

Nearly 1 million families in Illinois have at least one uninsured family member and 360,000 families making above \$50,000 have at least one uninsured family member. More and more Illinoisans are seeking community health centers as their medical home. Since 2000, Illinois community health centers have more than doubled the number of patients they serve—from less than 500,000 then to 1.1 million today. The needs in the community have only increased as the economy struggles—and the recovery package invests \$1.5 billion in community health centers. Illinois received more than \$20 million for more than 300 clinic sites around the state that are providing quality, affordable health care to anyone in need.

I have only scratched the surface of what we have accomplished in these past 100 days. Among the other steps we taken to address needs, specifically in Illinois: \$147 million for Argonne National Laboratory and Fermilab; \$49 million for improvements to the EJ&E bridge near Morris, which is currently the biggest safety concern for ship traffic on the 300-mile-long Illinois River; \$20 million for the Rock Island Arsenal; more than \$6 million for the Great Lakes Naval Station; and more than \$6 million for continued work on the barrier project to prevent the spread of invasive species, including Asian Carp, in the Great Lakes.

This President and this Congress will continue to work to address the needs of our nation.

We have made important progress in these first 100 days. We still have a long way to go.

This President is invested in rebuilding this economy, restoring our diplomatic strength around the world, reforming our health care system and taking concrete steps to reduce global warming. We have only just begun.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RICHARD DEWATER

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today in remembrance of one of Oregon's finest young men, PFC Richard Dewater. A former resident of Grants Pass, OR, PFC Richard Dewater tragically lost his life on April 15 while on patrol in Afghanistan. PFC Richard Dewater will be flown back to Oregon and laid to rest in Roseberg National Cemetery.

Private First Class Dewater was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division based out of Fort Hood, TX. Private First Class Dewater was deployed to Afghanistan in July in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Just days before his death, Private First Class Dewater's brigade ambushed a Taliban unit near Korengal Valley.

Joining the U.S. Army was something Private First Class Dewater was extremely passionate about. Ever since Private First Class Dewater was a

young child he wanted to become a soldier. Private First Class Dewater loved the work he was doing and was very proud of his service in the military. He also enjoyed fishing and camping and considered Grants Pass, OR, to be his home. Private First Class Dewater was a devoted husband to his wife Valerie, whom he married in Topeka, KS, back in June 2008.

I offer my heartfelt prayers and condolences to Private First Class Dewater's wife Valerie, his family and friends. I am forever grateful for Private First Class Dewater's service and his dedication to our country. Private First Class Dewater was a courageous and selfless man and deserves to be remembered for his valiant service. I ask that my fellow Oregonians and all Americans join me in honoring PFC Richard Dewater and the sacrifice he and his family have made for our country.

SERGEANT LEROY O. WEBSTER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to honor a fallen soldier. SGT LeRoy Webster, a 28-year-old soldier from Hartley, Iowa, was fatally shot while on patrol on April 25, 2009 in Kirkuk, Iraq. LeRoy was serving with the B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, TX. My prayers and condolences go out to his wife Jessica, daughters Natasha, Kaydence, and Jady, and his parents Donald and Crystal Webster.

LeRoy was deployed to Iraq in January. He had previously served in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005 and in Baghdad, Iraq from October 2006 to January 2008.

An Iowa native, LeRoy was born in Spencer, IA, and graduated from Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn High School in 1999. His family has deep roots in Hartley, the community where LeRoy grew up and met his wife, who was his high school sweetheart.

LeRoy Webster was a decorated soldier, having earned numerous military awards, and he is remembered by friends as dedicated, good-natured, and an excellent father. His family said he was "proud to serve in the United States Army." LeRoy's sacrifice deserves the gratitude of the entire nation and is a reminder of the high cost of freedom. I express my deepest respect and admiration for this American hero.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

NOMINATION OF GOVERNOR KATHLEEN SEBELIUS

• Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly supported the confirmation of Governor Kathleen Sebelius to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

America needs strong and effective leadership in public health. That is true at all times but never more so than when the Nation faces a grave threat from a serious disease epidemic.

