

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, earlier this evening, only an hour or so ago, Senator UDALL from New Mexico led a discussion with Senator BURRIS and Senator WHITEHOUSE and others. I was there part of that time, with Senator CANTWELL involved from the Chair. It was extolling the importance of the public option, that it makes such a difference in terms of keeping the insurance industry honest, keeping costs down, and providing extra choice, so if people want to choose private insurance, they can; if they want to choose the public option, they can.

The insurance industry, in its wild claims only 2 days ago in a manufactured report that an accounting firm did that was clearly incomplete and hastily done, claimed huge insurance company increases based on our legislation. The fact is, they have already doubled insurance rates in less than a decade, in only 7 or 8 years. That is as good an argument for the public option as we can find.

In 5 minutes or so, I would like to speak to the Senate. I have come to this floor, night after night, reading letters from constituents I have, from Trumbull County near Youngstown, near Summit County, the Akron area, from Cuyahoga County. These all happen to be, in this case, from northeast Ohio, from near Dayton or Cincinnati or Wilmington or Chillicothe.

What I found in letters I am getting from my constituents, as is the Presiding Officer, I think, when he gets letters from Richmond or the Washington suburbs or from western Virginia, is that most of this mail I get comes from people who had good insurance policies, they thought, until they got really sick, and then their insurance policies would be canceled or they would spend so much of their time fighting insurance companies just to get payment, to get payment for something they thought they were covered for. I would like to share a couple of these letters.

Beverly and Dennis from Trumbull County write:

My husband is 62 . . . and worked for the same factory for 42 years . . . last year the factory shut down and his severance package was \$8,500 before taxes and 3 months paid insurance.

Forty-two years, \$8,500 severance, 3 months paid insurance.

After the insurance ran out, we picked up COBRA, which will be up this December right before Christmas. We've talked to different private insurance companies, but without anything really wrong with my health, they say my minor medical condition diagnosed 30 years ago was a preexisting condition. The best plan offered, just for me, was \$1,000 a month with a \$10,000 deductible.

A preexisting condition from 30 years before.

We have always been proud of our accomplishments over the 43 years of our marriage. I don't want to lose everything we have worked so hard for if something happens to us medically.

I wish those opposed to reform—

I wish my colleagues would listen to this.

I wish those opposed to reform would have to worry about the next meal, the next bill, the next doctor's appointment, or what would happen to them if they got sick.

We thought things would be smooth sailing after we got to our age, but we're afraid our boat is sinking and we are drowning.

Forty-two years in the same plant, married for 43 years, played by the rules, seemed to do everything right. This is what is happening to these people in their early sixties.

As many of these letters indicate, a lot of these letters come from people who are 59 or 63 or 61 or 64, just holding on until they can get Medicare because they know Medicare, like the public option, will never drop them for preexisting conditions, will not discriminate against them because of geography or age or disability, will not cut them out of their plan, whether it is the public option or whether it is Medicare, for all kinds of reasons the way private insurance does.

Angela from Cuyahoga County, Cleveland area:

As a registered nurse I have seen too many cases where the lack of insurance prohibits needed care. I have experienced first-hand what it means to have insurance but be afraid to use it. My husband has worked for the same employer for more than 10 years, but both he and I are afraid to use his insurance for fear that too many medical bills will increase the cost of our plan. In the past 2 years, he has received memos stating that to keep medical bills down we should seek medical visits only when necessary.

As a strong believer in preventive care, I feel discouraged to go for my yearly physical and my husband has not had a physical in 5 years.

This is from a nurse.

Thank goodness we are reasonably healthy. I encourage you to keep pushing for a public option—I'd be one of the first to sign up.

Think about that, her husband got a note from his employer saying: Please don't go to the doctor unless you absolutely have to. She is a nurse. She hasn't had a physical for a year. She hasn't had her yearly physical. Her husband hasn't had a physical in 5 years. They know they should get a physical. They are afraid of what it would cost both them and the employer to do that. Again, they are the victims of the health care system that too often skimps on preventive care, too often denies people coverage for rea-

sons it should not, too often simply is a burden to so many of the people who have insurance.

