

America is a great and good nation with the power to help stop this. But it will take sustained attention, and it will take the efforts of committed citizens like Brian Banks and Ben Rome who, one by one, are opening the world's eyes to a tragedy that must be stopped.

NATIONAL HUNGER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today is National Hunger Awareness Day, and it is an opportunity for all of us to pledge a greater effort to deal more effectively with this festering problem that shames our Nation and has become even more serious in recent years. Surely we can all do more to care for neighbors and fellow citizens who fall on hard times.

The number of Americans living in hunger or on the brink of hunger now totals 38 million—5 million more than when President Bush took office. That total includes almost 14 million children, 972,000 more since 2000.

America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest network of emergency food providers, recently conducted a series of interviews with its clients, and the report is astounding. Its emergency food providers serve 4.5 million different people a week—and 24 to 27 million people a year.

Over 36 percent of its clients are children under 18 years old, and 10 percent are elderly. Another 36 percent of its clients live in households with at least one employed adult.

These statistics are shameful. Our Nation's neediest individuals should not be forced to choose between paying for food and paying the rent or paying for medicine.

In Massachusetts, the Greater Boston Food Bank serves over 320,000 people a year—34 percent of them are under 18. All of us in the Commonwealth are grateful that we have food providers like the Greater Boston Food Bank, but they should not have to wage the battle alone. Government can't stand idle in the face of this great tragedy. We have programs in place to fight hunger, but they continue to be underfunded and underused.

Day in and day out, the needs of millions of Americans living in hunger are ignored, and too often their voices have been silenced. Their battle is a constant ongoing struggle. It undermines their productivity, their earning power, and their health. It keeps their children from concentrating and learning in school. We all need to do more to combat it. Government, corporations, communities, and citizens must work together to develop better policies and faster responses.

In 1996, the Clinton administration pledged to begin an effort to cut hunger in half in the United States by 2010, and the strong economy enabled us to make significant progress toward that goal. Hunger decreased steadily through 2000. We now have 4 years left to fulfill that commitment.

The fastest, most direct way to reduce hunger in the Nation is to improve and expand current Federal nutrition programs. Sadly, the current administration proposes to change proven and effective programs such as food stamps and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. The administration also proposes to eliminate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides modest food packages to low-income seniors and to mothers with children up to age 6.

It is time to do more for the most vulnerable in our society. National Hunger Awareness Day is our chance to pledge to eradicate hunger in America—and to mean it when we say it.

HOLD ON S. 2012

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, up and down the coast of Oregon, fishermen, their families and communities are suffering from the actions of the Secretary of Commerce in curtailing the Klamath salmon fishery without offering the assistance they need to cope with this disaster. Months ago the Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended to the Secretary of Commerce that this salmon fishery be drastically curtailed. The Secretary responded to the Council's recommendation by slashing the quotas and limiting the number of days and areas that could be fished. But despite numerous pleas for help from the affected communities, the Secretary has done nothing for months and months to help out the fishers whose livelihood depends on the Klamath salmon stocks.

The Secretary's continued inaction is not acceptable, and so I am objecting to any unanimous consent request for the Senate to proceed to or adopt S. 2012, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2005 until the Senate can consider legislative steps that will help fishermen in Oregon and California survive this disastrous fishing season. I make this objection consistent with my policy of always announcing "holds" I may place on legislation or nominations.

The State of Oregon is seeking a Presidential emergency declaration for those affected by this Federal action, and I intend to work closely with the State and my colleagues here in the Senate to make sure Oregon's fishing communities are not forgotten and that they receive the aid they will require to make it through this year.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST REPORTED AIDS CASE

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise to recognize a bittersweet occasion: the 25th anniversary of the first reported AIDS case. June 5 will forever be a day to reflect upon the lives that have been impacted by the HIV/AIDS virus and the significant progress we have made in its detection, control, and treat-

ment. While much ground has been gained over the last quarter of a century, there remains a great deal of work to be done. That is why I stand today to pledge a sustained commitment to the global fight against HIV/AIDS—a fight that we cannot abandon until and effective cure is discovered.

Twenty-five years ago, Dr. Michael Gottlieb with the UCLA Hospital reported an extremely rare pneumonia in five young gay men to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC. One of these men, named "Chuck," was from Oregon. Unbeknownst to Dr. Gottlieb, this seemingly insignificant incident ultimately evolved into one of the most significant health events of the modern era. It was 3 years later that the cause of this mysterious outbreak of pneumonia was attributed to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV. Sadly, for "Chuck" this discovery was made too late; he passed away shortly after he fell ill.

Since 1981, an estimated 25 million individuals have died from the AIDS virus worldwide. What is even more alarming is that 16,000 new cases of HIV are diagnosed every day, quickly adding to the 40 million people who have already contracted the virus. Statistics such as these are disheartening given the scientific and medical progress we have made since the first cases of the illness were reported.

In the United States, an estimated 1.039 million to 1.185 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2003, a 20-percent increase over the estimated number of cases at the end of 2002. While the number of persons with HIV in Oregon is small relative to other States, we nevertheless saw an 85-percent increase in the number of HIV-reported cases between 2002 and 2003. Not since the height of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s has there been so many Americans living with this terrible illness.

Congress has a great opportunity to further the domestic fight against HIV/AIDS this year. Reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act currently is underway, and I am confident that the House and the Senate can pass a bill by the end of this Congress that improves the scope and quality of services provided to those living with HIV/AIDS. As deliberations continue, it is important that we focus upon improving the equitable distribution of resources to States, municipalities, and community-based organizations, and that we not arbitrarily restrict their ability to provide the best care possible to those who need it. Nonprofit groups such as Cascade AIDS in Portland, OR, rely upon Ryan White CARE funds to offer a wide-range of both medical and social support services, like emergency housing and nutritional assistance. We must ensure that the changes we make to the CARE Act strengthen—not harm—the ability of organizations like Cascade AIDS to serve those living with HIV/AIDS.

As we move forward with the annual appropriations process, it is important