

One of my staffers wrote down what he said. He said: "In all my years I have never seen such transparent dishonesty in the Congress."

He said "it is the biggest fraud that has been perpetrated in the history of our country," in his opinion.

Here we have a situation. I want to say I am going to pursue this in a little more detail. I am not going to go into great length tonight. But we have an amendment—Senator BENNET offered an amendment yesterday that said we wouldn't cut guaranteed benefits for Medicare. But the way this deal is being done is they are cutting payments to providers of Medicare.

We are already reaching, as Senator GRASSLEY said, a national crisis because by 2017 we will not be able to have a surplus in Medicare, we are going into default in Medicare. Where are we going to get the money?

Could we have efficiencies? Could we save some money in Medicare? Could we do some things to keep the program afloat? Perhaps. But if we do so, should not we use it, should not we use any efficiencies in savings that we could scrape together without damaging the commitment we have to our seniors—should not we use those savings to save Medicare that is going into default? I suggest that is a moral and legal commitment.

Mr. Eberle has written to me. He has paid for 40 years. He has not been able to draw anything out of it for the 40 years he has paid into it. Now he gets ready to draw, and we are telling him we are going to cut \$465 billion out of the Medicare payment. This is not a little bitty matter.

We seem to have amazing—we seem to have this dispute. One group, from the other side, says: Don't worry, we are not taking \$465 billion from Medicare, and we wouldn't cut Medicare, and we don't believe in cutting Medicare, and we don't want to hurt Medicare in any way. Our side over here is saying: But you are. According to the numbers that are pretty plain in this legislation, hospitals will have a \$135 billion reduction; hospices, you have \$8 billion for life-ending care that has been so helpful to so many families; nursing homes have a \$15 billion reduction; Medicare Advantage, \$120 billion; home health agencies that Senator GRASSLEY talked about, a \$42 billion reduction. Are we imagining this? Have we somehow formulated this? It all totals up to about \$465 billion.

This matter, I suggest, is not going away. Either we have reality here or not. I believe the facts will show that we are raiding Medicare, we are weakening that program when it is already known to all of us in this body that Medicare is not actuarially sound.

I remember when President Bush determined, in a failed effort, to try to alter Social Security in a way that he believed would put it on a more sound footing. He got no help at all. We had many of our Senators on both sides of the aisle saying: If you really want to

do something, as bad as Social Security is, Medicare is in a much worse financial fix. Why aren't you fixing it?

I remember a number of years ago, 10 or more, when Senator JUDD GREGG, then chairman of the Budget Committee, tried to come up with some legislation to contain a little of the growth in Medicare. Over 5 years, he had a plan that would contain the growth by \$10 billion. Not a single Democrat voted for the Gregg proposal. Now they accuse the Republicans of trying to damage Medicare when, in fact, every penny of the \$10 billion to be saved was going to be utilized to strengthen Medicare and try to keep it from going into default.

Now we are talking about taking \$465 billion out of Medicare and starting a new entitlement program, a new entitlement program at the time that this Nation has just passed or just incurred the largest single deficit in the history of the American Republic, \$1.4 trillion. Next year, we will be over \$1 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office—not me.

Is this smart? To have a program that people have depended on, that we have a moral compact to support—to support our seniors who paid into this plan for 40 years, now taking money out of that to create a new program? It is, in fact, in quite a number of areas, going to cost far more than is being suggested by the people who are promoting the legislation. We are going to dig into this and try to analyze it with more clarity, but the truth is, the numbers just do not add up. They will not work. We just ought not to be establishing a new entitlement program of massive proportions in a way where we really have little concept of how it is going to play out at a time of the largest deficits this Nation has ever had, deficits that, according to our own Congressional Budget Office, will double the national debt in 5 years and triple it to \$17 trillion in 10 years.

It is an unsustainable course, and one of the first things we have to do is watch how we spend our money. I talked to an individual today. He said: It is like your house is in serious need of repair. You really don't have the money to fix it. You finally decide you have to borrow money to fix the house, and instead you borrow money and add a wing onto the house.

