

recklessly moving forward may result in disastrous economic repercussions, with little or no benefit to the environment.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business be set aside and amendment No. 3358 be called up.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3043, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin-Specter amendment No. 3325, in the nature of a substitute.

Vitter amendment No. 3328 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide a limitation on funds with respect to preventing the importation by individuals of prescription drugs from Canada.

Dorgan amendment No. 3335 (to amendment No. 3325), to increase funding for the State Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Thune amendment No. 3333 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide additional funding for the telehealth activities of the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Dorgan amendment No. 3345 (to amendment No. 3325), to require that the Secretary of Labor report to Congress regarding jobs lost and created as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Menendez amendment No. 3347 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide funding for the activities under the Patient Navigator Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005.

Ensign amendment No. 3342 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to administer Society Security benefit payments under a totalization agreement with Mexico.

Ensign amendment No. 3352 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to process claims based on illegal work for purposes of receiving Social Security benefits.

Lautenberg-Snowe amendment No. 3350 (to amendment No. 3325), to prohibit the use of funds to provide abstinence education that includes information that is medically inaccurate.

Roberts amendment No. 3365 (to amendment No. 3325), to fund the small business Child Care Grant Program.

Reed amendment No. 3360 (to amendment No. 3325), to provide funding for the trauma

and emergency medical services programs administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Allard amendment No. 3369 (to amendment No. 3325), to reduce the total amount appropriated to any program that is rated ineffective by the Office of Management and Budget through the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized to please state his unanimous consent request again.

AMENDMENT NO. 3358 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3325

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business be set aside and that amendment No. 3358 on this bill be called up.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. COBURN] proposes an amendment numbered 3358 to amendment No. 3325.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require Congress to provide health care for all children in the U.S. before funding special interest pork projects)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

Sec. _____. (a) This section may be cited as the "Children's Health Care First Act of 2007".

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any congressionally directed spending item, as defined by Sec. 521 of Public Law 110-81, until the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services certifies that all children in the U.S. under the age of 18 years are insured by a private or public health insurance plan.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, this amendment, for myself and my colleague Senator BURR, is about the topic of the Children's Health Care First Act of 2007.

There has been a lot of debate, a lot of politics on children's health care. The House failed to override what I think was a poor solution to take care of children in this country by expanding children's health care through the SCHIP program and spending \$4,000 to get \$2,300 worth of coverage for our kids.

What we do know is we do have problems with health care. We need to be debating health care. We need to figure out how we are going to do this. Myself and Senator BURR have an amendment that solves the health care problem, which has not been considered yet but which we are soliciting and for which we have received a number of cosponsors. This amendment, however, redirects us toward priorities. It is something we need to talk about. It is something the Senate doesn't talk about.

We had numerous quotes in this body about how important it is to make sure

kids in this country have access to care. What we do know—and I used the number \$2,300 because that is the high end if we were to buy every kid in this country a health insurance policy. It is probably more like \$1,700. So if you take the \$2,300 that we have as a high-end number to buy kids health insurance, and not put them in something that has a Medicaid stamp or a SCHIP stamp on their forehead but real health insurance, and you look at the earmarks in this bill, which are \$398 million, you could, in fact, buy insurance for 173,000 kids, in this bill alone. So 173,000 children could be covered for health care from the earmarks alone in this bill.

Now, this amendment is real simple. If everybody in this body claims they want to take care of kids and their health care, they ought to be willing to give up their earmarks to cover kids. So what this bill says is, let's have no earmarks, no directed spending until such time as we have covered the kids in this country. We put kids ahead of us. We put kids ahead of our political interests. We put children's health care ahead of the politics and the consequential action of using politics in terms of earmark spending.

Now, \$400 million is a lot of money, and \$400 million is out of the priorities of what this country ought to be doing that are in this bill that is Member-directed spending. This amendment simply says: We don't direct any of that money—none of it, zero, not one earmark—until we have cared for the kids, until we are caring for the kids. So in essence, what we are doing by accepting this amendment is saying, instead of rhetoric, we are going to say kids count. We are going to start putting the priorities back. If access to care for children is important, is it less important than your favorite earmark?

I know if you total up certain of the earmarks of one certain State which has \$72 million worth of earmarks, you have enough to cover all the uninsured kids in that State—all the uninsured kids in that State from the earmarks in this bill. So what are our priorities? Are our priorities children? Are our priorities the health care of kids?

This amendment is going to be a fun vote because what it is going to tell your constituency is: Kids aren't important if you vote to keep your earmarks, but if you say I am willing to abate on the earmarks, and I am going to do what is right. This amendment says none of this directed spending goes until the Secretary of HHS certifies that kids under 18 in this country have access and have care. We have had months of debate about the children's SCHIP. We are going to have more because another bill is coming. But it seems to me the American public might want to ask: Why are you earmarking special money for special projects when you have a chance to make sure it will go toward children and solving the problem?

So this is going to be a tough vote: kids versus my political career, kids