

money on their side to protect their retirees. Containing costs on the Medicare side clearly has the potential to keep costs down for employers insuring their retirees.

So now, as the Senate begins to schedule for early next year and Senators look at the variety of issues that are coming up, I hope they will look in particular at this concept which has won the support of 93 percent of the American people. I think most Americans just scratch their heads and say: How in the world could the Government say the only people in the United States—the only people in the United States—who will not bargain to hold down the costs of medicine are those running Medicare?

If you are in North Carolina and you are in the technology sector or you are in Oregon in the natural resources sector, the first thing you try to do is use your bargaining power and get the most for your dollar. You act as a smart shopper. And people have been flabbergasted that Medicare is the only “person” out there shopping without using every bit of clout that would be available to older people in the marketplace.

That is why this evening I wanted to take a few minutes to outline specifically how the changes Senator SNOWE and I have been advocating for the last few years would work. They are common sense. They use the marketplace to protect the wallets of senior citizens and our taxpayers. I am particularly pleased Senator REID has indicated this would be a high priority. Fifty-four Members of the U.S. Senate have already voted for it. I hope next year—as people begin to understand, with the examples I have given tonight and others, how this would work—my hope is early next year a significant step will be taken finally to hold down the costs of the medicines that are essential for this country’s older population.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. BURR.) The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### EDWARD MCGAFFIGAN, JR.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was established on January 19, 1975, to regulate the Nation’s civilian nuclear power industry. Since then, 25 men and three women have served as members of that commission. Members are appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate for 5-year terms. On November 3, Commissioner Ed McGaffigan, Jr. became the longest serving member of the NRC. Of the 28 men and women who have served as commissioners since

1975, only 6 have been reappointed to a second term. Only one, Ed McGaffigan, has been reappointed to a third term. First appointed by President Clinton in 1996, Ed was reappointed to a second term in 2000, and reappointed by President Bush to a third term in 2005.

The Senate rarely confirms NRC nominations before the date set by law for the term to begin, so none of the six commissioners who have served 2-year terms have served a full 10 years. Until this month, the longest serving NRC commissioner was Kenneth Rogers, who served a week short of 9 years and 11 months. On November 3 of this year, Ed McGaffigan broke that record.

Length of time in office, of course, is not an end in itself. How long a commissioner serves is not as important as how well he or she serves the public interest while on the commission. By this measure, too, Ed McGaffigan stands out.

Congress created the Nuclear Regulatory Commission not to promote nuclear power but to regulate nuclear power. The commission’s job, in the words of the Atomic Energy Act, is to “promote the common defense and security and to protect the health and safety of the public.” Ed has taken those words to heart.

Throughout his time on the commission, Ed has worked to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the NRC’s regulatory programs. He has been instrumental in improving the reactor oversight process, focusing it more directly on risks and on activities important to plant safety and, at the same time, making it more transparent and open to the public. Following 9/11, he helped revamp the NRC’s security and emergency preparedness programs to strengthen the Nation’s nuclear facilities against the possibility of a terrorist attack. He has helped lay the groundwork for licensing the next generation of nuclear powerplants, new uranium enrichment plants, and the nuclear waste depository. He has also taken an active role in managing the generation change confronting the NRC by helping to hire and train a new generation of nuclear regulators to replace the current generation which is now retiring. He is a firm but fair regulator and an effective nuclear safety watchdog.

I take special interest in Ed’s achievements on the commission because Ed was one of the first people I hired when I came to the Senate in 1983. He was a legislative assistant. Later he was my legislative director and, finally, my senior policy adviser. He was my right hand on defense and technology policy, on personnel and acquisition reform, on nuclear non-proliferation and export control policy, all of that until he joined the NRC in 1996.

Ed had already established himself as a brilliant physicist and a dedicated public servant before I hired him. He had earned degrees in physics from both Harvard and Cal Tech and in pub-

lic policy from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. He had served in the Foreign Service. He had been a science attache at our embassy in Moscow. He held simultaneous senior posts on both the staff of the National Security Council and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. He was, in short, an established expert on science and technology and energy and defense issues when he joined my staff. As a newly elected Senator, I was indeed fortunate to have his counsel at the start of my work here in the Senate. He is an invaluable ally, a tenacious adversary, and a fine human being. I am honored to have his friendship.

It comes as no surprise to me that Ed has served the commission as long or as ably as he has. He has devoted his career to public service. He has served us well with his scientific skill, his expert knowledge, and his sound judgment.

At his third confirmation hearing before the Committee on Environment and Public Works last year, Ed spoke movingly of his Irish immigrant father. He had encouraged Ed to “dream big dreams” and taught him, by acting on those dreams, to make them possible. In a lifetime of public service, Ed has dreamed big dreams and the Nation is better for it.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### SERVING FLORIDIANS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, it is a great privilege for this Senator from Florida to continue public service as a result of the will expressed in last Tuesday’s election by the people of my State of Florida. It is a great privilege for a lifetime of public service. It is especially a great privilege serving in this body at this time in our Nation’s history, with the challenges that are facing us.

I believe there are many messages that have come from the American people in this election that we have just experienced. Clearly, the issue of Iraq and the policy of the United States Government toward Iraq is one. That was discussed during the election all over this country, and it was particularly discussed as two of the main items of interest in the two televised debates that we had in the Senate election in Florida.

The other message coming out of this election, in addition to Iraq, is that the American people are tired of the partisan bickering. They have seen excessive partisanship operative in Washington. When they see that excessive partisanship overlaid with ideological