We need to fix the house we have. We need to make sure we honor our commitment to Medicare recipients. They have already paid. That is the important point to remember. They have already paid their working life under a compact and a commitment that money would be in a fund that would be available. We ought not to be taking it away.

I urge colleagues to think about this. This is perhaps the most significant fatal flaw in the legislation. It just doesn't add up. There are others, but this one, to me, is the most dramatic, the most pernicious, the one that is most unwise. We simply need to slow

down, ask ourselves how we can make our health care system better, how we can do it without breaking the bank. Aren't there some things we can do to improve health care without a huge cost? Yes, there are. Let's start with every single one of those we can agree on. If we do that, I think we could make a lot of progress.

Who knows, if this economy turns around—and we all hope it will—we would be in a better footing to consider a new benefit in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

REMEMBERING MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES BEACH, JR.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am here today to remember the life of a dear friend, MG Charles Beach Jr., of Beattyville, KY. General Beach passed away this past Veterans Day, at the age of 90. He was a genuine servant to his country, his hometown, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. While General Beach will be greatly missed, the contributions that he has made to Kentucky, and the sacrifices that he has made for this Nation, will surely live on as his legacy.

Charles Beach knew from a young age that he wanted to serve his country, and in 1940, he graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, VA. Shortly after graduation, he completed his special training and began his active service. While in Italy in 1944, Charles became severely wounded during battle. He spent the next 8 months recovering in a military hospital and was awarded the Purple Heart.

Charles Beach joined the Army Reserves after he was released from active duty. After a short time in the Reserves, Beach was recommissioned into the U.S. Army, this time with the rank of major. In 1976, he was promoted to major general after becoming the 18th Commander of the 100th Division, where he commanded the Kentucky Army Reserve Training Division.

General Beach's contributions extended beyond his military service; he was an active member of his beloved hometown of Beattyville. The general served his community through many organizations including, as chairman of People Exchange Bank and Insurance, president of the Beattyville/Lee County Chamber of Commerce, president of September Place Retirement Village, and cofounder of a scholarship program to aid eastern Kentucky students wanting to pursue careers in medicine.

This scholarship has increased the number of doctors in eastern Kentucky.

For his service to the community, General Beach received several awards, including the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year and the Community Bankers of Kentucky Outstanding Community Banker of the Year awards. The Beattyville/Lee County Chamber of Commerce recognized General Beach for his 58 consecutive years as president. And, Beattyville Mayor Joseph Kash described Beach as “a true gentleman and a hero of this community. It is appropriate that his passing was on Veterans Day. He was a true patriot.”

The positive impact that General Beach has made on Kentucky and this Nation has certainly not ended with his passing. His legacy will continue to live on through the individuals and the communities he so lovingly helped lead. Known nationally for his leadership and service to our country, I know all Kentuckians join me in grieving the loss of Charles Beach.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL ANTHONY CARRASCO, JR.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a brave son of Anthony, NM.

Army CPL Anthony Carrasco Jr. was killed November 4 after being hit by sniper fire while serving his country in Iraq. He was 25 years old.

Corporal Carrasco—or “Tony” as he was called by family and friends—was a husband and father and son. He and his wife Johana are expecting a child. And he had two small step-children who adored him.

Tony served as truck commander for armored vehicles. It was his job to direct his vehicle down streets infested with roadside bombs and targeted by insurgents attacking from the shadows of buildings. Tony understood the danger. He accepted the risk. And he died doing what he loved, serving a country he loved.

His fellow soldiers described Tony as an optimist. His platoon sergeant, Timothy Brown, put it best: Tony “saw the good in everything. He was a soldier who never, ever complained.” Sergeant Brown called Tony “the best soldier I ever had.”

As Senators or as citizens, we cannot fully experience the sadness that Tony’s family and friends are feeling. But when a soldier dies, the Nation as a whole feels the loss. We are linked to Corporal Carrasco by the ties that bind a grateful Nation to its faithful servant. His loss is ours.

Please join me in honoring Anthony Carrasco, and extending our sympathies to his wife Johana, his father Antonio, his mother Juana, and the rest of the Carrasco family.