We face such a threat now from swine flu. The world has looked on with growing apprehension as cases of this deadly new illness appeared first in one nation, then in another, and another. Yesterday, Spain reported its first case. Today, New Zealand. Tomorrow, who knows where the epidemic will have spread.

In our own Nation, we have seen cases of swine flu in New York, California, Texas, Kansas, and Ohio. The disease will surely become more widespread before it abates.

That is why we need effective leadership at the helm of our public health agencies with the authority that only Senate approval can confer. To have delayed this vote would make no sense—the epidemic would grow and more cases would be reported. The Nation urgently needs Governor Sebelius' leadership at HHS in the fight against this deadly epidemic.

Governor Sebelius will face other important challenges as well. None of these is more pressing or more urgent than the need to reform America's broken health care system.

Today we stand at a historic crossroads in health care in America. The United States spends more than \$2 trillion a year on health care, accounting for roughly one-sixth of our entire economy. We spend more per person on health care than any other country. Yet our health outcomes, as measured by key benchmarks like infant mortality and life expectancy, lag behind other developed countries. Nearly 47 million Americans are uninsured including over 8 million children and a disproportionate share of minorities. 25 million more of our citizens remain underinsured, and even those with insurance often receive substandard or inappropriate care. Our health care system cries out for reform, and now is the time.

Governor Sebelius has the experience, compassion and steady hand to take the helm of the Department of Health and Human Services and help lead our Nation toward high-quality, affordable health care for all. She has served the people in Kansas well for over 20 years as State legislator, as insurance commissioner and as Governor, and she has demonstrated deep knowledge of the problems plaguing our health care system, and the vision and skill to fix them. Time and time again she has reached across the aisle and achieved practical solutions that have resulted in tangible benefits to families and businesses.

She was asked by former Republican Governor Bill Graves to design and lead the Kansas Children's Health Insurance Program in 1998, and she led an expansion of coverage from 15,000 to over 51,000 children. As Governor, her Healthy Kansas Initiative has helped to contain runaway health care costs, streamline the bureaucracy, and make health insurance and prescription drugs more affordable for thousands of children, working parents and small

businesses. To give all children a healthy start on life, she further proposed providing health insurance to every uninsured child from birth to age five.

Governor Sebelius set up counseling programs as well to help senior citizens navigate the complexities of the Medicare prescription drug benefit plan and choose the best plan for their needs. She also established a multistakeholder group of business leaders, consumer groups, health care providers and private insurers to make recommendations on modernizing the health system, promoting coordination and consistency of care and reducing administrative burdens on patients and providers alike.

Through this broad consultative process, Governor Sebelius created a public-private partnership to build and install nationally-recognized health information technology systems, and she pioneered the Kansas "smart card" the first health insurance ID card to implement state-wide standards.

Achievements such as these have brought wide accolades. Governor magazine named her as one of its Public Officials of the Year when she served as Kansas insurance commissioner in 2001. Time magazine named her one of the Nation's top five Governors in 2005. Her nomination is supported by the American Medical Association, the AFL-CIO, and scores of other stakeholders. As Warren Buffet said, "With this appointment, the President just hit one out of the park."

I thank my Senate colleagues for confirming Governor Sebelius' nomination as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and I look forward to working with her in the months ahead to achieve real health reform for the American people this year at long last.●

AMERICAN LEGION POST 27

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the achievements of American Legion Post 27 out of Muscatine, IA. This group hosted its first World War II Honor Tour in Washington, DC, in October 2008, sponsoring 30 World War II veterans from the Muscatine area. The local community raised funds by holding yard sales, dances, and tournaments, and also by asking help from local businesses and friends. The veterans attending the tour were accompanied by family members and volunteers who donated their time and money to come along on the trip. While in DC, the group visited several historical sites including the World War II Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. I am very proud to represent these honorable veterans and ask unanimous consent that an article written about their time in Washington by Melissa Regennitter of the Muscatine Journal be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Muscatine Journal]

(By Melissa Regennitter)

MUSCATINE, IOWA.—A trip to Washington D.C. became a memorable experience for 30 World War II veterans who had the chance to share memories and make new ones with old friends. Many people made new friends along the journey as well.

