

In fact, our legislation has language specifically prohibiting Medicaid and CHIP coverage for illegal immigrants. I could take it out of the bill and read it to you, but that would be unnecessary.

There is no acceptable reason for this 5-year waiting period to remain in place. All lawfully present children should have timely access to health care in the United States. We are doing our best to achieve that and will achieve that through this bill. Five years later, if we kept on that requirement, is a lifetime for young children who may have bad teeth or early cases of cancer or any other life-threatening illness or disability, to make them wait 5 years because we don't think maybe they measure up. They measure up. They are kids. They are children. That is what we are fighting for.

Those who oppose removing this arbitrary waiting period will come to the floor and offer all sorts of unrelated arguments about immigration. This is not about immigration. It is about health care for kids who need it, something that a lot of us have been fighting for since the mid-1990s. These arguments are nothing more than a smokescreen. The bottom line is that both U.S. citizen children and children in this country legally should have timely access to health care, period. This legislation covers both those objectives.

In closing, I hope we will have the same bipartisan commitment in passing this legislation as we did in 2007. Those who look upon one amendment, which is highly moral, highly deserved and entirely right, will pass it with the same margins we did in 2007. Four million children are waiting for us to finish the task at hand.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

SPADE-READY PROJECTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we have some things that are going to happen this year that are very significant. In the committee I chaired when the Republicans were in the majority—it is now chaired by Senator BOXER—we have two major pieces of legislation coming up.

We have the Transportation reauthorization bill and we have the Water Resources Development Act reauthorization bill. In the case of the Transportation reauthorization bill, we had a good reauthorization in 2005. It is scheduled to be reauthorized again, and I would suggest we use that as somewhat of a pattern of what we are going

to plan to go in this coming year, in 2009.

In spite of all of the things you are hearing about the inauguration and about the various confirmations, business is going to continue. The WRDA bill, the Water Resources Development Act, is something that should be done on an annual basis or every other year. Yet the last time we passed it was 7 whole years ago. We had a lot of making up to do. There is not one State represented on this floor that is not way behind in some of the programs that are dealt with in the Water Resources Development Act.

The reason I mention this at this time is we will be dealing with some type of a stimulus bill. When they talk about \$800 or so billion, I already, in my previous remarks, talked about how big \$700 or \$800 billion is to individual families in America.

We will be dealing with this, and I regret that of the \$800 billion, only \$30 billion has to do with highway construction. We have a great need in this country for bridge construction, highway construction, and, hopefully—Senator BOXER and I both cosigned a letter to try to get a much larger percentage of whatever amount we end up authorizing in a stimulus bill.

So I would hope—and I would ask each Member to look at their own States, as I have done in my State of Oklahoma—Senators look at State projects that are out there that we call spade-ready: they have had their environmental impact statement, they have had their AS statements, and they are ready to go. They would employ people immediately. For those like me who are conservative, who do not believe the ingredients in this stimulus package, or at least do not believe what they are looking at in the House is going to really stimulate very much, one thing we do know is that there is nothing that puts people back to work faster than to get something that has already passed all of the environmental prerequisites and is ready for construction to start. Then, after it is over, you have something. You have bridges that are rebuilt. You have roads that are rebuilt.

So what I would encourage the Senate to try to do is get as much as we can out of the stimulus package that actually does provide jobs and provides things that otherwise we would have to do in the reauthorization bill.

There is no way in the world we are going to take care of the real need we have with infrastructure in America unless we get a very large amount in the front end of the stimulus bill.

CELEBRATING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to join with the millions of Asian Americans around the country in celebration of Chinese New Year. Last year, I was pleased to introduce a resolution honoring the historical and cul-

tural significance of this holiday, and today, I am equally delighted to recognize all those welcoming in the Year of the Ox.

The festivities surrounding the Chinese New Year are steeped in rich cultural tradition. The 15-day-long celebrations marks one of the most important times for Chinese Americans and Asian Americans from many backgrounds and ethnicities to gather together with family and friends. Mouth-watering aromas will fill their homes as families sit down to New Year's Eve meals, and children will eagerly await receiving lucky red money envelopes. Many will watch or participate in vibrantly colored dragon dances, a symbol of prosperity and good fortune.

In our State of Nevada, the festivities held in Las Vegas, in particular, draw thousands of visitors, where many of the city's hotels feature spectacular decorations, dragon dances, and restaurants serving traditional dishes. And all across our great State, families will flock to community festivals featuring dances, crafts, food, and fireworks—the sights, sounds, and smells that make Chinese New Year such a jubilant celebration.

This year marks the 4706th year in the Chinese calendar, based on the lunar cycles. As it unfolds, I hope those observing Chinese New Year will enjoy this special time to honor traditions, spend time with their families, and eagerly anticipate what blessings the Year of the Ox may bring. To the thousands of Chinese American Nevadans and many others celebrating today, I send my best wishes for a joyous celebration and a prosperous New Year.

TRIBUTE TO DR. HAROLD C. RELYEA

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on January 30, 2009, after more than 37 years of service at the Library of Congress, Dr. Harold C. Relyea will retire as a specialist in American National Government at the Congressional Research Service, CRS. His service and devotion to the U.S. Congress will be greatly missed.

President Thomas Jefferson once observed that “information is the currency of democracy.” He also noted that “whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.” Thanks to the fine work of Dr. Relyea and his colleagues at the Congressional Research Service, the people's representatives in Congress are well-informed—and, thus, well-armed—to preserve and defend the ideals, structure, and balance of our government as envisioned by our Founding Fathers.

As Senators and staff come and go, the best CRS specialists become repositories of institutional knowledge, deep wells of experience who offer perspective and thoughtful analysis. Such specialists tend to take a long view on issues, having seen issues and trends emerge and reemerge in varying forms.