

there are a few school districts in the State of Colorado and other places that are highly dependent upon this particular piece of legislation.

So I am here this evening to thank my colleagues for being sensitive to these public land-bound counties that simply do not have fee land to finance their essential needs—roads, bridges, schools—and they cannot ask the other taxpayers to assume their burden outside the counties within the State.

My State anticipated the difficulty of reauthorizing and created some contingency, but still it would not have funded the full school program. So tonight we have acted and sent a very clear message to these counties, to these schools that we take educating the young people of these school districts as a high priority, that we see the vitality of these communities as extremely important.

So tonight, in section 601, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Program, we have reauthorized Craig-Wyden. I thank my colleagues for allowing that to happen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. President. I just have a few short remarks.

IMPROVED ADOPTION INCENTIVES AND RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT ACT OF 2008

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Montana, Senator BAUCUS, for the terrific work he did when I talked to him on the Senate floor in July and he made a point of speeding up and shepherding through the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act of 2008. It was his leadership that made such a difference. I am proud to be a cosponsor of that bill, which was introduced by Senator GRASSLEY in May and passed the Finance Committee unanimously earlier this month.

Since its enactment in 1998, the Adoption Incentives Program has helped nearly 450,000 children in all 50 States and the District of Columbia move from foster care to permanent homes. In my State of Ohio, more than 18,000 adoptions have been finalized through this program. It has helped incredible people such as Joe and Becky Puckett of Conover, OH. After raising children of their own, the Pucketts adopted four children with special needs out of the foster care system. Without reauthorization, this important program would have expired on September 30. Thankfully, this bill passed last night by unanimous consent.

I commend the senior Senator from Montana and others for their tireless support and the hard work they have done on behalf of adopted children and families who adopt in our great country. I thank the Senator from Montana.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

PAUL WELLSTONE AND PETE DOMENICI MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, something happened on the floor of the Senate moments ago which was a long time in the making. We passed a bill, the mental health parity bill, that has been debated in this Chamber for 10 years or more.

The reason I come to the floor today, after its passage, is to note one of the Members of the Senate who was an inspiration for this bill. His name was Paul Wellstone. Six years ago, he died in a plane crash, running for election in the State of Minnesota. He used to sit in the back row over here and at a corner desk. He had an especially long cord for his microphone, and he used to wander all up and down the aisle talking. It was a sight to behold—a short, little fellow, and because of his passion for college wrestling, his back was all beat up and he kind of hobbled around. But he had a heart of gold, and he was one of these people you loved to be serving with because he brought out the best in you.

The last time I ever saw him was here in the well of the Senate on the night of the vote authorizing the war in Iraq. He was one of 23 of us who voted against it.

I knew he was going home to Minnesota to face a tough election, and I said to him: I hope this doesn't cost you the election, Paul.

He said: It is all right if it does. This is what I believe. This is what Minnesota expects of me. And whatever happens, I am all right.

That was the last conversation I had with him. Within days, he died in a plane crash.

When we returned after a memorial service and a lot of heartfelt expressions of sympathy for him and his wife Sheila, who died, as well as members of their staff, there was always a question about, what is a fitting tribute to Paul Wellstone for a great, inspiring legislative career? Those of us who knew him knew the last thing in the world he would ever want is a statue or a bridge named after him or a post office—just not the kind of thing that would mean anything to Paul. But this bill, the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction

Equity Act of 2008, is the tribute Paul Wellstone would have wanted.

I thank Senator PETE DOMENICI, who was his partner in this effort for this mental health parity bill, for agreeing to allow Paul Wellstone's name to be the lead name on this legislation. It will be the Wellstone-Domenici bill for all of us, and both of them deserve praise for all the work they did. But when PETE DOMENICI said: Put his name first, it meant a lot to many of us. This was the fitting tribute we were hoping for Paul Wellstone.

What does it mean? It means for Paul Wellstone's family and the families of millions of Americans that mental health will now be treated differently in their health insurance plan. For the longest time, we have languished in ignorance over mental health. We have fed our prejudices instead of learning about this illness. We have treated it not as an illness but a curse, and we have basically said that we officially give up on finding cures for mental illness.

