

expenses seniors have for care, that average out-of-pocket expense rises by \$1,400 for an individual. If you think about it alone, the increase in health care out-of-pocket expenses basically wipes out where many seniors are for any kinds of remaining income. Certainly, if we put this kind of cut on top of that, it would make it clear that seniors would be getting less from Social Security. We recently, for the first time since 2009, gave seniors an increase to their cost-of-living adjustment. Now what are we going to do—go backward and take it away? For 75 years, Americans have been paying into Social Security with the promise that they would receive these benefits in their retirement years. Now is not a time to break that promise.

I think my colleague has clearly come to the floor with a message to our other colleagues who aren't here this afternoon, to say take a look at the details of this proposal. This is not a simple proposal about in the future someone is going to get less than they might under some other plan; this is about a cut in the benefit formula today that would impact seniors if implemented.

So I am here with my colleague to say our economic situation has not been caused by seniors coming to Capitol Hill and proposing that we have opaque derivative markets. It wasn't caused by seniors coming and saying: Let's go ahead and have the banks get rid of Glass-Steagall so the banks can do whatever they want. Seniors didn't come here and foist this economic situation on us. Yet, where are the other proposals to help fix that? Yet, the No. 1 proposal we saw circulating in July was, right off the bat, \$300 billion coming off the backs of seniors. That same proposal is still circulating in the Halls of Congress. My colleague and I are here this afternoon to say that it is not the proposal we should be considering.

So I hope our other colleagues will stand up to protect seniors, particularly women, who are living longer, and make sure they have these important Social Security benefits.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. Ms. MIKULSKI. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. First of all, I compliment the Senator for the really wonderful teaching she just did on this issue. She is a member of the Finance Committee, and with all they are doing in Social Security, hasn't there been a hearing in the Finance Committee on the chained CPI, and have experts and senior advocacy groups shared their views with the Congress?

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I can say to the Senator from Maryland that in my time period there, I don't remember any hearing or briefing on chained CPI that was the focus of the hearing. I don't know if in the last 15 or 20 years somebody hasn't suggested or had a hearing on it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. How many years has the Senator been on the committee?

Ms. CANTWELL. Two years.

Ms. MIKULSKI. In those 2 years, this has not come up.

I have another question about the Finance Committee, which also has jurisdiction over health care. Is it the Senator's understanding that both in the supercommittee and other reforms, Congress's intent is to raise premiums and copayments and a variety of other things on seniors? Is that one of those things out there in the ether?

Ms. CANTWELL. I can tell the Senator from Maryland that there are lots of ideas that people are suggesting. I don't know the details of the supercommittee or to say the Finance Committee is backing up the supercommittee on those ideas. I know we have to live within our budget, and we have to make some tough decisions.

There are many positives in the health care law that are about allowing seniors to stay in their homes and receive care as opposed to going into nursing homes, which is very positive and helps reduce significantly the cost of health care. There are things in there that will help us get more transparency on drug prices. Many of us would like to have direct negotiations on drug prices and drive the costs down even further for seniors. And obviously there are reforms that will help us get more efficient in the delivery system. Those are things you can accentuate by moving more quickly.

I know the Presiding Officer, coming from Minnesota, with the Mayo Clinic, certainly understands about outcome-based health care, preventive medicine, and those things seniors would like to see in reform that actually deliver better care and drive down costs. Those are the proposals that I think we should be discussing, that are positive for seniors, will help seniors, and will deliver the kind of care that is more efficient and cost-effective. But asking them to take it right on the chin with something like this proposal, as my colleague outlined as well, is something we are not willing to do.

I thank the Chair and the Senator from Maryland for her tireless leadership on behalf of women in America and making sure they can make do in this tough economy.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. 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

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

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

TRIBUTE TO JERRY McENTEE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called the organized labor movement, "the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."

And for three decades, Jerry McEntee has been a leader in the quest for that progress.

As president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees since 1981, Jerry McEntee has been a driving force in the fight for a better life for American workers.

He has dedicated his union's resources to the struggle for greater economic and social justice for every man and woman in this Nation—regardless of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

And he has literally given American workers a voice.

AFSCME has played a role in every struggle to protect collective bargaining rights, equal pay, good benefits, secure retirement, public services and worker opportunity for the last 75 years. And for more than 50 of those years, Jerry has been part of the fight.

At the helm of AFSCME, Jerry advocated for every piece of progressive legislation passed in the last three decades. The organization and dedication of Jerry and his 1.6 million brothers and sisters has been invaluable, whether we were raising the minimum wage or passing the Affordable Care Act.

And Democrats and our progressive allies are grateful for his leadership and support over the years.

As Jerry McEntee announces that he will retire next year from AFSCME's presidency, I am reminded that our work isn't over. Assaults on collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin and Ohio proved that.

The journey from misery and despair to hope and progress that Dr. King spoke of—a journey that Jerry McEntee has led for more than 30 years—is never truly over.

I look forward to working side by side with AFSCME, our friends in labor and all our progressive allies as we continue the work of my friend, Jerry McEntee.

The labor movement is better because of Jerry. America is a better place because of Jerry.

I congratulate Jerry on a career well spent in the pursuit of progress.

KENTUCKY ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Kentucky Army National Guard for surpassing its recruiting goal for the eighth consecutive year, a feat which appears to be without precedent in the U.S.

This recent achievement is indicative of the Kentucky Army National Guard's strong presence and dedicated service to the Commonwealth and to the Nation. Over 14,000 Kentucky Army and Air National Guard troops have