

them in the lessons of life. His current and former players have been seen and heard everywhere—each of them now sharing lessons that will be passed on yet to another generation.

Most of us can remember that one coach or that one teacher who had the greatest impact on each of us. For many in the Parkersburg community, that one person was Coach Thomas.

He was well known for getting the best out of his players and students. He was always providing motivation to his kids. But those who knew Coach Thomas best say his No. 1 talent was friendship. His friend, Al Kerns, said:

He only saw the best in others, and I guess that's why he got all this back.

"This" being the outpouring of compassion from people across Iowa. It may be best demonstrated by the scene in Parkersburg last week at the funeral. As the hearse traveled from the funeral to the nearby cemetery, the streets were lined four or five deep with myriads of color. It has been a true testament to the reach of this icon, not only because of the sheer numbers of people but the myriad of colors that came from high school football teams from all across Iowa that came in their game jerseys to honor a selfless man who shared his playbook as well as his heart.

The tributes made since that tragic morning show that even after his death, Ed Thomas is teaching us to be better people by the way he lived his life.

It has been obvious that his two sons have taken his life lessons to heart, just like many others. I continue to be struck by the poise of his sons who have performed the most monumental task by asking us to pray for the family of the man who killed their father. I cannot think of a greater tribute to their dad than the actions they have performed and the words they have spoken over the last 10 days. There is no question in my mind that these two young men possess the same qualities as their father and that these two boys will continue his legacy.

Aaron Thomas, the oldest of Ed and Jan's two boys, said this at the funeral. He actually said more than I am going to quote, but this is a very important part:

You can be sad the rest of the day, but come tomorrow, once you wake up, it's time to get going . . . there's a lot of work to be done in this town.

While this community's heart is heavy, they will move forward to see the brightness of another day and of another game, just as Coach Thomas would have wanted.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, before I make my remarks, I want to express my appreciation to Senator GRASSLEY for his obviously passionate and compassionate remarks about a story and a man who has captured America. As Senator GRASSLEY knows, I have the

privilege of visiting Iowa once or twice a year and have dear friends there, and I know how strong the people of Iowa are.

I want to tell Senator GRASSLEY, his remarks, his compassion, and his passion are appreciated, I am sure, not only by the family and all Iowans but all of us in America, as we share in the tragedy and loss of a great man. I commend him on his remarks.

#### TRIBUTE TO NEAL BOORTZ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise for just a minute to talk about a gentleman who resides in my State, a man I have known for 40 years, and a man I, never in a million years, thought I would stand on the floor of the Senate and brag about. But today I did something I have never done. I voted on the Internet in relation to the National Radio Hall of Fame nominees for 2009 for a gentleman by the name of Neal Boortz.

Neal Boortz is a daytime talk show host in the city of Atlanta. He started in radio with Ring Radio in 1969, a little old 1,000-watt station in Brookhaven, GA. Now he is one of the leading talk show hosts in terms of audience in the United States of America.

He is syndicated on 230 different stations, has an audience of 5 million people, and calls himself the High Priest of the Church of the Painful Truth. I have to rise and tell you as a politician who has been both the victim and the beneficiary of any number of Neal's diatribes, he is exactly that. He is a man of the painful truth. He can find the facts on any issue. He can get to the core of the issue, and he can move communities to do good things and do the right thing.

I was delighted to hear that the National Radio Foundation has nominated him for this award, and I want to say today I voted for him because I sincerely hope he gets the recognition for three reasons: One is, while he is not always right, he is seldom in doubt. His passion for what he believes rubs off, and I think that is important.

Secondly, he loves to be challenged. Unlike so many you hear on the radio who want you to believe it is their way or the highway, he loves to share his own ideas. He has published three books. The first one, "The Terrible Truth About Liberals," is on its sixth publishing. "The FairTax Book," which he cowrote with a Georgia Congressman, JOHN LINDER, has been on the New York Times Best Seller list for a long period of time.

Right now, his most recent book—and that is, "Somebody's Got to Say It," which he oftentimes does—is in its second printing and No. 2 on the New York Times Best Seller list.

But the best part of Neal Boortz is not the thousands he has influenced in over 40 years on the radio, his humor and his passion. It is not his longevity. It is the fact that he always gives back to his community and his State.

Just one shining example is his wife Donna, who, by the way, prides herself in saying she has never listened to 1 minute of Neal's radio show. But Neal donated the proceeds of his book sales to Donna for the establishment of a foundation, which she uses that money to help those less fortunate, those in need, and those on the cusp of doing great things who need a little encouragement and a little capitalization.

So as all of us have our opinions from time to time about talk radio or journalism or commentaries or those who may sometimes accuse us and sometimes praise us as politicians, I am delighted to stand on the floor of the Senate and praise a man from my State who for 40 years has given the best he has, who has fought for what he believed in but accepted being challenged, and who always tried to say and do the right thing for America and the right thing for our community.

It is my sincere hope when the voting ends on October 1, that millions of Americans will have gone to the poll on the Internet, radiohof.org, and cast their vote for Neal Boortz.

Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, we have all heard that America's health care system is in crisis. But all too often, Washington loses sight of what is truly at stake. Some talk constantly about how much reform will cost, but without action more and more hard-working Americans will lose coverage.

Soaring health care costs are increasing the burdens on the American people, American businesses, and our government. Today, our health care system stands on the brink of collapse.

Over the past 2 years, 3.5 million Illinois residents, nearly 31 percent of the under-65 population, have been without health care insurance at one time or another. How can we allow American citizens to live in fear that the next cough or fever would put them in the poorhouse? There is a better way.

Even for those who manage to stay insured amid the current climate of rapid increasing costs, the economic toll of paying for insurance can be crippling to middle-class families.

Over the past 9 years, insurance premiums have more than doubled. By 2016 the projected cost of insurance for a family of four in Illinois will top \$25,000 a year, meaning for a median income family in my State, nearly half of their earnings would be spent for health insurance. Obviously, this would prove disastrous to people in Illinois and across the Nation.

The pressure of increasing premiums is hurting our economy from the business side as well. Small businesses in particular often cannot afford to provide care for their workers. In 2006 only 41 percent of Illinois businesses with less than 50 employees were able to