That is just plain wrong on every count. Mental illness is an illness. For the vast majority of Americans, it is a curable illness. What those suffering from mental illness need is professional assistance and the right medication, and many of them will lead absolutely normal, happy, productive lives. But the health insurance companies refused to cover mental illness—most of them—so many people with family members who were suffering from mental illness had no place to turn, and many times they could not afford the medications, and many times their lives were compromised as a result.

Paul Wellstone and PETE DOMENICI said a long time ago that is just unfair and America is a better place. Thanks to their hard work and inspiration, thanks to the hard work of TEDDY KENNEDY, who should have been here today voting for it—his name belongs in this pantheon as well when it comes to mental health parity—TOM HARKIN, and MAX BAUCUS, who put this in this package to make sure it passed—I just want to say it is a great day for America, a great day for us to give so many millions of Americans who struggle with mental illness or have a member of their family struggling with mental illness a fighting chance. That is what this gives them: a fighting chance that their health insurance policies will cover this, for the first time in many instances. It is long overdue, and this tribute to Paul Wellstone is long overdue. But 6 years after he left this Chamber, 6 years after he died, we finally gave the right tribute to a great man who served us so well.

Mr. President, today is an important day for the U.S. Senate and the Nation.

With the passage of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, the Senate not only acknowledges the struggle for civil rights in our country, but also the fight of one man never neglected that struggle.

In 1992, the late Senator Paul Wellstone worked with Senator PETE DOMENICI to introduce the Mental Health Parity Act to correct the unfair burden placed on American families living with mental illness without access to mental health services.

For his entire public service career, our friend Paul fought valiantly for equal rights for all, regardless of their race, religion, socioeconomic status, or health status. He fought for parity as he fought for all civil rights—he fought to end discrimination against people with mental illness and addiction in insurance coverage.

For over a decade, the Wellstone name has been synonymous with the Democratic effort to push mental health parity.

Finally, with the passage of mental health parity legislation, we are assuring millions of Americans that mental illness deserves equal treatment as physical illness.

But we also honor our dear friend and his lifelong commitment to seeing parity enacted.

I only wish that Paul Wellstone could have lived to see this day.

Although Paul himself could not be here, his memory lives on in his two sons, David and Mark.

Paul would be proud of his sons and the great work of Wellstone Action, a national center for training and leadership development for the progressive movement with a mission to honor the legacy of Paul and Sheila Wellstone by continuing their great work.

And Paul would be proud of all of us for moving this important bill forward.

As Paul said, "Politics isn't about big money or power games; it's about the improvement of people's lives."

I am pleased to support this bill, in honor of Paul and Sheila, and the millions of people living with mental illness whose lives will hopefully be improved by its enactment.

I ask unanimous consent to have David Wellstone's written comments printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD IN SUPPORT OF THE PASSAGE OF THE PAUL WELLSTONE AND PETE DOMENICI MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2008

I am pleased to speak in support of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. This legislation is critically important to the future of health care, and it is also very close to my heart. During his time in the Senate, my father never stopped fighting for fairness in coverage and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders. My family and I are grateful for the effort in the Senate and the House to pay tribute to my father's legacy by naming the bill after him and his close colleague, Sen. Pete Domenici.

My brother and I founded Wellstone Action to carry on my father's work, and through this organization, thousands of people are trained each year to run for office and to develop grassroots skills in organizing and leadership. But nothing represents my fa-

ther's passion and commitment more than his work to pass legislation that would end the discrimination against those with mental illness and substance use disorders. This legislation is a major achievement and will do so much to end that discrimination.

For some time, I have been coming to Washington to speak on behalf of this legislation, but the fight for parity has a long history with many milestones: the 1996 federal law; the 1999 Executive Order that gave federal employees mental health and addiction parity benefits; the many successes at the state level to strengthen their parity laws; the times that Congress came very close to passing the expansion of the federal law; and the endorsement by President Bush in 2002. For my father, these milestones were very personal. His dedication stemmed from his personal observations of the terrible conditions in psychiatric institutions when his brother was hospitalized in the 1950s. These conditions, and the eventual catastrophic financial toll that my grandparents had to bear, inspired my father to do everything he could to make things right for those in similar circumstances.

