

truth of this. In January, I traveled with my colleague Senator LANDRIEU to East Asia to survey the aftermath of the December 26 tsunami.

We helicoptered over the Sri Lankan coast and through the windows witnessed a scene of unending devastation.

Over 155,000 people died. At least 1 million lost their homes. Whole villages were literally washed out to sea.

Through all of this, the lack of clean water emerged as the most pressing public health concern. In many areas, the tsunami had poisoned wells with salt water, and swept away water treatment plants.

Shortages of potable water threatened to trigger outbreaks of diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. The large pools of stagnant water I saw along the coast were potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes carrying malaria and dengue fever.

In confronting these challenges, America showed tremendous generosity and compassion. And part of our efforts included innovative new technologies to provide clean, safe water. And those efforts continue.

This March, World Water Day launched the International Decade for Action. The United States and countries around the world are working together to reduce by one-half the number of people who lack access to safe drinking water.

I applaud the President his leadership. In August 2002, the administration launched the "Water for the Poor Initiative" to improve management of fresh water resources in over 70 developing countries. An estimated \$750 million was invested in 2004 alone.

While no single piece of legislation can eliminate water-related diseases in the world, continued leadership is essential.

In March, the minority leader and I introduced the Safe Water: Currency of Peace Act to make safe water and sanitation a major priority of our foreign relief efforts.

The \$200 million earmarked in the Foreign Operations bill is an extension of these efforts.

I commend the assistant majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, the chairman of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, for his leadership. And I thank my colleagues for their continued commitment to this pressing issue.

It is hard to imagine that something so basic, so necessary, is lacking in so many places.

Providing clean water will save millions of lives. It is as simple as a glass of H₂O.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDICARE

Mr. FRIST. Tomorrow, America celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Medicare law.

Forty years ago, standing in the Harry S. Truman library in Independence, Missouri, President Johnson told a grateful nation that "Through this

new law, every citizen will be able, in his productive years when he is earning, to insure himself against the ravages of old age."

Passage of the Medicare law ensured that never again would health care for the elderly be a matter of charity, but one of national conscience.

Medicare has served millions of seniors, improving their health and lengthening their lives. Today, 41 million elderly and disabled Americans have Medicare coverage. That number is expected to hit 77 million in 2031 when the baby boom generation is fully enrolled.

I am proud to have worked to pass the Medicare Modernization Act in 2003. This legislation guarantees seniors for the first time have access to affordable prescription drugs.

It also expands health care choices, improves preventive care, and begins to take a number of additional steps to improve quality and affordability of care in the Medicare program.

In just a few short months, in January 2006, every senior will have access to prescription drug coverage under Medicare. This represents the most significant improvement to the Medicare program since its inception 40 years ago. And 41 million American seniors and individuals with disabilities finally have the prescription drug coverage they need and the Medicare choices they deserve.

As a physician, I have written thousands of prescriptions that I knew would go unfilled because patients could not afford them. Under the Medicare Modernization Act that will soon change.

As a senator, I watched a decades-old Medicare program operate without flexibility, without comprehensive and coordinated care, without preventive care or disease management, and with no catastrophic protection against high out-of-pocket medical costs. I watched as science raced ahead, and Medicare stood still.

Now, under the Medicare Modernization Act that, too, is beginning to change. By expanding opportunities for private sector innovation, Medicare now combines the best of the public and private sectors. It provides better and more comprehensive coverage for today's seniors, and helps to lay the foundation for a stronger and more modern program for tomorrow's seniors.

The Medicare Modernization Act also offered some benefits for younger Americans. Most significantly, it is making health insurance more affordable through portable and tax-free health savings accounts. Health savings accounts are already giving younger Americans more control over their health care choices and hard-earned dollars.

The Medicare Modernization Act was a historic step forward for a program that has served millions of America's seniors. And it continues to draw on technological advances, like health in-

formation technologies and e-prescribing, to deliver more effective and more affordable care.

Medicare is a compact between generations. It is one of the most valued and compassionate legislative achievements of the 20th century. More changes will be needed in the future. But we have already begun to lay the groundwork. Medicare is providing a platform for making health care more affordable, more available, and more dependable for all Americans.

H.J. RES. 59, WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for H.J. Res. 59, a joint resolution that expresses the sense of Congress with respect to the women suffragists who fought for and won the right of women to vote in the United States. It is my privilege to join Congresswoman SHELLEY BERKLEY, my colleague and fellow Nevadan, in the effort to honor and celebrate their hard-won achievements.

Our Nation was founded on the principle of "consent of the governed." Yet for the greater part of America's history, women were denied the fundamental right to participate in our democracy through the power of the vote. Today, it would be unthinkable and unconscionable to hold elections where not every vote properly cast is counted. Eighty-five years ago—perhaps within the lifespan of our mothers or grandmothers—this was not the case.

Next month we will observe the 85th anniversary of the 19th amendment, which finally secured women's right to vote in the United States. The 19th amendment does not just represent voting rights. It also represents a profound victory for women suffragists long seeking to be affirmed as equal partners in America's civic, cultural, and social affairs. But as victories with enduring and far-reaching consequences tend to, this one required the suffragists to first overcome numerous setbacks.

In 1866, Elizabeth Cady Stanton ran for Congress to test women's constitutional right to hold public office—and received only 24 of 12,000 votes cast. In 1872, Susan B. Anthony registered to vote in Rochester, New York, and cast a ballot—and subsequently was arrested. Two years later, the Supreme Court considered whether citizenship itself conferred voting rights and ruled that it does not for women. During the several years leading up to 1920, many suffragists, including Alice Paul, exercised their right to engage in civil discourse through protest and were thrown in jail for doing so.

These names may not sound familiar to everyone. Nor are these events the full extent of the challenges that the women suffragists faced as they fought for the ratification of the 19th amendment. The joint resolution would let us remember them and give them their due tribute.

The women suffragists commended in this resolution were instrumental not