I will close with a letter that is about health care but also about something this Senate needs to vote on quickly; that is, unemployment insurance. This is Mark from Franklin County, central Ohio. He writes:

I need my health insurance badly since I have had cancer twice. The only way I could previously afford insurance was through my employer. But my company was recently bought out and I was laid off.

Because of my preexisting condition, I can't afford the price of private insurance. In addition to my health and job issues, I have only one more extension on unemployment.

I really don't know what to do if I can't afford insurance. If I could find a way to receive insurance or get a job with insurance, I could be here for my little girls who I care for and who look up to me for the world.

One person on the other side of the aisle, one Republican, stood up and objected. We were trying to pass the same unemployment insurance extension as they did in the House of Representatives. I know every Democrat is for extending unemployment, and I know most Republicans are probably for extending unemployment, but one Republican stood up and stopped us from doing that. That is so important because every day we fail to extend unemployment insurance, people are dropping off the unemployment insurance rolls and have to fend for themselves in ways that they don't know what to do.

It is not as if people don't want to work. The situation clearly is that people want to work, they are trying to find a job. In this economy, in my State as in many States around this country, people simply cannot find work, as hard as they are trying. We have an obligation to extend unemployment benefits. Not next month, not next year, but tomorrow when we come back here, I am hopeful my Republican friends across the aisle will not object to that extension of unemployment.

The last letter I will read is from Renee from Van Wert County, western Ohio, near the Indiana border. She writes:

I, along with 300 other workers, were locked out of our company last year after it closed down and moved to Mexico. We will be losing our benefits this month and it is urgent you get unemployment extension passed as soon as possible. It would help so much if we could get our benefits extended, at least through the cold winter months.

I'm looking everywhere for a job and hope there is something opens up by the spring and the economy will pick up.

Thank you for reading my story and making me feel like there is hope.

Renee, again, we will go to the floor tomorrow to try to extend unemployment benefits.

Renee points out, particularly with the winter months coming, people will have to choose, if they don't have unemployment extension, between food and heating their home and taking care of their kids and all the responsibilities people have.

Somebody like Renee, from Van Wert County—I know Van Wert County. I spent a lot of time there. I know about the shutdown of this plant that went to Mexico. There are 300 people who lost their jobs. It is not as if they don't want to work. They were working hard, showing up for work every day. They were productive workers. They did what was asked of them. They were taxpayers, were involved in Little League, involved in their community. Those 300 workers can't find work. It is not a question that there is a job out there for them; they were looking for work. That is why it is so important, as they look for work, for them to get some help from their government. This is not welfare, extending unemployment insurance. It is called insurance, unemployment insurance, because they pay into it. They ought to get some help from that unemployment fund.

It is clear from this mail that people want this legislation to pass. They know our health care bill will allow people who are happy with their insurance to stay in the insurance they have but will build consumer protections around those policies—no more pre-existing conditions, for instance, to deny care.

Second, this bill helps small business provide insurance as most small businesspeople do. They want to provide insurance for their employees.

Third, this bill will help those who do not have insurance. They can go into this insurance exchange and get insurance.

Fourth, this bill provides for a public option, so if they don't want to go to CIGNA or Wellpoint or United or one of the big health care companies, they can decide to sign up for the public option which will never throw them off, just as Medicare would never disqualify their coverage.

It is clear what we have to do in the next month. In my State alone, from Akron, to Ravenna, to Cleveland, to Garfield Heights, to Sylvania, to Cincinnati, 390 people in my State every day lose their insurance—390 people every single day lose their insurance. It is important that we move as quickly as we can in the next month or so.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

REMEMBERING SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

• Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a great leader, inspiring public servant and American icon, Senator Edward Moore Kennedy.

I do not need to stand here and talk about what the Kennedy legacy has meant and continues to mean to this country. It is, at this point, simply a part of the fabric of our country.

