

debating society. In the end, we need to get a result. I have concluded that the best way to get a result on health care, on immigration, on other major issues facing our country is to put aside the 1,000-page bills, and re-earn the trust of the American people by working step by step to begin to solve the challenges facing our country.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

#### HONORING NORMAN BORLAUG

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today is an opportunity to honor an unassuming and too often unsung hero, a humanitarian credited with feeding 1 billion people and saving the lives of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world.

There are few who have walked the Earth who have had the impact Norman Borlaug had; not only in his own country but in the areas of the Earth he referred to as the "forgotten world."

As an Iowa farm boy, Dr. Borlaug recognized there are no miracles in agricultural production, there is science. Norman Borlaug is the father of the green revolution. He warned that fear-mongering by environmental extremists against pesticides, fertilizers, and genetically improved foods would again put millions at risk of starvation while damaging the very biodiversity those extremists claimed to protect.

In fact, Dr. Borlaug's green movement does not provoke a war of man versus plant, it strengthens that relationship by using science to supplement the Earth's natural resources and provide a stable food source for a stronger and healthier world.

Biotechnology has breathtaking possibilities for improving human health, the environment, and enhancing agricultural production around the world. Already, hundreds of millions of people worldwide have been helped by biotechnology drugs and vaccines. There are many more drugs and vaccines currently being tested which will eventually help us wipe out other diseases as well.

For thousands of years, farmers have fought countless pests and diseases that have destroyed crops and limited production. Biotechnology is bringing hope to those in the developing world by providing crops that are more tolerant of drought and more resistant to insects and weeds and more nutritious.

Biotechnology is also increasing the nutritional value of foods produced by increasing the vitamin and mineral content of crops grown and reducing fat.

Bt, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, is a natural insecticide in the soil. It is being transplanted into corn, potatoes, cotton, and rice, allowing farmers to produce more food with far fewer chemicals.

In the United States, use of transgenic seeds has reduced pesticide

application on our fields by tens of millions of pounds annually. Dr. Borlaug's work focused on the principle that wealthy nations have many problems, hungry nations have only one. He stated that: "Without food, many can live at most but a few weak; without it, all other components of social justice are meaningless."

Today, in the United States and in this Congress, we have the luxury of being concerned with so many other issues because our bellies are full. In an excerpt from Dr. Borlaug's epilogue from his biography, "The Mild Mannered Maverick Who Fed a Billion People," he underscored that "Helping struggling subsistence farmers produce a food surplus is the way to rid the world of much poverty and misery."

Dr. Borlaug's work will be remembered as the catalyst in solving world hunger and we, as world citizens, are forever indebted to his humanitarianism and a reminder of what science can do and why it should be defended and promoted.

Today, let's all give thanks for the life and honor the memory of one of the foremost humanitarians of our age, Dr. Norman Borlaug. His passing earlier this week is a cause for the celebration of his life and a dedication to continuing his work as the best tribute we can provide to this truly great humanitarian.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURRIS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MURRAY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, we have heard a great deal about health care reform over the past few months. It is an issue that excites passion in many people, from the White House to Wall Street, from the Halls of Congress to the streets of Middle America. Last week the President called this Congress to action. He drew a line in the sand: We must improve the quality of health care in America and reduce cost, we must stop insurance companies from dropping the coverage of those who need it most, and we must make sure every single American can get quality, affordable care. We can all agree on these simple goals, but there is wide disagreement about how to get there.

I recognize this issue may be easier for me than it is for many of my colleagues. I will not be running for re-

election next year, as many in this Chamber will. Because of this, I am free to focus my attention on policy rather than politics. I don't have to worry about political concerns. I don't have to think about what the special interests will say or what campaign donors will think about my latest vote or statement on the Senate floor. When I evaluate an idea, I only have to ask one question: What does this mean for the American people?

I believe health care reform is too important to be consumed by political concerns. I ask my colleagues to take a moment and ask the same question. As we look at health care reform, what would a public option mean to the American people? The answer is clear. A public option would provide stability and security because it is easily portable. A public option will introduce accountability, choice, and competition to the national health insurance market. It will provide a safety net for those who cannot afford private insurance. It will not be a government takeover of health care. Let me repeat that: It will not be a government takeover of health care. No other proposal would be as effective; no other plan can accomplish our goals.

I ask my colleagues to separate politics from policy. Let's take a look at the facts. Critics have said a public plan will cost too much. To back up this claim, they cite studies performed by the same corporate insurance giants that posted record profits in a time of hardship for many Americans. These companies can increase profits by charging higher premiums and denying coverage to the sick. They have an interest in trying to prevent the kind of reform that will benefit American families. That is why their numbers make the public option look bad.

But the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office conducted a study that tells a very different story. Rather than costing us money, the CBO estimates that a health care insurance option will save taxpayers \$150 billion over the next 10 years.

I believe we should not compromise on the public option because it will be the key provision that can provide choice and cut costs. I believe the American people deserve \$150 billion in savings. Apparently, some of my Republican colleagues disagree because they continue to oppose a public option. That is bad policy, and it is bad politics.

Critics have suggested we include a "trigger" mechanism in the health care bill. This would allow a public plan to compete with private companies only if other reforms failed to bring costs under control. This sounds like a reasonable proposal, but we have already seen the mechanism at work.

