I am delighted, through the leadership of Senator INHOFE and the cooperation and leadership of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Senator JEFFORDS, Senator BAUCUS, Senator REID, who worked very closely with me on the last highway bill, we brought our section to the floor as well as the sections from the other committees. We look forward as soon as we can to going back to work on it. We would ask any of our colleagues who have amendments, particularly to our section, you have had a chance to look at it, we have had a chance to work on it. I hope we can move quickly because the time will be short and the bill is important.

With that, I thank the chairman of our committee and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Missouri. He has worked tirelessly, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation of the Environment and Public Works Committee. You always hear that working with Senators is like herding cats. I think we have learned that on this bill. It is very difficult. Of course, by the very nature of the Senate, one person can hold things up. But I don't think there is anything this year we are going to be dealing with that is more important than our highway reauthorization bill.

Last year we passed a good bill out of committee. We were unable to get it out of conference last year. This year I am sure that situation will change.

As we work on it this week, I agree it is an ambitious schedule to get it done, but I am anticipating we are going to have to at some point file cloture. I would certainly tell any of the staff and Members who might be listening that we are open for business. We now have the substitute amendment on the floor so we know what we are working with. We would ask them to bring their amendments down. We can't do anything with an amendment unless we see it, unless we have it before us.

I know what is going to happen if we don't do that. When we come up against some deadlines, trying to get this passed out of here at the end of the week, people are going to be saying they didn't have time. You have time now. We are waiting for you. We want you to bring them down.

The substitute amendment we adopted has some changes in it. We did increase some highway funding by $8.9 billion. That would be the highway funding portion. That was over the EPW bill that we passed out of the committee that we chair. And it includes a 5.1-percent increase in both the apportioned and allocated programs. It also includes the minimum rate of return for donor States to 91 percent and working up to 92 percent. This is not as ambitious as it was last year, but last year we were dealing with a bill that was $318 billion over a 6-year period. This is going to be about 251 over the remaining 5 years of the 6-year reauthorization.

Last year's bill, the donee status was improved more dramatically so that for States such as my State of Oklahoma and the State of the Presiding Officer, we would have that up to a minimum of 95 percent. That means we would get back at least 95 percent of that which is collected in our respective States. We can't quite do that with the smaller amount, but certainly it is enhanced a little bit with the amendment we just agreed to consider.

So we have a lot in here, and they are going to be a part of this bill. Again, the only thing that needs to be done right now is for amendments to be brought to the floor. By the way, Senator BOND is right when he says there are a lot of Members who are not happy, and they won't have enough money in their States. I am not happy about the amount of money in Oklahoma. There was a lot of compromising over a 3-year period to get us where we are today. However, if you are not happy, offer an amendment. We will consider it and we will vote on it. That is what the process is all about.

We have a lot to be done in the next 4 days. We expect that we are going to be doing it. We are encouraging people to come down with their amendments.

I chair the EPW committee, but we also have some titles in here by the Banking Committee, the Commerce Committee, and the Finance Committee. We have been talking to those chairmen. I believe they are ready. So we could entertain amendments on any of these sections or any of the titles of the bill.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go into a period of morning business with each Senator permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT ROBERT J. ''JASON'' GORE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a fellow Iowan who has fallen in service to his country. SGT. Robert J. ''Jason'' Gore of Nevada, IA, was killed on April 21, when insurgents shot down his helicopter. Jason had already completed one tour in Iraq before he began his tour as a security guard for Blackwater USA. He was only 23 years old and is survived by a mother, father, brother, and grandparents.

Jason grew in Nevada, IA, and chose to attend St. John's Northwestern Military Academy for his last 2 years of high school. Sergeant Gore excelled there in academics, athletics, and leadership, and he was described as a kind young man with a purpose-driven life and a great enthusiasm for the opportunity to serve in the military.

Sergeant Gore's patriotism for his country and zeal for life must be recognized and appreciated today and in days to come. In his honor, I urge all Americans to contemplate their love for this great country and to think about the patriotic ideals which Jason held in such high esteem. In memory of his life and his great sacrifice so willingly made, we are called to rekindle in ourselves the fiery devotion and enthusiasm of SGT. Robert J. Gore. I offer my condolences to the family and friends of Jason who have felt this loss most deeply. Today, their son, brother, grandson, and friend stands as a beacon of enduring patriotism, deserving of emulation by all Americans.

CARE COORDINATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to call the attention of my colleagues to the important issue of improving the coordination of health care for the Nation's senior citizens. As we all know, large numbers of senior citizens receive health care and treatment from several different physicians. In fact, more than half the patients with serious chronic conditions have three or more different physicians.

Too often, a physician seen by a patient is not aware of the tests and prescriptions that other physicians have ordered for the same patient. The result is that the patient receives care that is often duplicative, and may actually be harmful.

We need new ideas on improving care coordination for patients—particularly for senior citizens.

The Boston Globe recently published a thoughtful article by Lois Quam, CEO of the Ovations division of UnitedHealth Group, describing new initiatives to improve the quality of health services provided to senior citizens. It includes a number of worthwhile recommendations, and I urge my colleagues to take the time to read it carefully. We can clearly do better, much better, in this important area of health care.

I ask unanimous consent that the article ''Rx For Medicare'' be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Boston Globe, Mar. 11, 2005]

RX FOR MEDICARE

(By Lois Quam)

Social Security reform will dominate politics and be the subject of much debate for months to come. However, failure to address rising healthcare costs, by changing the way Medicaid and Medicare-funded care is delivered, could undermine efforts to ensure financial security for many retirees.

Over the next 75 years, the government is expected to pay more than $27 trillion in healthcare benefits promised to seniors seven times its Social Security obligations for that period. Further, a recent analysis by Urban Institute researchers suggests that by 2040, typical seniors might have to spend approximately one-fifth of their Social Security benefits on Medicare premiums.