

\$63,000, 300 percent of poverty. It is hard to imagine they have so much money that they couldn't use a helping hand with health insurance.

The final point that is made is a tougher one, and it is one we are going to be debating this week. Here is what it comes down to: Should we cover the children of people who are in the United States legally but not citizens for the first 5 years they are here? We have had this debate back and forth for 10 or 12 years. We have decided from time to time to extend food stamps to these people legally here but not citizens. The question is: Should their children receive health insurance coverage if they are legally in the United States?

There will be some who will argue: No, don't do it. I am not one of those people. I honestly believe America is not better off with sick children. I do not believe we should be naive enough to think a sick child, who happens to be an American citizen sitting in the classroom with your own child, is not going to spread the germs, is not going to have problems that could reach other kids. I guess this betrays my own personal values. I would much rather see these kids healthy and given a chance. Yes, it is going to add some costs, but they are legally here. We are not talking about undocumented people. They are legally here, and they are in the status of on the way to citizenship or at least temporarily legal in the United States.

That is an issue we will debate. This law does not require them to be covered. Each Governor has to decide. It is the State's decision. If the States don't want to cover them, that is their decision.

These folks are likely to become tomorrow's citizens. Census data shows most immigrants who enter the United States when they are children become U.S. citizens. These are the children who will grow up to be the adults we need to be in our workforce and to be productive citizens, people who will make contributions to the U.S. economy, pay their taxes, start businesses, serve in the military, and participate in America's civic life.

There are 18,000 legal immigrant children in my home State of Illinois. These are future adults who will go to school, make a career, and create families. How can we continue to support a policy that says to our future American citizens: You have to wait 5 years to see a doctor, to get your immunizations, to feel better. No child should have to wait 5 years for health care. Five years can be a lifetime to a little boy or girl.

In the 5-year waiting period, we may miss an opportunity to diagnose and treat asthma, autism, hearing impairments, or vision problems. These are conditions that may have lifelong consequences for a child's health, educational attainment, and well-being.

Our country is better than that. We will debate these amendments, as we

should. That is what the Senate is about: deliberation, votes, and resolution of issues. Then I believe we will send this Children's Health Insurance Program to President Obama. Despite the two vetoes by President Bush, we are going to extend this program because our vision of America was articulated by President Obama at the beginning of his campaign. He used to talk—in fact, he spoke this way when he was a Senator from Illinois and even a candidate for the senate in Illinois—that the misfortune of a child in East St. Louis had an impact on his life in Chicago; the misfortune and lack of education of a child on the south side of Chicago affects people living in better-off suburbs.

Bottom line, in a few words, we are in this together. If we improve the quality of life for our children, give them a fighting chance to be healthy and well educated, to become participants in America, we will be a better nation. To turn our back on them, to shun and push aside millions of kids, for whatever reason, is not good for our country in the long run. It is not the value system we are all about.

We provide foreign aid, and I support that, to countries around the world to help kids who may never set foot in the United States. We do it because we are caring people. Shouldn't our care be extended first to our own children to make sure they have basic health insurance?

I am looking forward to this debate. I hope it is the beginning of a good debate and a good outcome and that this bill will be sent to President Obama, who will have a chance to sign it into law to give these kids a fighting chance for decent health care.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF TIMOTHY F. GEITHNER TO BE SECRETARY OF TREASURY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate shall proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Department of Treasury, Timothy F. Geithner, of New York, to be Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to express my support for the confirmation of Timothy Geithner as President Obama's choice as Secretary of the Treasury. I am aware this nominee is not free of controversy. My office has received many calls from Utahns who are concerned about Mr. Geithner's admitted errors in initially failing to report and pay his own self-employment tax. Many of them brought up the valid point that the Secretary of the Treasury, the person who is ultimately in charge of collecting taxes from all Americans and who oversees the Internal Revenue Service, should be beyond reproach in his own tax filings. Many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle are also uneasy about this problem. I understand and I share this concern.

The Senate has a solemn responsibility in confirming key officials in the executive branch, and the Treasury Secretary is among the very most important roles in the administration, both historically and particularly at this critical time. My guiding principle for approving the President's nominees has always been that the President, as chief executive of the Nation, should be entitled to the person he or she chooses, and that the Senate has an obligation to confirm those choices except in cases where it is obvious the nominee is either incompetent, corrupt, or unethical. While not all my colleagues share this view, I believe it is the correct one, and that it helps us stay above the petty partisanship that sometimes enters into these nomination processes and harms the effectiveness of our Government.

Upon careful examination of this nominee, it is obvious that Timothy Geithner is neither incompetent nor corrupt, and certainly not unethical, and that he should be confirmed as Secretary of the Treasury. I have reached this decision after weighing the facts of his tax situation with his impressive education, experience, and intelligence, and keeping in mind the desperate financial crisis currently facing this country.

In announcing this conclusion, I believe I owe it to the people of Utah to explain that I view Timothy Geithner's tax issue as a very serious matter. He is the top tax officer in the United States of America and, I might add, next to the President himself, is the person who bears the ultimate responsibility for collecting the revenue this Nation needs in order to operate. As such, the Treasury Secretary must be an example to all Americans in tax and financial issues, and any shortcomings in this area can be an impediment to effective tax compliance. The fact Mr. Geithner has had this issue arise, and that he admitted committing serious oversights on several of his tax returns, is indeed regrettable. It has marred an otherwise singularly outstanding nominee's record and has