for the disadvantaged. One of the things that will be taken up will be that coverage should be expanded through the Medicaid Program by increasing eligibility for parents, for children, and for pregnant women who otherwise cannot afford the health care.

I also think it is important to have reform that promotes quality care by mandating coverage of the services necessary to maintain health and wellness. What do I mean? I mean primary care, a lot of what we talk about that is preventive care so you get at the root of the problem before it becomes a big problem, and then it becomes expensive to treat. Get at the root of the problem, and a lot of that is with primary care doctors and other health providers who provide that very important preventive medicine. For example, diabetes, heart disease—if you catch it early, you can prevent the big problems. But prevention requires knowledge and awareness that comes with comprehensive care, and it is critical that preventive care is available to Medicaid and Medicare recipients and, therefore, also in that health insurance exchange. We are going to have to bring these preventive services into these programs.

I close by saying we have come in this country to feel, as we should, that access to a quality, affordable health insurance system is a right. We certainly do not have that now. The system is cockeyed. This is a historic opportunity to answer this need by expanding and improving coverage while cutting the wasteful spending and addressing the flaws of the system.

The time for reform is now. We are going to start hashing it out, as we have been in these long roundtable sessions in the Finance Committee. I hope this can be bipartisan, but the proof is going to be in the pudding on final passage. Are there going to be votes, and how many from both sides of the aisle? If we are successful, it is going to turn around our ability to have adequate quality and affordable health care, which we need.

But it is going to do one more thing: It is going to start bringing under control the exploding cost of Medicare and Medicaid that, over the next 20 to 30 years, unless we change it, the Government is not going to be able to afford. That doesn't say one thing about cutting back on access to care nor the quality of care; it simply speaks to bringing those costs under control by rooting out the inefficiencies in the system and doing a lot of the things I have just talked about.

I look forward with great gusto to tackling what is one of the most enormous problems facing us. I look forward to sharing my thoughts with the Senate later in the week about GEN Charlie Bolden to be the next head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

GM'S SPRING HILL ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, General Motors' decision to put the Spring Hill plant in Tennessee on standby is a blow to many employees who work there and to their families, but hopefully it will be a short-term problem. I have discussed with Governor Phil Bredesen how I can be of as much help as possible to the families who are affected, as well as the suppliers and the dealers. For the longer term, though, there is no reason in the world why the New GM cannot build cars and trucks at Spring Hill, TN, more competitively than any other location in America. Tennessee offers hundreds of suppliers, one of the country's best four-lane highway systems, a right-to-work law, thousands of trained workers, and low taxes. The Saturn plant was said to be the largest U.S. capital investment in history, and since then, General Motors has spent hundreds of millions of dollars modernizing it. For the same reasons Saturn and Nissan, Volkswagen, and their suppliers located here, Tennessee will continue to be a major automotive center.

What is more, General Motors has a proud history in Tennessee. As Governor of our State in 1985, I wrote the full-page ad for the Wall Street Journal. I took almost all of our economic development funds for advertising that year, and the ad proudly said this: ''Saturn finally found a home in Spring Hill, Tennessee.'' Saturn was the most sought-after plant in America then. A Saturn car had not been built then. Yet the name was better known than Pontiac, which had been on the market for 60 years. Saturn, together with the arrival of Nissan a few years earlier, helped to attract auto industry to a State—Tennessee—that had almost no auto jobs and to a region that had very few auto jobs. Today, nearly 150,000 jobs—or about one-third of Tennessee's manufacturing jobs—are auto related, almost all of them at suppliers to the 12 auto-assembly plants that are now located in the Southeastern United States.

Madam President, I would like to look ahead a little bit toward the New GM and the Government ownership of 60 percent of what we are calling the new General Motors. We are told that when General Motors emerges from bankruptcy in 60 or 90 days, the U.S. Treasury will own 60 percent of the New GM. To avoid the possibility of the Government owning New GM for years, I will introduce legislation authorizing the Treasury to distribute to individual taxpayers all of its stock in the New GM and in Chrysler as soon as is practical following the emergence of the New GM from bankruptcy proceedings. So instead of the Treasury owning shares in the New GM and Chrysler, you would own them if you were one of 154 million Americans who filed individual Federal tax forms on April 15.

