MCCONNELL who has allowed more votes in 1 day than the Republicans got from Senator REID the entire year last year. We probably doubled the number of votes this year than we had all of last year.

The Democrats are saying, we are not even going to go to this bill that would fund Homeland Security. And if we don't go to it, then Homeland Security is not funded. Are they going to block a bill that would fund Homeland Security?

Senator MCCONNELL is saying you can have your relevant amendment. If you don't like the language the House put in that says the money can only go to fund lawful activities, then you can vote to take it out and offer an amendment to take it out; but if you don't have the votes, you lose. That is the way the system should work.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

EMPLOYER WELLNESS PROGRAMS: BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES AND LOWER COSTS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks at the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing yesterday be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EMPLOYER WELLNESS PROGRAMS: BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES AND LOWER COSTS

This morning we are holding a hearing entitled ''Employer Wellness Programs: Better Health Outcomes and Lower Costs.''

Ranking Member Murray and I will each have an opening statement, then we will introduce our panel of witnesses. I ask that each of our witnesses limits their testimony to no more than five minutes. We will conclude the hearing at noon.

About half of Americans, or 149 million, have health insurance through an employer. One thing we agree upon is that it's a good thing for employers to encourage employees to be healthier. There are a few ways that employers can do this. Offering employees free gym memberships, access to weight loss coaches, and on-site nurses, to name a few. Today, we're going to hear from employers who offer lower cost insurance if their employees lead a healthy lifestyle.

Obamacare was not a bipartisan law, but it did include a bipartisan provision to strengthen workplace wellness programs. Former Senator Harkin and I worked together on this during the HELP Committee markup of Obamacare. Before Obamacare, employers relied upon a 2006 regulation which empowered them to discount employee premiums up to 20 percent.

Today, employers have certainty of law that they can give their employees up to 30 percent off of their premiums if they make healthy lifestyle choices like maintaining a healthy weight or keeping their cholesterol levels in check. The law also gave the Secretaries of Labor and Health the authority to extend this discount to 50 percent off through regulations. And the Secretaries did just that for tobacco cessation, so companies can also give employees who are smoke-free a 50 percent discount off their premiums.

But these discount programs aren't a blank check. By law, employers have to meet several conditions. First, they cannot discriminate. Employers must make these programs available to everyone and must provide a reasonable alternative if an employee cannot complete the standard requirement. Second, they have to be designed to promote health. So, your boss can't offer a reward for a better job performance, but she can do so if you stop smoking. Third, everyone should have a chance to qualify at least once a year.

To get started, employees might simply fill out a questionnaire about themselves and their family's medical history, or undergo a basic health screening to take their weight, temperature, blood pressure, as well as a finger prick test for cholesterol or diabetes. This information provides employees a baseline from which to work with a medical professional to improve.

Today, we will seek to answer several questions. First, how well are these programs working? A 2014 study conducted for Interactive Health found 85% of 15,550 people surveyed either improved or maintained their level of health risk and companies' health care costs rose 6% more slowly. A September 2014 survey by the benefits consulting firm of Towers Watson & Co. found that 18% of employers already use outcomes-based wellness incentives and 48% plan to add one by 2017.

Next, we want to explore if any of these programs need to be changed. There are a number of laws and regulations on the books governing wellness programs, but do employers have all the tools they need?

And we want to hear how a disturbing turn of events may affect these programs. Specifically, the action the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is taking against companies like Honeywell for encouraging employees to lead a healthier lifestyle. I'm concerned the government is encouraging workplace wellness on one hand, and discouraging it on the other.

There is a great deal of evidence that tells us these programs can make employees healthier and happier at work, and for the investment employers make, they can see lower health care costs.

Honeywell has a wellness program that is reportedly compliant with Obamacare, provides for reasonable alternative accommodations, and protects patient privacy. And, it's working to improve employee health. 61 percent of Honeywell employees identified with more than one health risk factor eliminated at least one of those risk factors; and 46 percent eliminated all of their risk factors.

What's wrong with that? Well, the EEOC seemingly believes employers should not reward employees who make healthy lifestyle choices with lower premiums. And in October last year, the general counsel sued to stop Honeywell from doing just that.

Even the White House has expressed concern regarding the EEOC's actions. In December, when asked about the president's thoughts on the EEOC wellness lawsuits, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said the administration is concerned EEOC's actions are, or could be, ''inconsistent with what we know about wellness programs and the fact that we know that wellness programs are good for both employers and employees.''

