

these people visited the pharmacy this month thinking that they would receive their medications for the same price they paid in December. Some of these dually eligible individuals were victims of data glitches that resulted in the pharmacists being unable to verify enrollment in any insurance, and they were told to pay for the full costs of their drugs. Some were charged the wrong amount even though their insurance was verified. These bills reached into the thousands of dollars at times. I was disheartened to learn that some of the beneficiaries paid for the drugs on their credit cards, their only other option being to go without their medications. Those with little income will be paying for these drugs for months, with interest, and this is a sad burden for the Federal Government to place on the neediest in society.

While my office did its utmost to help those who called, I wonder how many Wisconsinites did not call my office, did not have relatives to help them, or were unable to get through to the help lines that had waiting times of up to 5 days. How many people are being forced into emergency rooms in order to get their medications? How many people are being injured because of lack of medications? Have any deaths occurred as a result of the extraordinary bureaucratic hurdles in this program? The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services needs to find answers to these questions and address this crisis immediately.

Fortunately, many State governments, including Wisconsin's, came to the aid of the public when the Federal Government would not by enacting emergency provisions. Now, these States are depending on the Federal Government to return the favor and reimburse them for funds that were spent out of tight State budgets. To date, the administration has refused to compensate States. I will work to try to make sure that Congress quickly addresses this problem, passes legislation, and reimburses the States.

The health of our Nation's citizens is not a partisan issue, and we all must join together to assist the most needy. I voted against this program in 2003 and have since made numerous attempts to try to improve the program. Since mid-December, I have sent three letters to the administration, urging that the most pressing problems with the Medicare drug benefit be addressed. While these efforts were not supported by Republicans, I want to make new efforts that I hope the other side of the aisle will support. We cannot sustain a great nation if we do not care for the elderly, the sick, the disabled, and the homebound. These are the populations that this drug plan is supposed to be serving, and I fear that they have been dismally let down the past few weeks. Let us not wait any longer. Congress is in session, we are in a position to come to their aid, and I hope that we will do the right thing and quickly bring relief to the suffering.

#### SALMON RECOVERY

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, today, as you may know, Jim Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, called for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest. While I may not agree completely with Chairman Connaughton's statement, we must stop ignoring what is going on. It is about time that someone speaks out about the reality of the situation in the Northwest in regards to salmon recovery. He proposed to end outdated hatchery programs and to stop harvest levels and practices that impede recovery of salmon listed under the Endangered Species Act, ESA. He also outlined a comprehensive collaborative process to promote a shared goal and responsibility of salmon recovery. As early as next week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's fisheries service, NOAA Fisheries, will launch a collaborative review of how harvest and hatcheries are affecting the recovery of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.

There has been no clear direction in the past, and CEQ is taking the first step to provide a meaningful direction. We have sat back and idly watched while the region moved from injunction to injunction and lawsuit to lawsuit. In fact, over the past 2 years, two injunctions have been ordered and more lawsuits are being filed. This situation just fosters mistrust and the inability to meet common goals and objectives.

Our past practices have focused on keeping the fish in the river and in abundant numbers so that we can have our cake and eat it, too. In no other place in the world do we treat an ESA-listed species this way. We don't raise bald eagles only to use their feathers for our clothes, so why do we spend hundreds of millions of dollars—each year—to recover the species, and then allow a majority of them to be killed through harvesting? The people who pay for these absurd practices are the Northwest ratepayers.

Here are some facts that the region should know. The total cost of fish mitigation in the Northwest from 1978 to 2005 has been approximately \$7 billion. Fish costs now make up to 30 percent of the Bonneville Power Administration's power rates, 30 cents of every dollar paid for BPA-managed power. Snake River Fall Chinook are the most impacted ESA-listed species in the Columbia River system. These fish drive BPA's fish and wildlife program. Approximately 40 percent to 60 percent of this species is harvested.

Last summer, Judge Redden ordered a change in river operations that resulted in an approximately \$75 million dollar hit to the region's ratepayers. This means that depending on how many fish survive, summer spill costs between \$225,000 and \$3 million per fish, and consequently, ratepayers are left with the bill. Even at \$225,000 per fish,

that is a lot of money. Judge Redden, once again, second-guessed the region's fish managers and made the decision to increase spill this spring and summer. This will result in another cost to the ratepayers of approximately \$60 million dollars.

Management of the river by the courts is not management at all. I would like to help the management agencies—the appropriate managers of the river system—to succeed in their efforts to manage the river, in partnership with local, State, and tribal governments.

Why not trust the experts who have the scientific knowledge to make those decisions and help empower the region to work together instead of giving up and having the court systems make management decisions? How are we to succeed in the future if we keep allowing others to make our decisions for us?

When will this silliness stop? When will the region take ownership and responsibility for the river? And when will we work together as a region and get serious about salmon recovery? CEQ made the first step today.

I will work with other Members of Congress to finally face these challenges and to help provide direction and be more accountable to the public and to recovery of the species. If we are serious about recovery, we need to start acting serious and not avoid the tough questions.

I would like to challenge my colleagues to come together in a bipartisan way to help the region get back on track.

#### TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM B. BONVILLIAN

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my profound gratitude and heartfelt best wishes to a dear friend and dedicated American, William B. Bonvillian, who has served as my legislative director and chief counsel since I first took office in the U.S. Senate in January 1989. It is truly a bittersweet occasion to bid farewell this week to an outstanding and valued staff member with whom I have worked for 17 years in this hallowed institution that we both dearly cherish and respect. I can only say that, as Bill embarks on his new venture as director of federal relations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT, my loss is most surely MIT's gain.

Bill came to my Senate office as an accomplished and respected attorney who had previously served in the executive branch from 1977–1980 as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, where he was involved in major legislation relating to transportation deregulation and funding issues. However, our long association actually goes back much further than that, to the early 1970s. Bill was my first intern when I was elected to the State Senate; we rode from New Haven to the State Capitol in Hartford