The stock certificates would be in your name, not that of your Government. To keep it simple, and to help the little guy also have an ownership stake in America's future, Treasury would give each taxpayer an equal number of the available auto shares.

The Treasury Department has said it wants to sell its auto shares as soon as possible, but Fritz Henderson, the president and CEO of General Motors, told Senators and Congressmen in a telephone call this morning, in which I participated, that while it is the Treasury's decision to make, this is a ''very large amount'' of stock, and that the orderly offering of these shares to establish a market might have to be ''managed down over a period of years.'' Another option, of course, might be to sell blocks of the New GM stock to one or more large investors, but that might also take years.

So I want the Treasury also to have the option of getting the ownership of these companies out of the hands of Washington and back in the hands of the marketplace in months rather than years. Distributing New GM shares and Chrysler shares to individual taxpayers is the way to do that.

Those shares might not be worth very much today, but put them away and 1 day they might help pay for a college education. For example, General Motors' 610 million shares were only worth 75 cents just before bankruptcy, but they were worth $40 per share 2 years ago.

I would not interfere with the loans the Federal Reserve Board made to companies in trouble. The Fed is independent. Its loans are collateralized. It makes money for the Treasury. I am only talking about the taxpayer bailouts that Congress has authorized since last October that have resulted in Government ownership of auto company assets.

Under my proposal, the fiduciary duty that management owes to owners would be owed to the more than 154 million Americans owning New GM stock and not to a few Washington politicians and bureaucrats.

You know what would happen if the Treasury owned 60 percent of the New GM for the next several years: Members of Congress would start holding hearings and saying things such as: ''We are the owners and we demand to know why are you building this model? Why are you closing the plant in North

Carolina and not in Tennessee? Why are workers not paid more? What about these work rules? Why is this battery being built in South Korea and this engine being shipped from Mexico?''

When the company negotiates with the Federal Government on such things as, for example, fuel efficiency standards, won't it be negotiating with itself? And as the elections approach, might not the White House be tempted to build plants in States it might carry instead of States it might not?

As the New York Times editorialized this morning:

> It was only March when the Obama administration let GM slide toward bankruptcy by denying it more taxpayer money, partly on the grounds that the company was too heavily dependent on SUVs, while its biggest stab at fuel economy, the Volt, was too expensive to work in the near future.

Not long after that, we saw the President of the United States fire the president of General Motors. So if it is going to take years to sell the Treasury's New GM stock and Chrysler stock, the best way to help those auto companies succeed and recover the taxpayers' more than $50 billion in loans may well be to simply give all the Government stock to taxpayers and get Washington out of the business of owning and running auto companies—the sooner the better.

Here is one disadvantage. Giving the stock to taxpayers might well add a few billion dollars to the Federal debt. But whose debt is it, anyway? The 154 million taxpayers'. So why not give individual taxpayers the ride up, if there is to be one.

Some will say another disadvantage is that the old GM will not be able to sell its tax breaks to an acquiring company. But these tax breaks would be just another bailout paid by taxpayers. It would be better to distribute the Treasury's stock to individual taxpayers and let the marketplace decide what happens, rather than spend billions more on bailouts.

Here are the advantages as I see them. No. 1, 154 million new investor cheerleaders. Think fan base of the Green Bay Packers, whose ownership is distributed among the people of Green Bay. This new investor fan base could produce customers for the auto companies.

No. 2, better odds for success. Does anyone think Washington can run car companies? Did you ever ride in a Lada, a clunky Soviet car made by a government-run company? The standing joke was: How do you double the value of a Lada? Answer: Fill up the tank with gas.