Congress was clear in the health care law. The administration was clear in the regulations. And the White House has again reiterated its support for these programs. But apparently that is not clear enough for the EEOC. The EEOC is sending a confusing message to employers—reliance on Obamacare's authorization of wellness programs does not mean you won't be sued.

So, I'm working on legislation to provide employers and employees even more clarity and certainty to continue to offer these voluntary wellness programs and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. Innovation and healthy choices should be applauded, not punished.

Workplace wellness programs give individuals some control over rising health care costs. Instead of watching powerlessly as more money comes out of their paychecks each month to cover rising health insurance premiums—wellness programs give individuals the ability to regain some control over those costs.

I admit that this represents a big shift in how we think about the workplace in relation to our health. There has been a sea change in how we talk about health at work. I remember well the smoke in the hallways of the Nixon White House. That was true in most workplaces then. These days, about the only workplace you can smoke is the Speaker's office.

REMEMBERING CHIP KENNETT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to Bayard Winslow ''Chip'' Kennett II, a native of Conway, N.H., who passed away on January 17 at the age of 34.

Growing up in the Mount Washington Valley, Chip was a fantastic student-athlete and natural leader. At A. Crosby Kennett High School, one of two schools in Conway which bears his family name, Chip quarterbacked the Kennett High School football team and was honored with the Jack Burns Memorial Award for leadership, dedication and loyalty to his teammates on the Kennett High baseball team. His parents, Bayard and Theresa, instilled in Chip a love for the region and its people, and Chip spent his summers volunteering and working at Conway's community recreation center.

Chip would later go on to a career in public service that spanned close to a decade, rising from a college internship with then-New Hampshire Representative John Sununu to a position in Senator Judd Gregg's office, after which he returned to work for John Sununu upon his election to the Senate. Before leaving Capitol Hill to join Raytheon's government affairs practice, Chip most recently worked for Maine Senator SUSAN COLLINS as her military legislative assistant and director of appropriations. During his time in Washington, Chip was active in the New Hampshire State Society, helping to raise funds for New Hampshire students hoping to intern in the Nation's capital as he had during college. All those who knew him in the Senate recall his upbeat and caring nature, both qualities that buoyed him and his family through the difficulties of the past 2 years.

In October 2012, Chip's wife Sheila was 35 weeks pregnant when he was diagnosed with stage IV advanced lung cancer. As he learned more about his diagnosis, Chip, who was not a smoker, was struck by the lack of progress in improving the survival rate for this deadly cancer which, contrary to popular perception, annually affects more non-smokers than smokers. During his own treatment, Chip became an advocate for lung cancer and worked exceptionally hard to increase awareness of the disease and to end the negative stigma of a lung cancer diagnosis. He gave his time and legislative expertise to LUNGevity, a lung cancer-focused nonprofit, to help fight for much-needed lung cancer research, education and support. His efforts culminated in an invitation to testify on Capitol Hill regarding the need to expedite trials for breakthrough drugs to treat life-threatening diseases like lung cancer. Throughout his own battle with the disease, Chip held out hope that one day we could all celebrate a cure for cancer.

Chip truly embodied the spirit of public service, especially in his remaining days when he served as a voice for others. I know I speak for all in the Senate when I say thank you, Chip, for providing an example of what it means to be a great father, son, husband, friend and American.

Chip is survived by his 5-year-old son Bayard ''Joe'' Kennett II, his 2-year-old daughter Crosby Reynolds and his wife Sheila whom he met while they were both serving as staff members in the Senate; his mother and father, Bayard and Theresa Kennett of Conway, N.H., as well as his brother and sister-in-law Tanner and Sarah Kennett of North Conway, N.H.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the life and service of Chip Kennett.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I wish to recognize the extraordinary life of my friend Chip Kennett, who passed away on January 17 after a courageous 2-year battle against cancer.

Bayard Winslow ''Chip'' Kennett II was born and raised in Conway, and he was a proud New Hampshire native son. The Kennetts are pillars of the Conway community whose roots in the Mount Washington Valley go back generations, and I have been fortunate to know Chip's family and to witness their countless contributions to business and civic life in New Hampshire.

Chip carried on his family's tradition of public service when he first came to Capitol Hill to serve his home State of New Hampshire. He served as a congressional staffer for nearly 8 years—first as a legislative correspondent to my predecessor Senator Judd Gregg and later as a policy aide for former Senator John E. Sununu. More recently, he was a senior aide to my colleague from Maine, Senator SUSAN COLLINS. When I first came to the Senate in 2011 and did not yet have a full legislative staff in place, Chip generously offered his counsel on national security and defense issues, for which I was very grateful.

