

well being of everyone. For example, rural America produces the food and the fiber that our country needs to survive. Young farmers and their families will not come back to live and work in an area where they cannot receive health services should an accident or sickness occur. The farming profession is already a gamble and not having access to health care is something most people aren't willing to risk. If people are forced to leave rural America due to lack of health care, then a whole new set of challenges will arise that we are not currently prepared to address. Any health care solutions or reforms must account for current rural health care system realities and future challenges.

I have long said that the best solutions originate outside the beltway, the same holds true with health care. Blanket policies crafted from within the DC beltway do not always meet the needs of Nebraskans. In fact, they often add additional burdens onto the current system and compromise the ability to access quality health care.

That is why I encourage my colleagues crafting health care reform legislation to incorporate the solutions offered in the Craig Thomas Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act. I am a sponsor of this legislation and look forward to a number of its provisions being enacted.

Additionally, I hope any health care reform will offer critical access hospitals flexibility in determining their bed count to account for seasonal and emergency situations which might affect admissions rates. Any comprehensive legislation must address the unique payment issues facing rural hospitals like reimbursing them for lab services provided in nursing homes and rural health clinics, and increasing Medicare payment rates for rural health clinics. Finally, legislation should extend the rural community hospital demonstration project and provide incentives to encourage providers to practice in physician scarcity areas.

The health care delivery system in rural America is already stressed. We cannot afford a big mistake with health care reform, because if we get it wrong, the fragile rural health care delivery system may never recover. Mark my words; if we enact policies that drive providers and facilities out of business, no one is waiting in the wings to take their place. Therefore, I urge caution and thorough debate of all health care reform proposals as unintended consequences must be minimized.

#### COMMENDING SENATOR NORM COLEMAN

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to our former colleague, Norm Coleman.

Norm once said, "It is easy to criticize, particularly in a political season. But to lead is something altogether dif-

ferent. The leader must live in the real world of the price that might be paid for the goal that has been."

Norm Coleman is a leader. Norm or, more importantly, his character endured one of the most difficult elections in the history of the Senate, and came out standing taller in the eyes of many. It is not easy to lose. But it is so much harder to maintain your dignity in the face of defeat, which Norm has done.

Having spent most of his life as a Democrat, Norm is what we would call a "late bloomer." I also started out as a Democrat and voted for Jimmy Carter in 1976. In 1996, Norm realized that the path of the Democrat Party was paved for other people, not him. He joined the Republican Party to share in our vision to keep taxes low, reform education, and grow jobs.

Norm more than adhered to this vision while in the Senate; he became a powerful voice on these issues. He also established himself as a fierce advocate for renewable energy. Norm fought for tax incentives that would strengthen the development of renewable energy across our country. He saw renewable energy as the key to greater national security and economic stimulus.

Norm also introduced legislation that would wean our Nation off our dangerous reliance on Middle Eastern oil by placing a greater emphasis on increasing renewable fuel infrastructure and alternative fuel technologies. His legacy will continue to thrive as we move our country closer to energy independence, through innovation, not government handouts.

Norm's leadership did not end at the shores of our Nation. He established himself as a true voice in foreign policy issues by exposing the corruption that was rife throughout the U.N.'s Oil for Food program and becoming a fierce advocate for our servicemen and women.

However, all of this pales in comparison to the legacy that he will leave in Minnesota. Throughout his entire Senate career, he never lost track of the voices of his constituents and the promises he made to them on the campaign trail.

His greatest legacy, perhaps, will be bringing hockey back to Minnesota. Minnesota will enjoy the fruits of his labor for years to come.

I consider Norm a friend and someone whom I respect and admire.

Norm, we will miss you dearly. I wish you much success in the future knowing that great things lie ahead of you.

#### COMMENDING BILL ANTON

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a brave American, William Anton. As a man of remarkable courage, strength, and conviction, Bill is receiving an extraordinary honor in the U.S. Army Ranger community by being inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame. Bill will go down in the history books as the first Nebraskan to ever receive this recognition.

As the son of an Army officer, Bill found his choice to continue the family tradition quite natural, but fate was needed to further solidify his commitment.

An ROTC scholarship to the University of Nebraska put Bill on the football team, but a football-ending knee injury put Bill right where he was supposed to be, as a fulltime Army cadet. Bill was soon promoted to cadet major general, making him the highest ranking ROTC cadet in the United States with over 20,000 cadets under his command.

According to Bill, life has been a constant pursuit of challenging endeavors saying, "In everything I've done, I always wanted to challenge myself to see if I could accomplish the most demanding tasks or courses—whether it was in the Army or in my academic pursuits."

And challenge himself he did. As a defender of our Nation's freedom in the Vietnam war, Bill guided the most decorated combat Ranger unit in Vietnam, Company H, Ranger, 75th Infantry, Airborne. While Vietnam was seen as a controversial war back home, Bill's role to defend freedom was never a doubt in his mind.

Bill joined the Rangers because they are one of the toughest military organizations in our Nation's history, and as a member of the Ranger Hall of Fame, history will remember Bill as one of our greatest warriors. For it was the Rangers that accomplished some of the most demanding and impossible tasks, and as a member of this elite group of soldiers, Bill exemplified their requirements of high intellect, physical strength, stamina, and bravery.

Bill's own words describe him the best: "My entire career was full of fond memories. I sought demanding assignments to challenge myself. Serving my country as a professional soldier and Officer is the highest form of public service. It is full of selfless duty and devotion to our nation—defense of our people and the supreme document—the Constitution. When we take our oath, it is to the Constitution first, then the President, and then to the other officers appointed over us. This is not lost on any Officer or soldier."

When asked what Bill would like the world to remember about his fallen comrades, he had this to say: "The American military fights only when diplomacy fails. We enforce the policies of our great nation. Our fallen comrades do not die in vain. They are remembered by their comrades, families, and most of the citizens of our great nation."

We all know that Bill Anton is an extraordinary soldier, but now America will know that above all else, he is an American that truly embodies the spirit and freedom of this great Nation.

#### REMEMBERING JAMES O. "JIM" INGRAM

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, this morning I was saddened by the news