

each year because of this cost shifting phenomenon because Medicare and Medicaid reimburse at below-market rates. So those are hardly a model for what we ought to be doing. Adding another new government plan on top of the ones we have, of course, will only increase the costs. We will never lower health care costs by putting Medicare all in place or what some might call Medicare on steroids. We need new approaches.

Mr. President, there are better alternatives. We have a bill that has been proposed by Senators BURR and COBURN on our side of the aisle. Several members on the Finance Committee, including myself, are working on a proposal that will empower patients and consumers, and not the government; that will not get between doctors and patients and will not rely on denying or delaying access to care in order to keep costs down. We believe innovation is one of the things that has made health care in America among the greatest in the world, and that is why we believe we need to retain, protect and nurture that innovation and that quality health care: to empower patients to use a market that plays by the rules to help lower their costs.

I have seen that as recently as a few weeks ago in Austin, TX, when I visited with a number of employees of the Whole Foods Company that is headquartered in Austin—a grocery company—where these workers have health savings accounts or high deductible insurance. They call them wellness accounts. I was told that 80 percent of the employees at Whole Foods don't have to pay any money out of pocket for health care. Since they have wellness accounts, or money they control, they have been empowered to become good, smarter consumers in health care.

So they will call health care providers and say: How much are you going to charge me for this? They will shop and compare different providers to make sure they are getting the best price for the best quality outcome. I think that kind of thing, which imposes market discipline but which requires transparency, is one way we can hold down costs and empower individuals rather than just turn it all over to Uncle Sam.

Let me say, in conclusion, we keep hearing we must put health care reform on the fast track in Washington, DC, although we see the schedule slipping because of the sticker shock at the huge numbers coming out of the CBO. I have told folks back in Texas that we know the train is leaving the station, but we don't yet know whether that train will safely arrive with all of its occupants healthy and alive or whether what we are witnessing is, in essence, a slow-motion train wreck in Washington, DC.

The more the American people learn about what is in these bills and how much they cost, they will want us to slow down so we can make better decisions and we can get this right.

I think we owe them that. I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are to report the pending legislation.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1023, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1023) to establish a nonprofit corporation to communicate United States entry policies and otherwise promote leisure, business, and scholarly travel to the United States.

Pending:

Reid (for Dorgan/Rockefeller) amendment No. 1347, of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 1348 (to amendment No. 1347), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1349 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1347), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1350 (to amendment No. 1349), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with instructions.

Reid amendment No. 1351 (to the instructions on the motion to recommit), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1352 (to amendment No. 1351), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 1353 (to amendment No. 1352), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the legislation that is now the business of the Senate, on which we will have a cloture vote at 5:30, is legislation that probably demonstrates that agreement is near impossible in this body.

If you cannot agree on tourism, what can you agree on? Tourism ought not to be the subject of very substantial controversy. Yet it is.

Last week, in an article in Roll Call, it says "Senate GOP still saying no." The quote is:

When they bring bills up, we are going to extend the debate as long as we can, block everything.

So this legislation is simple, and it is bipartisan. Republicans and Democrats have both supported this legislation. I was the author of it. We have Repub-

lican and Democratic cosponsors. It is the Travel Promotion Act. Why should we promote travel?

If you watched the U.S. Open Golf Tournament today, you might have seen the country of Turkey advertising during that golf tournament. They were running an advertisement saying: Come to Turkey. We want you to travel to Turkey and see the wonders of our great country.

Why would they do that? Most countries are now aggressively involved in trying to attract international destination tourism to their country. Why is that the case? We know on average that an international traveler spends about \$4,500 per trip, and that means they are purchasing hotel rooms and car rentals and going to see exhibits and parks and all kinds of things. The fact is, it is job creating in a country where international travelers visit. So most countries are now very active trying to attract people to their countries. Japan is, as are Great Britain, Italy, Turkey, France—you name it.

I have some charts. Here is an example of what is happening out there. This is an advertisement: "Sweet secrets from Japan." To learn about Japan and its culinary arts and traditions, this is an advertisement saying: Come to Japan. Come and travel in the country of Japan.

Here is an advertisement from France. Picasso, Normandy Landings. Come and see France with the Eiffel Tower.

Here is one for Belgium. "Travel to Belgium where fun is all in fashion," they say.

Brussels, "Sophisticated simplicity, the capital of cool."

This one says: "One special reason to visit India in 2009. Any time is a good time to visit the land of Taj. But there's no time like now." Come to India.

The list goes on and on.

Here is Ireland. "The Emerald Island. Go where Ireland takes you." And here is a beautiful picture of Ireland saying: Come to our country.

Finally, we have Australia. "Arrive for an experience to remember. Depart with an adventure we'll never forget." Come to Australia.

I describe these and the fact that Turkey advertises on a golf tournament because here is what happened to visitors to the United States since 2000: Between 2000 and 2008, we have had a 3-percent decrease in visitors to our country from other countries. Mr. President, 633,000 fewer people have come to the United States to visit per year that existed in 2000. Over 8 years, we have actually lost ground and had fewer people visit the United States. Contrast that with the number of international visitors around the world, which is up 40 percent. The United States is down 3 percent.

We have constructed—Republicans and Democrats together—a piece of legislation, which I have brought to the floor, that attempts to get our