

Lieutenant Avery grew up in Lincoln and graduated from Lincoln High School in 2000. He received his parents permission to enlist in the Army at age 17 and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 2004. During his junior year at the academy, Lieutenant Avery established an organization called, "Light by Morning," to aid Iraqi orphans. After graduating from West Point, he successfully completed the U.S. Army Ranger School and the Sapper Leaders Course and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division in Fort Campbell, KY. He was deployed to Iraq in October 2005. Lieutenant Avery will be remembered as a loyal soldier who had a strong sense of duty, honor, and love of country. Thousands of brave Americans like Lieutenant Avery are currently serving in Iraq.

Lieutenant Avery is survived by his wife, Kayla; parents, Susan and Gary Avery; brothers, Clinton and Johnathan; and sister, Elizabeth. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time. America is proud of Lieutenant Avery's heroic service and mourns his loss.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring 1LT Garrison Avery.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the House of Representatives has passed S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, DRA. This is a relatively modest deficit-reduction bill that represents just one-fourth of 1 percent of what Congress would otherwise spend during the next 5 years.

It has been 8 years since Congress last passed legislation to reduce mandatory spending. The kinds of Medicaid changes made in the conference report are a fraction of what Governors across the country—Republican and Democrat—asked Congress for to help State governments keep their Medicaid programs afloat for the millions of people who rely on Medicaid. Beneficiaries and taxpayers both deserve to get the highest value for every dollar that is spent on Medicaid, Medicare, and other safety-net programs.

It is especially rewarding to have included in this overall package a bill I first authored in 1999. The Family Opportunity Act, which I have pushed for year after year with Senator KENNEDY, was inspired by an Iowa family struggling to access health care services for a disabled child. Melissa Arnold, the mother, didn't give up, and today's legislative victory is a tribute to her kind of determination. The measure will let States create options for families that have children with multiple medical needs to buy into Medicaid while continuing to work. It is a pro-work initiative because it lets parents work without losing their children's health coverage. It is pro-family because it encourages parents to work and build a better life for their children, rather

than being forced to impoverish themselves to access health care. And it is pro-taxpayer because it means more parents continue to earn money, pay taxes and pay their own way for Medicaid coverage for their children.

In addition to this expansion of the Medicaid program, the comprehensive legislation includes \$400 million in child-support payments that will go directly to welfare families, along with grants to promote healthy marriages and responsible fatherhood, \$100 million to improve the handling of court cases involving foster care, a \$200 million increase for a Safe and Stable Families program to help keep troubled families together and support adoption, and \$1 billion to help parents pay for child care when they leave welfare and join the workforce.

On Medicaid, some partisan critics and their allies will probably continue to distort the bill's intent and effect. I am repeating this—the provisions on benefit flexibility and cost sharing are clear and unambiguous. The Congressional Budget Office and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services agree. The conferees agreed to language that clearly provides early periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment as a guaranteed benefit to all children on Medicaid. The conferees also agreed to language that clearly exempts individuals with incomes of less than 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit from any increased cost-sharing. I fought hard for these provisions and I will take appropriate actions to prevent any misreading of them to occur down the road.

FAMILY OPPORTUNITY ACT AND WELFARE REFORM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Wednesday, February 1, 2006, the House of Representatives passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, DRA, clearing the way for the President to sign this bill into law. This legislation was the product of a great deal of work on the part of Members and our dedicated staff and the experts who work in the congressional support agencies.

I would like to highlight two provisions in the DRA: the Family Opportunity Act and the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and pay special tribute to the Members and staff who worked so hard on them over many years.

Mr. President, I am particularly pleased that after years and years, the Family Opportunity Act is about to become law. This legislation has been something of a crusade of mine. This legislation extends Medicaid eligibility to families with a severely disabled child that are faced with either staying poor in order to continue to qualify for Medicaid or, worse, relinquishing a child to the State so that the child can receive the services that the child needs.

The introduction of the Family Opportunity Act was motivated by the

circumstances of individual families, the Melissa Arnold Family and the Dylan Lee Family. I offer my heartfelt thanks to these families for sharing their struggles with me and for being the inspiration for this legislation.

I pay special tribute to my partner in this endeavor, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY, who is a tireless champion on behalf of children and those with disabilities. During the many years we worked side by side on this bill, Senator KENNEDY was most ably assisted by Connie Garner, of his staff.

On my own staff, I would like to single out the efforts of Hope Cooper who worked for many years on the Family Opportunity Act and whose knowledge and compassion were invaluable assets in developing the bill.

I also appreciate the work done by policy leads, Leah Kegler, Becky Shipp; health policy director, Mark Hayes; deputy staff director, Ted Totman, and staff director for the Finance Committee, Kolan Davis.

I am grateful for the work done by Jeanne De Sa and Eric Rollins at the Congressional Budget Office and Ruth Ernst at the Office of Legislative Counsel, especially for their patience in analyzing and drafting the many different versions of the legislation.

Mr. President, the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, has been a long and very difficult process, spanning three Congresses. Everyone who has worked on this reauthorization has been guided by a fundamental principle: helping those in deep and persistent poverty achieve the economic self sufficiency needed to overcome that poverty. We may disagree on some of the best ways to overcome poverty, but everyone who devoted their labor to this program did so out of the best of intentions.

I particularly thank my friend and partner on the Senate Finance Committee, Senator MAX BAUCUS, for his work on this program over the past 5 years. We didn't always agree, but we kept working together until we finally got to a compromise that satisfied us both. I hope at some point we can revisit some of the common themes we developed together in the PRIDE bill.

I thank Senator BAUCUS's staff who worked on this issue over the past 5 years, Doug Steiger, Kate Kahan, and Liz Fowler. They are passionate, knowledgeable, and care deeply about low-income programs and the individuals who rely upon them.

Other Members and their staff who contributed to the policy and the process include, the initial "Tripartisan" members: Senator John Breaux and his staff, Sara Triagle and Michelle Easton; Senator ORRIN HATCH and his staff, Becky Shipp; Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER and his staff, Barbara Pryor; Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE and her staff, Carolyn Holmes; Senator JAMES JEFFORDS and his staff, Justin King; Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN and her staff, Elizabeth MacDonald and Mike Anzick.

Other critical Members and staff include: Majority Leader BILL FRIST and