At least part of the answer to that question relates back to what we do at the Federal level. We say that $20 billion will be made available through the National Institutes of Health to form centers of excellence for scientific research in medicine. We move that money to specific areas of the country where there is already a significant population, and from that springs economic opportunity and biotechnology companies and new jobs. We simply exacerbate all of these problems with the way we spend our money at the Federal Government.

There are centers of genius in the middle part of this country, in Minnesota and North Dakota and South Dakota and Kansas and Oklahoma. There are small centers of excellence that could do wonderful scientific research, but they do not get the funding. Why? Because the biggest States get all the money. Three States get a third of all the money through the NIH.

I am not suggesting that anything illegal is going on. It is just that we have a system that perpetuates itself and creates a circumstance where three States get fully one-third of the billions of dollars we provide for medical research and 21 other States are left to share 3 percent of the medical research. And that predicts and predetermines where the centers of excellence will be in the future.

It also, in my judgment, is unfair to all of those folks who live so far away from the biggest centers, where most of the money is moving to, because it is not going to be very easy for them to be involved in clinical trials for such things as their breast cancer, their lymphoma. They are going to have difficulty getting cutting-edge medical therapies.

That ought not be the case. I want to change that. I am hoping, with the cooperation of Senator SPECTER and Senator HARKIN, and with a new determination in the House and the Senate, that we can come to an understanding that, as we double the funding for the NIH, we can also do much better for this program at NIH called IDeA. Again, this program lets us reach out and find ways to use NIH funding all across this country, to get the best of what everyone in this country has to offer, to find all the centers of excellence that exist everywhere, and have them come to bear on research and inquiry. I am convinced that this represents our best chance to try to find ways to cure some of these diseases that ravage people who live in this country and the rest of the world.

We are making a lot of progress. With this amendment, I do not mean in any way to suggest we are not making great strides. Doubling the NIH budget is a terrific thing to do. It will produce enormous rewards for all who live in this country and those who will come after us. But it is also the case that we must do better in the distribution of this research money if we are going to be able to have access to all the best minds this country has to offer. That is the purpose of my amendment.

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

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

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I believe the amendment offered by the distinguished Senator from North Dakota is a meritorious amendment on institutional development within the National Institutes of Health. We have a figure of $60 million there as part of $2.7 billion.

The subcommittee and the full committee have been very—aggressive, is the right word—to increase NIH funding. We did it at $2.7 billion in this bill. We had $2.2 billion last year, $2 billion the year before, a billion before that. I agree totally with the thrust of what the Senator wants to accomplish.

When we sit down with the House in conference, there is always a lot of give-and-take with a bill that is at $104.5 billion. It would be my intention to do what we can to reach the figure of $100 million, which is what the Senator wants, because I think that is the right figure. What I suggest is that the Senator give Senator HARKIN and me and the other conferees the flexibility to negotiate. There is a lot of give-and-take.

For those watching on C-SPAN, the process is, after we pass our bill, we go to a conference with the House, which has passed a bill. Then we sit down with long sheets and go over all the points and try to reach a compromise. To have that flexibility would be helpful. I know there are a number of programs the Senator from North Dakota would like to stay at the Senate figure, as opposed to the House figure which may be lower. If we could reach that accommodation, I believe we would obtain the objectives which the Senator from North Dakota wants, to give the conferees that flexibility to assert the Senate position on other matters.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Senator from Pennsylvania is alluding to the analogy of the legislative process being akin to the making of sausage. Often, neither are a pretty process, so it is better, perhaps, to speak less of it. I say to the Senator from Pennsylvania that I am more concerned about the destination than I am about the route by which we get there.

He has indicated that he supports the $100 million level in the House bill for the IDeA program. Senator HARKIN has indicated the same. For that reason, I will not proceed with my amendment, with the understanding that their intention will be to reach that level in conference.

My sense is that we are making a lot of progress. Before the Senator was in the Chamber a few moments ago, I said he and Senator HARKIN will have the undying gratitude of the American people for their persistence and relentless work to increase funding at NIH. This is very important, not just for people who live here now but for generations to come.

My concern, as we do that, is to make sure we get the full genius of all the American people working on these scientific inquiries into treating and curing these ravaging diseases. I want more funding in the IDeA program so that smaller States have the opportunity to access these grants and we can put to work their scientists and their medical schools and their communities to meet our nation's medical research goals.

I appreciate my colleague's response.

I will not ask for a vote on my amendment. What I will do is ask that we handle it in conference, as the Senator has suggested.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for his comments about what Senator HARKIN and I are trying to do—and, really, it is the whole committee and the full Senate. We will, I think, accomplish what he is looking for—the $100 million—in the final analysis. I think the old saying that you don't want to see either sausage or legislation made may have some merit. I think when we deal with our national health, we are dealing with ''prime rib.'' We will make some tasty morsels here for the benefit of America, I think.

Mr. President, in the absence of any other Senator in the Chamber, 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. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

NO APOLOGY NECESSARY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, earlier this morning a Member of the Senate described the circumstances on the floor of the Senate yesterday with respect to a vote on the issue of a prescription drug benefit for Medicare. Yes, there was a vote on that issue. I want to describe why that motion was offered and the importance of it.

I also want to say that, while I certainly have the greatest respect for my colleague, this was not a circumstance where the minority leader or anyone else intended to surprise anybody. When the minority leader or any other

Senator is pursuing an agenda he believes is important for our country, he does not go desk to desk in the Chamber asking permission from anyone else to offer an amendment. That is not the way the Senate works, of course.