SPECIALIST JOSEPH GALLEGOS

Mr. President, I want to acknowledge the recent passing of brave New Mexi-

can. Joseph Gallegos, a specialist with the New Mexico Army National Guard, died of a heart attack while serving in Iraq.

While his death was not due to injuries suffered in combat, that fact does not lessen the pain of his loss.

Specialist Gallegos was 39 years old. He served with the Guard as a light wheel vehicle mechanic. When not serving his country, he worked for the Forest Service on the Carson back home in Questa, NM. Throughout his life, he also worked as a firefighter, an ambulance driver and a policeman.

Specialist Gallegos gravitated toward work that allowed him to help his fellow citizens. While working for the Forest Service, he even saved a life—spotting a burning truck one day, he saw a man inside and pulled him to safety.

As Specialist Gallegos’ brother, Donald, said: “He was always taking different jobs, but they always put him in the service of others.”

Today, I ask you to join me in thanking Specialist Gallegos’ family for his service, and for his sacrifice.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GARETH PARRY

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the service of a great Federal employee.

Human ingenuity is boundless. This is especially true in America, which has always been driven by an entrepreneurial spirit and a belief that nothing is impossible.

From Whitney’s cotton gin to the first elevator, from the electric telegraph to the refrigerated rail car, our forerunners used their ingenuity to help build a nation. Such invention and perseverance closed the western frontier in the nineteenth century. In the century that followed, Americans continued to be pioneers on that frontier which has no end—the frontier of science.

Sixty-seven years ago this week, a team of American physicists led by Enrico Fermi conducted a critical experiment. On a cold winter’s afternoon, they huddled under the stands of the old football stadium at the University of Chicago. Using graphite blocks, wooden rods, and uranium pellets, they initiated the first-ever controlled nuclear reaction.

That experiment, called “Chicago Pile One,” marked the beginning of the nuclear age.

Today all Americans know that the discovery of nuclear power was a mixed blessing. With it came the potential for a new form of energy to power our homes and businesses. For the first time, our naval ships could remain at sea—and on guard—for extended periods without refueling.

But with nuclear energy came nuclear weapons. These led to the dangerous prospect of the mass destruction of hundreds of cities within minutes. They brought us a generation of “duck and cover” and backyard fallout shelters.

Thankfully—though our nation and others continue to possess these weapons in our time—the Cold War is over. No longer are we minutes from “mutually assured destruction” the way we once were.

Today, peaceful nuclear energy provides a fifth of our electricity, and there are 104 civilian reactors in operation across the country.

Developing and enforcing the regulations that keep these reactors safe are the men and women of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

This week I wish to recognize the contribution of an outstanding public servant, Dr. Gareth Parry. Gareth has had a distinguished career at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission advancing our nuclear safety.

He is also a 2004 recipient of the distinguished Arthur S. Flemming Award for public service.

Gareth, who immigrated to this country from the United Kingdom, has over thirty years of experience in developing models for probabilistic risk analysis—or PRA. He retired this September after a long and distinguished career.

As senior adviser on PRA for the Commission’s Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Gareth became one of the leading experts on analyzing common cause failure and human reliability. His work led to the development of PRA standards and the use of PRA to support risk-informed decision-making with regard to nuclear safety.

Gareth, as a scientist and a public servant, worked hard to ensure the safety of America’s civilian nuclear facilities.

The kind of work he performed is highly mathematical and complex, and it may not sound glamorous to the average American, but it is critical and contributes enormously to the security and economic well-being of our Nation.

Sixty-seven years ago, Fermi and his team first harnessed the power of the atom. Today, the men and women of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ensure that our modern nuclear reactors continue to do so safely.

I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring the service of Dr. Gareth Parry and all who have worked—and continue to work—at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

EXPIRATION OF START

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, tonight, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will expire, and with it the primary framework for the reduction of nuclear weapons for the last 20 years. Today, I would like to speak a few minutes about the critical importance of an offensive strategic arms reduction, and why we must establish a follow-on treaty to START.

In September, President Obama proposed a resolution to the United Nations Security Council to eliminate nuclear weapons, ban production of the fissile material, outlaw nuclear tests,