The legislation that my father and Sen. Domenici passed in 1996 was groundbreaking and important, for it established in law an important first principle of parity: that those with mental illness should not be discriminated against in insurance coverage. But my father knew that it was not enough, and that is why this legislation is so necessary. It is the critically important next step toward ending the persistent discrimination against people who suffer from mental illness and addiction.

In the Senate, the tireless leadership of Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Pete Domenici on this effort has been extraordinary, especially with their efforts to bring together the coalition of business and advocates to work to get this bill completed. They and the Senate Leadership, especially Senator Harry Reid and Senator Dick Durbin, should be proud of their efforts to make this legislation one that will strongly protect the needs of millions of Americans who have mental illness and substance use disorders. In the Senate, the efforts by Senator Chris Dodd, Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Max Baucus, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Senator Amy Klobuchar also did so much to bring this bill to final passage. And, as I know well, nothing is accomplished without the unflagging commitment of hundreds of dedicated staff and advocates who have worked so hard to right the wrong of discrimination that has existed for so long in our country. I also want to extend my deep gratitude to former First Lady Rosalynn Carter for her many years of leadership on this issue and many other problems related to mental illness. She and my father worked closely together on parity for many years, and he was always grateful for her support and leadership.

We know that mental illness is a real, painful, and sometimes fatal disease. It is also a treatable disease. My father used to say that the gap between what we know and what we do is lethal. Available medications and psychological treatments, alone or in combination, can help most people who suffer from mental illness and addiction. But without adequate treatment, these illnesses can continue or worsen in severity. Suicide is the third leading cause of death of young people in the U.S. Each year, 32,000 Americans take their lives, hundreds of thousands attempt to do so, and in 90 percent of these situations, the cause is untreated mental illness. This legislation will save lives. It will also go a long way toward ending the stigma that is behind the discrimination.

People have asked me why I am so involved in this issue. My first response is,

"Because of my father, of course". I loved him and I miss him, and I have learned that many others here in Washington and throughout the country miss him too, especially his courage and his compassion. He fought hard for those who had no voice, and he had a strong personal commitment to helping those with mental illness and addiction. After he died, Congressional members honored him and my family by promising to name the parity bill after him, and this meant a great deal to my family. But I also knew the kind of man my father was, and the kind of parity bill he would have wanted finally passed into law, and I wanted to help ensure that the final bill was one worthy of his name. The safeguards for patients that have been included in this final bill, such as protections of stronger state laws, out of network benefits, oversight of diagnosis coverage, and transparency of medical necessity, are essential to a strong law. This Congress can be remembered as the one that had the courage and leadership to pass a strong parity bill, one where everyone's voices had a chance to be heard.

I, along with millions of Americans, look forward to the day when people with mental illness and substance use disorder receive decent, humane, and timely care. The passage of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 brings us closer to this day.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is a hard week around here because we are being asked to consider something that is historic. This question of bailing out financial institutions because of a struggling economy has called into question a lot of very basics about the way we govern this Nation.

I think most people understand the economy is in trouble. For working families, they have known it a long time. They have been falling behind for 8 years. Their incomes do not keep up with the cost of living. The expenses they face grow dramatically, whether we are talking about mortgage payments, utility bills, groceries or gasoline or health care costs. They know the economy is weak. No matter how hard they work, they cannot keep up with it. They are the ones who have been wondering when Congress was going to understand this and do something about it.

It took a tragedy in another sector of the economy for Congress to act, and that tragedy is in the credit institutions. You see, what happened to the credit institutions in America was totally avoidable. What happened was we created a parallel credit operation, parallel to the banks and other regulated institutions—investment banks and other Wall Street entities—which had basically no rules. They played by their own rules. They were not regulated. There was no Government oversight, very little transparency. They loaned money in ways and with terms that were not publicly disclosed on a regular basis.

The attitude for the longest time around Washington was: Keep your hands off of them. These are the dynamics of capitalism. Give them a chance.