No. 3, fairness. Decisions about these auto companies would be made by collective decisions of people in a marketplace rather than by lobbyists with access to Washington.

No. 4, any benefits are more likely to go to taxpayers rather than to some Government program. For example, the law says that all proceeds made from the Troubled Assets Relief Program, TARP, purchased assets should go to reduce Government debt. Yet that is not happening because Treasury has not purchased toxic assets yet and has not made any profit yet. My proposal would make sure taxpayers get the profit rather than recycling this money into more bailouts.

Finally, this is the fastest way back to the wise principle, if you can find it in the Yellow Pages the Government probably should not be doing it. More than the money, it is the principle of the thing.

The other day a visiting European automobile executive said to me, with a laugh, that he had come to ''the new American automotive capital: Washington, DC.''

To get our economy moving again, let's get our auto companies out of the hands of Washington and back into the marketplace—the sooner the better.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

E-VERIFY

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I am concerned by the reports of several news outlets that the implementation of Executive Order 12989, which mandates the use of E-Verify for Federal contractors and subcontractors for the Federal Government, is now being delayed again until September of this year. This is the fourth such delay this year and I am afraid that it signals this administration is not serious about immigration enforcement—not even serious enough to utilize effective systems that we have in place.

On January 28 of this year, President Obama pushed back implementation of Executive Order 12989 to February 20. A few weeks later, that implementation date was pushed back again to May 21. Prior to that date, implementation was pushed back to June 30. Now various sources are reporting implementation will be delayed until sometime in September. E-Verify is one of the most effective tools at our disposal for protecting American jobs and should be made mandatory and permanent. Instead, the administration yet again has decided to delay this program as it applies to Federal contractors and subcontractors—that is, people who do work for the Federal Government; not every private business, just those who get jobs and money from the Federal Government to do contracting work. The administration claims they need more time to review the program. But it has been 5 months already.

I was also, let me recall, extremely disappointed when this Senate's Democratic Members stripped the E-Verify provisions from the final version of the economic stimulus package without discussion or debate. I tried to bring up an amendment in the Senate that would have matched the language that the House accepted unanimously in committee and was included in the final version of their bill. That language said that contractors who get money out of the stimulus program from the Federal Government had to use E-Verify, this computer system, to determine whether the people they are hiring are legally in the country. That was not too much to ask, I thought. The House, as I said, unanimously accepted that provision in committee and passed it overwhelmingly as part of the final version of their bill.

Every time I sought to bring it up, it was blocked by the Democratic leadership. They did not want to vote on it. It became pretty clear why, because if it was in the Senate bill and the House bill, it would certainly be in the final conference report language and would become law. As long as they could keep it out of the Senate bill, when they went to conference they could take the language that had been passed in the House out of the bill. Part of the compromise in conference would be to eliminate the E-Verify related language. I warned that would happen and that is exactly what did happen. We could not get a vote in the Senate. If we had gotten a vote, I am confident the Senate would have voted in favor of requiring recipients of stimulus funds to use E-verify.

The purpose of the stimulus bill was to put Americans back to work. Unemployment continues to rise. We are now hearing it will hit 10 percent. That is a serious number, much higher than some were projecting. I think the Obama administration's budget projected unemployment would be between 8.1 to 8.5 percent. Currently, unemployment rates are close to 9 percent and many are saying we will hit 10 percent. So why would we want to use stimulus money that was promoted as a way to create jobs for Americans and reduce unemployment in this time of recession and not make sure that those jobs go to American citizens. I think it is a matter of real, serious import and I am baffled by it.

Briefly, E-Verify is an on-line system operated jointly by Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration. Employers can check the work status of people who apply to work for them on line by comparing information from the employee I–9 application form against the Social Security and DHS databases. More than 112,000 employers are already using it because they do not desire to hire somebody not legally in the country. I think they should be congratulated for that.

It also helps the employer because they can use this as a defense and say I used the E-Verify system if it is later found out that an employee they hired is here illegally. It did not tell me the person was illegal. They produced a