In the early 1990s, when President Clinton and a Democratic Congress tried to pass health care reform, insurance companies brought costs under control. Health care costs grew by only \$38 billion every year that Congress debated reform. Insurance corporations

must have been afraid that reform would hurt their profits, so they self-regulated, keeping costs under control until the threat of reform had passed. Then when Republicans claimed the majority and health care reform was dropped, costs began to skyrocket. Between 1996 and 2007, the cost of health care increased by about \$102 billion every single year.

These numbers are clear. Fourteen years ago, we saw exactly what a trigger provision would look like. It simply doesn't work. What we need is a public option, plain and simple. It is time to abandon half measures. It is time to abandon empty political gestures. The evidence is clear we must make a public option a central component of the health care reform legislation. It will compete with private insurers, resulting in better coverage for everyone. It will improve health care outcomes and allow Americans to keep their current doctor. It will provide stability and security, especially if someone loses their job and needs to buy their own coverage. It will save money and reduce the burden on American businesses and families. It will not lead to a government takeover of the health care industry, as some critics have claimed. These claims have no basis in fact, and we have heard them before.

Allow me to quote a Republican Senator on the floor of this Chamber who said if a health care reform bill is enacted, "it will be the beginning of the end of private hospitals and medical insurance for individuals over 65." That is a dire prediction. These words were spoken by Senator Carl T. Curtis of Nebraska. But he wasn't talking about the current health care bill. Senator Curtis spoke these words more than 40 years ago in opposition to the Medicare law that established one of the most successful programs in American history.

A public option would not destroy private insurance. It will merely help the American people hold them accountable. As President Obama reminded us in his recent address, there are many thriving private universities in this country, even though they compete directly with public universities.

Over the weekend, I was speaking with a friend of mine who is a lawyer. He runs his own small practice, and he is proud of it. The subject of health care reform came up, and he told me he was worried. Costs went up so much, so fast that he could no longer afford to provide health care for all of his employees. He had no choice but to cut benefits or drop coverage for some of the people who worked for him.

Sadly, my friend is not alone. Thousands of American small businesses are face to face with the same tough choices. But it doesn't have to be this way. I told my friend about the public option. I explained how it would compete with private companies and the insurance industry, driving prices down, which will allow him to shop around and find the right plan for an

affordable price. He loved the idea. He told me the public option would save money and allow him to commit to the people who worked for him.

I am convinced that a public option is the best and most effective way to address the health care crisis in America today, and we can make it happen. The majority of Senate Democrats has said they would consider voting for such a measure. Only one has come out against it. So let's seize the chance to enact reform. Let's give the American people the health care choices they deserve. After all, if the public option is good enough for Members of Congress, it should be good enough for the American people. Let's extend a high-quality congressional health care plan to everyone. Let's pass a public option that will reduce costs and increase accountability. That is good policy, and it just so happens it is also good politics.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). Morning business is closed.

#### TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3288, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3288) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, again, we are on the floor of the Senate today considering the transportation-housing appropriations bill. This is a major appropriations bill with funding for States across the country. I have been talking with a number of Senators who have amendments they would like to offer. Again, this is now the fourth day we have been on the Senate floor. We started on Thursday, we were here Friday, and we were here yesterday. We are here again today. The majority leader would like us to finish this bill tomorrow. We have other appropriations bills that need to be done and conferences to be concluded in order to meet important deadlines for this fiscal year.

Again, I want all Members to know we need them to offer their amendments, if they intend to, so we can wrap up this bill by tomorrow. I expect a few Senators will be here shortly to offer amendments. If other Senators are going to offer amendments, if they could please let us know so we could get them up in order and get votes

scheduled so we could move to conclusion on this important bill.

I yield the floor and 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. McCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2375

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I call up amendment No. 2375 and ask that it be made pending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. McCAIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2375.

Mr. McCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide that all amounts in the bill provided for congressional earmarks shall be made available for NextGen and NextGen programs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, amounts provided in this Act for a congressionally directed spending item shall be made available to the Department of Transportation for NextGen and NextGen programs.

(b) In this section, the term "congressionally directed spending item" shall have the same meaning given such term in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, this amendment would take \$1.7 billion in earmarks and porkbarrel projects in this bill, 589 congressionally directed spending projects known by most Americans as earmarks, and instead redirect that money toward air traffic control modernization. Modernizing our outdated air traffic control system will positively impact all Americans, not just a favored few. It would decrease airport delays, improve the flow of commerce, and advance our Nation's air quality by reducing aircraft carbon emissions, unlike earmarks that only affect a small segment of our Nation's population and generally those Americans who happen to live in a State represented by a Senator who is a member of the Appropriations Committee.

For example, the distinguished manager of the bill had secured more earmarks than any other Member—50 earmarks—including \$2 million for a bike trail in Spokane—a bike trail. Right now, with the American people hurting all over America, we are going to spend an additional \$2 million of their money for a bike trail, and \$750,000 for a Freight Transportation Policy Institute. Madam President, \$750,000 of my taxpayers' dollars is going to be spent in the State of Washington for a Freight Transportation Policy Institute.