

## MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 1:45 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the next 30 minutes.

The Senator from Delaware.

## BURWELL NOMINATION

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, while Senator MCCONNELL is still here in the Senate Chamber, I wish to follow up on his comments about the loss of Christopher Stout.

My wife and I have a son of our own named Christopher. He is roughly 10 years younger than Christopher Stout at his death. So as soon as Senator MCCONNELL began talking about the loss of his life, it resonated with me as a father. It also resonated with me as a former commander chief in the National Guard for 8 years and as a Navy veteran who served three tours in Southeast Asia in the Vietnam war.

Sometimes we don't focus enough on what is being accomplished by our service men and women such as Christopher Stout and their service to our country in Afghanistan and our purpose there. Our role has been to go into a place in which 9/11 attacks were conceived and guided, killing thousands of Americans. Our purpose is, as we draw down on our troops there at the end of this year, to be down to about 9,800 troops, roughly half a year from now, and even fewer in the years to come. But our goal is threefold; that is, when we leave, we leave behind not only a place that is less likely to foment and launch attacks against this country or any other country, but also we leave behind a country that can feed itself, defend itself, and govern itself.

The Presiding Officer was adjutant general for the State of Montana, and he understands full well, having served in combat and for a long period of time, the importance of the role the Christopher Stouts have played and the reverence we hold for them and for their service in life and beyond.

I also hasten to add in following up on the minority leader's comments, there are some things we had in the military. I served 5 years Active Duty, 18 years Reserve as a P-3 aircraft naval flight officer and later as a mission commander. There are some things we had in the military that frankly a lot of people in this country haven't had for too many years. Until last year about 40 million people in this country did not have health care. They did not have access to health care, and we have changed that. We have changed that dramatically.

Does everybody have access to affordable health care today? No, but we no

longer have 40 million people anxious to get access to health care. That has been cut by roughly one-quarter. We will reduce it again this year and again next year, but among the things we had in the military is an annual physical. The idea is that you actually get an annual physical in your birthday month. My birthday month is January. I got my first annual physical, I think, when I was 17 from a Navy doctor, and I got them for years and years after that.

A lot of people in this country, including people on Medicare—they could have lived to be 105—and until about 3 years ago with the option of the Affordable Care Act they got one annual physical paid for by Medicare when they turned 65 and joined Medicare. That was it. It was called the Welcome to Medicare physical. If they could have lived another 40 years, they would have gotten another one paid for by Medicare.

The reason the military provides annual physicals for its members, Active Duty and Reserve, is in order to catch health care problems when they are small, when they can be treated, and we do this to save money. I served in the military and in and out of military bases all over the country, all over the world, and in almost every one of them there was not just a doctor, a Navy corpsman and so forth, but there was a place to go—if you had a problem and needed medical attention, you could get it—a clinic. Today we have thousands and thousands of clinics all over this country where people, whether they have 5 cents or \$5 or \$50 to their name, have health care coverage. They can go get primary health care. They can get primary health care. We have grown dramatically access to primary health care in places all over America, not just Delaware but all the other 49 States as well.

There has been a lot of attention on the VA, some of the very disappointing circumstances that are going on in Phoenix and other places such as that in terms of waiting lists, and they need to be aggressive and they will be, but one of the great innovations the VA came up with 15 or more years ago was electronic health care records.

When I was in the Navy and on Active Duty, and the Presiding Officer may remember, we used to carry around with us—roughly this size—a brown manila folder, and it included my medical records for years, from the time I got my first physical as a 17-year-old Navy midshipman until my last one. People on Active Duty don't carry these around anymore. We have electronic health records pioneered by the VA and now we have them in the Department of Defense. The reason we have them is because it enables us to better coordinate delivery of health care to people who otherwise may not have it. The Affordable Care Act actually introduces for the first time for millions of people electronic health care records, not for them to carry

around or access necessarily—although, in some cases they can—but so the people providing care for them can do it in a better coordinated and smarter way and a more cost-effective way, providing better results for less money.

The other thing we had in the military was the medicine. If someone needed to take medicine, prescription medicines or that sort of thing, they could actually get a medicine that was going to help them, keep them well or help them stay well, be productive. We adopted about 7 or 8 years ago the primary Medicare Part D prescription drug program in Medicare which has turned out to be a great success, although they had a big problem with it when people would fall into the doughnut hole. A lot of folks who got pretty good coverage for maybe the first half of the year would lose their coverage and have to pay. They didn't get any help from Medicare Part D. We started fixing—filling the doughnut hole—with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and over the next 6 or 7 years we will complete fixing that doughnut hole and people will not fall off the cliff, the Medicare Part D participants, as they have been, because of what is in the Affordable Care Act. Do you know who pays for that? The pharmaceutical companies pay for that, not the taxpayers. The pharmaceutical companies pay for that expansion, making Medicare Part D a good program, cost-effective, under budget, and 85 percent of the people who use it like it. All of those things coincide with the benefits we enjoyed in the military, and they are made available in part and parcel for more people through the adoption of the Affordable Care Act.

Are there problems with the Affordable Care Act? Sure there are. Are there things we need to fix? Sure we should. Will Sylvia Mathews Burwell help us fix those? She will provide great leadership. She and I, interestingly, have our lives intertwined in a strange way. We found out when I first met her. I called Erskine Bowles. I learned over 1 year ago the President had nominated Sylvia Mathews Burwell to be President Obama's OMB Director. I noticed she had worked in the Clinton White House with Erskine Bowles when he was Chief of Staff to President Clinton the second term.

So I called Erskine, and I said: Tell me about Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

He said: I will tell you about Sylvia Mathews Burwell. I have known people as smart as Sylvia. I have known people who are as good at working with other people as Sylvia is. I have known people as good as Sylvia at getting things done. I have not known one person who does all three of those things as well as she does.

He told me a story when she was working as Bob Rubin's right-hand person, top assistant. Bob Rubin was then the Secretary of the Treasury. President Clinton was meeting with Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, Bob Rubin, the