I do not need to recite the résumé of Edward Kennedy or extol his many accomplishments. His life's work speaks for itself. It will stand the test of time and, no doubt, become even more remarkable when viewed in hindsight.

I do not need to reiterate each of the noble causes Senator Kennedy fought for with passion and vigor. We know that his pursuit of dignity, opportunity and respect for every man and woman will benefit generations to come, and inspire so many more to carry on in the cause.

Yes, there is no doubt that Senator Edward Kennedy will be remembered far into the future and that history will treat him well, but I want to take some time today to talk about the people here and now that he leaves behind that may be the most telling about Ted Kennedy. In those moments and for those people, we got a chance to see something very special.

For some people it was very personal moments shared between family and friends—the opportunity to know him in a way others could only hope to glimpse.

And some were his arch enemies at the podium while also his dearest, most respected partners on causes behind closed doors.

Some became believers based on passion-filled political speeches delivered from his earliest of days in the spotlight to some of his last, spectacular moments right here on the Senate floor.

While others had their lives changed because he was brave enough to stand up for them when the cameras were not rolling and the majority was not on his side.

Ted Kennedy, the lion of the Senate, would roar about the need for better health care, improved public schools, and providing help to working families. He knew how to channel the emotion, the urgency and the helplessness he saw in the eyes and heard in the voices of those he was fighting for. And he didn't just beam it from the mountain tops—he worked on the solutions to these needs day in and day out with astute skill.

There is a Ted Kennedy that will be remembered in the history books and he will be great and strong and smart and good, but there is also a unique part of Ted Kennedy that will stay with many of us in our own special ways.

A politician. A public servant. A patriot. A prince of Camelot. A fighter. A negotiator. A liberal. A brother, husband, father, and friend.

The Lion sleeps. . . •

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in appreciation and admiration of Senator Ted Kennedy.

By the time I took my seat in the Senate, Ted had already held his for

nearly four decades. He had already established himself as one of the most influential members in this body's history. He had already introduced hundreds of bills that became laws and shaped thousands of others. He had already grown from youngest son to elder statesman and become an icon for millions of Americans.

Before I was ever elected, I respected Ted Kennedy. And after becoming his colleague, my respect grew. I was privileged to serve with him on the Judiciary Committee and to be ranking member when he chaired our Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security. We worked together closely, and that experience has made me a more effective Senator.

Ted Kennedy and I often held different principles, but we shared key convictions too. We agreed that our immigration laws needed reform. We recognized that judicial philosophy mattered. We believed that providing advice and consent on appointments to the Federal bench was not merely a right of Senators but one of our most solemn responsibilities.

Ted Kennedy understood the power of language. On the Senate floor, he used words of passion, calling his colleagues to embrace grand visions with great urgency. In bill negotiations, he used words with precision, understanding better than anyone how legislative language governs, and how to codify his convictions into the law of the land.

Senator Kennedy and I shared an interest in the history of this body, and a special pride in those who held our seats before us. In my case, I have long admired Sam Houston, who liberated the people of Texas, served as one of our first Senators, and raised his voice against secession. In Ted's case, he looked to the great Daniel Webster, who also stood for union, and for liberty.

Ted was drawn in particular to this quote by Webster:

Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also in our day and generation may not perform something worthy to be remembered.

All Americans can agree that Ted Kennedy's service in the U.S. Senate is something worthy to be remembered. Sandy and I continue to keep his wife Vickie in our prayers. And we offer our condolences to all who miss him most.

COMMENDING SENATOR MEL MARTINEZ

Mr. ENSIGN. Mel Martinez came to the United States from Cuba at the age of 15 as part of a humanitarian effort called Operation Peter Pan. We are all familiar with the character of Peter Pan he is careless and does not want to grow up. He is sometimes selfish and often conceited. It is ironic because Mel is the opposite of all of those attributes.

Mel Martinez arrived on our shores with no family and only the hope for a