While working for Senator Gregg, Chip met the love of his life, Sheila, who would become his wife.

In October 2012, Chip—seemingly healthy and active at the age of 31—was diagnosed with Stage IV non-smoker's lung cancer. There was no cure. In the face of an unimaginable prognosis, Chip understood better than most that life is a gift, and he inspired us all with his determination to live his life to the fullest—making the most of the time he had with his wife Sheila and their two young children, Joe and Crosby. Together, they found joy and meaning in simply being together during everyday, ordinary moments—resolving to be ''present and grateful.'' From family dinners to rooting for his favorite football team on ''Patriots Football Sunday'', Chip savored the blessings of family and friendship.

True to his compassionate nature, he turned his diagnosis into a cause for good—becoming a counselor to others battling cancer, raising public awareness of the disease and the need to reduce the stigma associated with lung cancer. The blog that Chip and Sheila started provided a ''Playbook for Living'' that served as a source of inspiration and encouragement to others who were fighting similar battles with cancer. Chip also put his Capitol Hill experience to work as an advocate for lung cancer research, and his efforts are credited with helping spur changes in Medicare coverage for lung cancer treatments—a legacy that will continue to touch many lives.

Chip summed up his approach to living with cancer at a hearing last May before the Senate Special Committee on Aging, where he testified that ''thanks to medical breakthroughs, I have been able to experience many quality filled days. We have enjoyed spending holidays with friends and family. I have been able to continue working full time. As a family, we have sat down at the dinner table together, have attended innumerable swim lessons, soccer and tee ball practices for my son on Saturday mornings, and have sat in a church pew together on Sunday mornings. In other words, we have stayed busy—busy LIVING with cancer.''

Chip's strong network of family and close friends was extremely important to him. He was always happiest being around the people he loved. After his diagnosis, his family, friends, coworkers, and former Hill colleagues—affectionately known as Team Kennett—mobilized to not only support Chip and his family but also to support their efforts to aid others fighting cancer.

The courage and strength with which Chip and his family faced his illness is an inspiration to us all. Perhaps Chip's greatest legacy is the valuable lesson he taught us all about how to live fully in each moment.

Chip was a wonderful, smart, and fun-loving man, and he had a big heart. It was a joy to know him and to call him a friend, and his loss is simply heartbreaking.

My heart and thoughts are with all of Team Kennett, including Sheila, Joe, and Crosby; as well as Chip's parents Bayard and Theresa Kennett of Conway; and his brother and sister-in-law Tanner and Sarah Kennett of North Conway.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BILLY'S BOUDIN & CRACKLIN

• Mr. VITTER. Madam President, many of our Nation's small businesses are well-regarded for their ability to truly showcase the local culture, food, and heritage. Small businesses have a unique perspective and opportunity to take advantage of local recipes, ingredients, and flavor profiles that allow them to provide regional favorites for residents and tourists. Without a doubt, one of the most remarkable aspects of Louisiana is our delicious, extraordinary cuisine. This week, I would like to recognize this truly special piece of Louisiana culture by honoring Billy's Boudin & Cracklin of Krotz Springs, LA, as the Small Business of the Week.

South Louisiana has created its own genre of Louisiana cooking. With traditions and recipes handed down through the generations, the charm and flavor of Acadiana is undeniable. Billy's Boudin & Cracklin was originally founded in 1995 as a convenience store. It was not long, however, before Billy Frey and his father-in-law decided they needed to incorporate something in their store to set them apart from the competition. The brilliant addition of a family boudin recipe bolstered the success of their store to what we know today. Two short years later, Billy expanded their thriving business to the nearby city of Opelousas and purchased a popular local grocery store, Ray's, to establish Billy and Ray's Boudin. Maintaining the local charm, the Frey's purchased Ray's secret boudin recipe and added it right onto the new store's menu.

Recently, the business expanded once again to the ''Boudin Capitol of the World'' in Scott, LA. What started out as a small convenient store has turned into a regional favorite, with over 3,000 pounds of boudin made daily between the three stores. In addition to the original boudin links, Billy's offers boudin in the form of balls, pistollettes, rollups, and sandwiches. They also have shipping options so nonlocals can enjoy authentic Cajun boudin and cracklins from across the country. The Boudin Balls have become a signature of the business, with around 1.7 million of the regular and pepperjack-filled balls sold yearly. The famous boudin recipe is so coveted that