Muscatine hosted its first WWII Honor Tour in October after much hard work and dedication from area volunteers who raised more than \$35,000 to give the vets an all-inclusive tour of D.C. and Virginia memorials. That trip included a visit to their memorial, the World War II Memorial in D.C.—situated between Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Memorial. The trip came about after Pam Ramer, former president of the American Legion Post 27 Auxiliary heard a heartwarming story about an Honor Tour her uncle Jim Marshall, 82, a former Navy radio operator from Mount Pleasant, had done. His wife Pauline helped him out and their tour took place in April.

Marshall had already taken the trip, complete with meals, bus tour, hotel and flight, so Ramer looked to him to get things in order. He had told her of the emotional journey it had been, how the vets were treated with dignity, cheers and handshakes, and how much it seemed to mean to them to go on a trip they otherwise may never have taken. By June Ramer had set her mind to the goal and knew it would be about \$1,100 per person. Though it felt like an impossible target, fundraising and a town with a love for its veterans made the elaborate scheme possible.

Fundraisers galore! Post 27 held a yard sale, 1950s-60s dance, car show, volleyball and golf tournaments, dinners and silent auctions. Business in town took part, offering a place to hold the events, donations and prizes. Senators, corporations and school kids who collected change donated money and were recognized on the "flag of honor" wall at the Legion. A woman even gave a house full of furniture to auction off and a local auctioneer volunteered his time to help sell it.

Everyone involved contacted businesses and business associates to ask for support. The reception from the community was remarkable as the word spread; the goal was met a few weeks before the send-off ceremony was held.

AirTran Airways went out of their way to make scheduling accommodations for the 48 people who went; 30 veterans and 18 family members and helpers. The pilots were as happy to have the vets on the plane as the vets were to be going to D.C. When the plane landed at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, fire trucks sprayed the aircraft down as it taxied in. The captain said it was a high honor and a way to show appreciation for the vets.

Many monuments. The group arrived on Thursday, Oct. 2, to a Tysons Corner Marriot in Northern Virginia. The weekend was packed with visits to historical sites including The World War II, Jefferson, Lincoln, Vietnam, Marine Corps and Korean memorials as well as Air Force and Navy memorials and museums. They also went to Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon, Mt. Vernon and the estate of George Washington, the U.S. Capitol, the White House and downtown D.C. where they shopped for souvenirs and saw Ford's Theater where Abe Lincoln was shot and the home he died in.

At Arlington, a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier brought tears to the eyes of many and honor to all as a group of the Muscatine-area veterans were allowed to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony.

The veterans were treated to fine dining where they enjoyed extravagant meals and

desserts which were all a part of the tour package. A helping hand. Along with the 29 men and one woman veteran were 10 family members who paid their own way to take the trip. In addition to those people, eight volunteers paid their own way so they could be there to push wheelchairs, lend a hand to those who might need it, keep things organized and even make the veterans laugh. What ended up happening was a new found sense of honor for those who had served. The helpers were at times more emotional than the veterans and bonds grew that no one really expected. All of the helpers say that they came home with new friends and made memories they'll never forget.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

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

Saying that "The continual increase in the cost of fuel is affecting Idahoans" is a major understatement. I, my friends, my family, and a large number of my co-workers have already cancelled a number summer activities and vacations here in Idaho due to the price increases. All fuel consumption has been whittled down to just bare necessities such as only driving to work, school, and to purchase groceries. And because of the gas prices, all store products have increased tremendously. My family pays approximately \$50 to \$60 more each week for our basic routine groceries.

I recently found out that my husband and I did not draw on the hunts we put in for this year. And, instead of being disappointed, we were somewhat relieved because of the money that we would have had to spend in order to hunt. We sold our snowmobiles this spring because of the money it would take us in the future to trailer them and keep them operational. I am considering selling my horse trailer because I cannot afford to trailer my horse anywhere. People are trying to unload their horses and stock because the price of hay has literally doubled and they cannot afford to feed their animals. Finding hay is a chore in itself because the majority of it is being purchased and transferred out of state. All outdoor activities have come to a screeching halt. And not only for my family but for many, many others.

Half of the raise I received at work this past year went to the increase in bus transportation to work; the other half went to the