

provides for people with disabilities. Before the Affordable Care Act, almost 3 million people were covered by Medicaid in Illinois, and more than half of the children born in our State were covered by Medicaid. Since the Affordable Care Act, another 530,000 people have signed up for Medicaid. That means that finally these people can get better from a condition they couldn't afford to treat. I call that a success.

It is interesting, too, that now that people on Medicaid can shop at different hospitals, traditional hospitals that serve the poor—there is one, Stroger Hospital, which used to be Cook County Hospital, in Chicago—have to change the way they do business. They are competitive now. They realize that Medicaid patients can go shopping at another hospital. The administrator at Stroger Hospital told the doctors and staff: Be on your toes. Provide better care. We are competing for business now. These Medicaid recipients can go to every hospital.

According to a recent Gallup poll, the uninsured rate has dropped 3½ percentage points from 2013 to 2014. In Illinois, the uninsured rate dropped 4½ percent during that same period.

The Affordable Care Act includes several changes meant to help slow the growth in health care costs. The CBO this week forecast lower private health insurance premiums. Health care spending per enrollee has slowed in the private insurance market and also in Medicare and Medicaid.

Instead of paying hospitals for the services they provide, because of the ACA, hospitals are paid to make people well. If their patients have to go back to the hospital, many of the hospitals are penalized for that. Despite climbing readmission rates since 2007, those rates started to fall with the Affordable Care Act. Hospitals are responding to the incentives in the Affordable Care

Act and more of their patients are getting better and staying better.

The solvency of the Medicare Part A trust fund is now 13 years longer than it was prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act—which means it will be solvent for 13 more years—which the trustees in 2010 said had “substantially improved” the financial status of the trust fund.

The law also helps seniors with the cost of prescription drugs by closing the doughnut hole. There was that moment in time when seniors weren't covered by Medicare Part D and had to reach into their savings account. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, people with Medicare in Illinois have saved over \$554 million on prescription drugs. We closed the doughnut hole with the Affordable Care Act. That is an average savings for each senior in Illinois of \$925. Those who want to abolish the Affordable Care Act have some explaining to do to seniors who are pretty happy that they have a helping hand when it comes to paying for drugs.

It is my hope that the Supreme Court does the right thing and realizes Congress never intended to have tax subsidies go to only some Americans and not others. I have always said the Affordable Care Act is not a perfect law. As I have said several times on the floor of the Senate, the only perfect law was carried down a mountain by Senator Moses on clay tablets. Ever since, we have tried our best to put a law together that serves the purposes of our Nation. We do our best, but we can always improve it. The same thing is true for the Affordable Care Act.

I hope the time comes—and I hope the Supreme Court doesn't force this sooner rather than later—when we can have a constructive, bipartisan conversation about the Affordable Care Act. It is not a perfect law. It can be improved. There are parts of it on

which I would gladly work with Republicans to change.

I have told my friends in the restaurant business that I know they are concerned about the number of hours employees have to work to be covered and how many employees work at the restaurant and so forth. All of those things can be and should be addressed. If they are addressed in a positive and constructive way, we can improve this law and make it serve the American people better. I think that is why we were elected.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:15 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, June 17, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (AFRICAN AFFAIRS), TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 27, 2015, VICE JOHNNIE CARSON.

LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (AFRICAN AFFAIRS), TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 27, 2021. (REAPPOINTMENT)

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

JOHN MORTON, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION, VICE MIMI E. ALEMAYEHOU.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

ENRIQUE J. GWIN