

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