The minority leader believes very strongly, as does almost every single member of this caucus, and perhaps some others in the Senate, that we need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. Life-saving miracle drugs can only perform miracles for those who can afford them. Senior citizens all too often are choosing between groceries and the prescription drugs they need. If we were to create the Medicare program today, unquestionably we would have a prescription drug benefit in that plan.

We have been very relentless in saying we believe we must add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program and we should do it in this Congress. We cannot and will not apologize for being relentless in that pursuit. We have had very few opportunities on the floor of this Senate to pursue our agenda. Yesterday was one of them.

If, at the end of the day, we get a bipartisan agreement to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program, then we will be rewarded for our success by the senior citizens in this country who will be able to have access to the prescription drugs they need. If, at the end of the day, we do that, I guarantee that it will only be because, for the last couple of years, we have been relentless on the floor of the Senate and in the House, saying this Congress must do this.

We have had others who say, yes, we agree about the need for a prescription drug benefit, but we want to have the private insurance companies write a plan, and so on and so forth. The fact is that the private insurance companies have said publicly, and they have come to my office and said repeatedly, ''We will not write a plan; we cannot write a plan.'' It is not within the range of financial possibilities for us to do what the majority party is proposing. In fact, one company official said, ''We will write a plan that has $1,000 in benefits, and we would have to charge $1,200 in premiums for the plan to cover the administrative and other costs of the benefit.'' That is the same as having no plan, the same as doing nothing in terms of adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare.

Our goal is to find a way to solve this problem in this Congress. This Congress, with all due respect, on some of the big issues, has been a Congress of underachievers. We can do a lot better than this. We can add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. We can pass a campaign finance reform bill. We can pass a Patients' Bill of Rights. We can pass an education bill that reduces class size and helps rebuild and renovate some of our nation's dilapidated schools. We can do these things if we put our minds to it. But somehow there is this notion by at least those who control the agenda that what we need to do is tuck in our wings and get out of town and do as little as possible.

I don't want to belong to a Congress of underachievers. I want our Congress to do the things we ought to be doing together. Yes, a prescription drugs benefit in Medicare is one of those items. We cannot apologize for what we did yesterday. We must, at every opportunity, continue to push and coax and pull those in the Chamber who don't really want to do this to join us and fix what is wrong with respect to this Medicare program.

What is wrong, in part, is that it doesn't have coverage for prescription drugs, and there are a lot of senior citizens who are prescribed medications that will allow them to live longer and healthier lives, and they discover they can't afford them.

A woman in Dickinson, ND, who had breast cancer was told by her doctor that in order to reduce the chances of a recurrence of her breast cancer, she must take this prescription medicine. This woman, who was on Medicare and had a small fixed income, said, ''Doctor, there isn't any way I can afford that medicine. There is no way. I am just going to have to take my chances.'' This situation faces too many senior citizens who need prescription medicine and find that they cannot afford it. That is why we must put a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program.

Let's do something at the same time that puts some downward pressure on drug prices. Prices have risen too fast and too far on prescription drugs.

I just want to say that no one crossed any lines by not going to every desk in the Chamber about that motion yesterday. We are going to keep trying until we get enough votes in the Senate to add a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare plan. It is for a good reason. This country needs that sort of policy in place right now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business for a time not to exceed 20 minutes.

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

TWENTY YEARS OF CONGRESSIONAL SERVICE BY DAVID GARMAN

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor today to offer my congratulations and thanks to my Chief of Staff, David Kline Garman, who has dedicated his entire life to public service. Today, in fact, marks the 20th anniversary of David's service in the United States Senate.

David's public service career began even before he came to the Senate. While attending Duke University in the 1970s, he participated in Naval ROTC and during the summer of 1976 he served with the naval amphibious task force which rescued American Nationals from Beirut during the Civil War in Lebanon.

After graduating with Honors from Duke in 1979, he served in the Peace Corps working on rural water supply projects in Nepal. He came to the Senate on June 23, 1980 to work as an intern with Senator Richard Dick'' Stone (D-Florida), beginning in the Senator's mail room and working his way up to assist on defense, finance, banking and energy issues.

After David attended the Democratic Convention in 1980, he began to reconsider his political affiliation and on the day Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, David joined my staff to serve as Legislative Aide on defense and foreign relations. He was soon promoted to Legislative Assistant for energy and natural resources.

In addition to his legislative expertise, David is extremely knowledgeable in the nuts and bolts of high technology. In the late 1980s he became Founding Coordinator for the U.S. Senate Microcomputer Users Group. This group was instrumental in changing Senate technology policy so that each office could decide what type of computer system it would utilize. Previously, Senate offices could only use a system selected by the Senate Computer Center.

David's broad range of intellectual interests led me to select him to join the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence when I was a Member of the Committee. He played a key role in the development of ''environmental intelligence'' capabilities in the intelligence community and at the national laboratories.

Some of David's best work occurred when he joined the staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He was responsible for environmental issues, including the Clean Air Act, Global Climate Change Policy, energy R&D and Arctic Research, Science and Technology policy.

While David worked incredibly long hours on highly technical policy issues at the Energy Committee, he went to school at night and in 1997 earned a Master of Science in Environmental Sciences at Johns Hopkins University. That I consider a very noteworthy achievement.

Despite his many hours of work and study, David did find the time to meet a beautiful woman, Kira Finkler, and her lovely daughter Bonnie. Kira, who works on the Minority staff of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee did not allow energy policy differences to stand in the way of their relationsip. They were married in December of 1998.

By this time, I had asked David to move from the Energy Committee and become my Chief of Staff. And as all Senators know, this is about the hardest job there is in a Senate office, because it is the Chief of Staff who has to get the trains to run on time. David does a superb job and I am deeply