habitat for Humanity recognizes that when communities come together, they can help solve this problem, one family at a time. Their accomplishments would not be possible without the thousands of volunteers who help support a struggling family, and provide them with the opportunity to turn a Habitat house into their very own home. Volunteers from across South Dakota have donated thousands of hours of hard labor to give 200 families a shot at the American dream.

I would like to take a moment to thank Pat Helgeland, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity in South Dakota, and everyone associated with South Dakota's affiliates for their solid commitment and hard work. They are truly making an important difference in the lives of their partner families.

Every time I visit with Habitat volunteers, I am impressed by their energy and spirit as they raise funds, select a site, select a partner family, and build the house. I was pleased to sponsor a house in Brookings, SD, that will now become a home for a mother and her three children.

I am also encouraged to know that Habitat for Humanity is engaged in a similar effort at the international level. From Thailand to Zimbabwe to Peru, its services provide exciting opportunities for home ownership. We should be proud, for example, that HFHI played a key role in providing tools and materials needed to rebuild or repair family homes damaged by years of conflict in Afghanistan.

So today I wish to extend my congratulations and thanks to all those

who helped build 200 new houses in South Dakota, as well as those who are involved in bringing this important model to communities across the globe. Their efforts are truly inspirational.

#### REMEMBERING PAUL WELLSTONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart. It was one year ago on October 25 that I lost my friend, and this body lost a great Senator. We all have our own memories of Paul Wellstone.

We remember the passion of his beliefs. He was an uncompromising idealist who stuck to his principles and never wavered. When he fought for an issue like mental health parity, you knew he would never give up.

We remember Paul Wellstone for his bravery, because even when his cause was unpopular, he followed his heart. He used to say, "We should never separate the lives we live from the words we speak," and he followed that path.

We remember what an inspiring speaker Paul could be. The first time I heard him was in the Capitol Rotunda at a ceremony for new Senators, and I was immediately impressed. Later, he came to Las Vegas and spoke to a convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have never seen a group so fired up.

We remember his physical strength and stamina, even in the last year of his life when he was in so much pain. He worked out at the Capitol Police gym, and he still holds the record there for doing the most chin-ups.

We remember Paul for his unassuming nature. He waged his first campaign in an old green school bus. There is no telling how many mechanics across the State of Minnesota worked on that vehicle to keep it running.

We remember Paul Wellstone for all these reasons. Most of all, we will always remember how easily he made friends and how deeply he touched people.

In this Chamber he had good friends on both sides of the aisle. But Paul Wellstone also befriended working people, like the janitors who cleaned his Senate office. One night, Paul waited until midnight so he could meet them in person and tell them thanks. And in Minnesota, the affection for Paul Wellstone cut across all segments of the population.

A few days before he lost his life, Paul was riding around the State with Peg McGlinch, a member of my staff who is a Minnesota native, and her father. They were running behind schedule, as is often the case on those hectic campaign trips, but when they spotted some union workers on a picket line, there was no question that they would stop and offer support. As Paul hopped out of the nondescript car, people seemed shocked to see him, until one woman ran over, gave him a big hug, and declared, "You're my hero."

Paul Wellstone was a hero to a lot of people. I went to Minnesota after his

death, and I was amazed at the spontaneous memorial that sprang up all around his campaign headquarters. I saw thousands of flowers and candles. I read handwritten notes thanking Paul for work he had done to help people, and looked at pictures of him with people whose lives he had affected.

And one thing I will never forget was a crayon drawing of a train chugging up into the sky, with a child's simple scrawl that read, "Paul Wellstone, the Little Engine that Could."

Paul Wellstone clearly had a special relationship with the people of Minnesota. His relationship with his beloved wife, Sheila, was also extraordinary. And their lovely daughter Marcia, who also perished in the tragic accident, was so much like both of them. She was an amalgam of all their best qualities.

Today, as we remember how much Paul Wellstone meant to so many people, our hearts go out to his family—his sons Mark and David, his grandchildren, and other family members. Also to the families of Paul's staff members who were lost with him: Mary McEvoy, Will McLaughlin, and Tom Lopic.

I said my heart was heavy today, and that is true. Paul Wellstone was my friend and I miss him. But I also feel grateful today that I had the opportunity to know this remarkable man, and I am grateful for my memories of him, which will never die.

#### SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH EQUITABLE TREATMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, in memory of the anniversary over the weekend of the death of our friend Paul Wellstone, I rise to reiterate my support for the mental health parity legislation on which he worked tirelessly. I am a proud original cosponsor of S. 486. The Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2003, which was reintroduced this year by Senators DOMENICI and KENNEDY in honor of Senator Paul Wellstone. This important legislation will provide people with a mental illness more access to treatment.

Specifically, S. 846 prohibits a group health plan that offers mental health benefits from placing discriminatory caps, access limitations, financial requirements or other restrictions on treatment that are different from other medical and surgical benefits. In other words, S. 486 treats physical and mental health equally. This bill is modeled after the mental health benefits provided through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, but provides a special exemption for small employers from such requirements.

I have long advocated on behalf of our Nation's rural health care delivery system and mental health parity is a key step to increasing access to mental health services in rural areas. The Domenici-Kennedy bill is crucial to