

ranges of views and best serves the American people.

A special thank you to my friend and colleague, Chairman KENNEDY, whose Senate career has been dedicated to providing health care to those in need. Senator KENNEDY's activism and determination made this day possible. My Senate colleagues and I and millions of Americans who may finally see the day when there is quality affordable health care owe him our gratitude and thanks.

In closing, of all injustices, Martin Luther King once observed: "Injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

This day is a victory for Ohio families, it is a victory for seniors and middle-class families around the Nation who deserve the humane justice of an affordable health care system that works for all of them.

We have a historic opportunity to make fundamental improvements to our Nation's health care system. We must not squander it—not in this Nation, not at this time.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### HONOR FLIGHT VETERANS TRIBUTE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize an inspiring group of World War II veterans from the Commonwealth who visited our Nation's Capitol on the 65th anniversary of the D-day invasion. The noble work of the Honor Flight Program and the leaders at its Bluegrass Chapter made it possible for these World War II veterans to visit their memorial on the National Mall free of charge. I have been privileged to participate in previous Honor Flights from Kentucky, and I very much regret that my schedule prevented me from attending the one that took place on June 6, 2009. I hope to have the opportunity to join participants from my home State on Honor Flight trips in the near future.

I wish to express my tremendous gratitude to the 66 Kentucky veterans who were here that day for having served to protect our great Nation's principles from the enemies of freedom. As Americans, we are forever indebted to the heroic men and women of the U.S. military who defend this great Nation and all it represents. In fighting for prosperity and freedom around the world, the veterans of World War II risked everything, earning the title of the "greatest generation."

As General Eisenhower said in his message to the troops just before the invasion at Normandy: "The eyes of

the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you." These words ring true, even after 65 years, as our military continues to challenge threats to freedom, democracy and the American way of life.

Our country continues to do its best to honor the incredible bravery and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. The Honor Flight Program is a reflection of the admiration and appreciation that all Americans have for the military. I take great pride in representing many brave veterans from Kentucky and in doing what I can to show our Nation's reverence for them.

The names of the 66 World War II veterans from the Commonwealth are as follows:

Richard Straub; George Hoffman; Robert Willman; Charles Junkins; Norman Reiss; William Taylor; Mary Phillips; Walter Brumfield, Sr.; Raymond Bumann; Lawrence Mayfield; Thomas Crump; Albert Tomassetti; Eugene Heimerdinger; Fletcher Williams; Paul Lawson; Millard Allen; Paul Jordan; Joseph McConnell; Harry Greaves; Robert Bohan.

John McCord, Jr.; Louis Stafford; Walter Martin; Stanley Adkins; James Thomas; William Wilson; Harold Hoover; Kenneth Elliott; Johnie Hayes; Peter Johnson, Sr.; Robert O'Bryan; Frank Rose; Norbert Gnadinger; Martin Lambricht; Robert Zangmeister, Sr.; Walter Jewell, Jr.; James Keene; George Pope; Richard Thompson; Orland Warth.

Raymond Ludwick; Arthur Lowe; Ralph Hammerle; Roy Six; Arthur Wissing; Louis Guettzow; Howard Mather; Allen Kessler; Harold Fennell; William Boyd; Wilbert Block; Claude Decker; George Garth; Joseph Wilson; Lloyd Hoagland; William Zeitz; Vincent Heuser; Oscar Disney, Jr.; Nat Bailen; George Keltner; Richard Zogg; Taylor Davidson; Pauline Thompson; Henry Hardy, Jr.; Abner McMaster; Stanley Fischer.

#### HIV TRAVEL AND IMMIGRATION BAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Department of Health and Human Services has taken an important and overdue step toward ending our Nation's discriminatory ban on HIV-positive visitors and immigrants.

On July 2, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services published proposed regulations that would lift the HIV travel and immigration ban. This policy change would remove HIV from the list of "communicable diseases of public health significance."

While we all know that HIV infection is a serious health condition, it does not represent a communicable disease that is a significant threat for transmission and spread to the U.S. population through casual contact. Officially ending this long-standing ban will help remove the stigma and discrimination often associated with HIV.

The United States is one of 12 countries in the world that ban HIV-positive visitors, nonimmigrants and immigrants. It seems illogical that the United States, a country that is a leader in the fight against the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, should legally ban all non-Americans who are HIV-positive.

The current travel and immigration ban prohibits HIV-positive foreign nationals from entering the United States unless they obtain a special waiver. This waiver is difficult to obtain and only allows for short-term travel. Immigrants who want to become legal permanent residents by applying for a green card are subject to a medical exam. Many individuals who have been denied a green card because of their HIV status confront a dilemma—either they go home where they might not have access to effective treatment or violate American law by remaining in the United States.

The ban undermines public health efforts by keeping researchers, advocates and experts from even entering the country. The current regulation stigmatizes and discriminates against people living with HIV and AIDS without justification and has serious consequences on individuals, families and our Nation. It separates loved ones, denies American businesses access to talented workers, and bars students and tourists from accessing opportunities and supporting our economy. Due to the ban, there have not been any international conferences on HIV/AIDS in the United States since 1990.

The ban originated in 1987, and was explicitly codified by Congress in 1993, despite efforts in the public health community to remove the ban when Congress reformed U.S. immigration law in the early 1990s. While immigration law excludes foreigners with any "communicable disease of public health significance" from entering the U.S., only HIV was ever explicitly singled out in the Immigration and Nationality Act. For all other communicable diseases, the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines whether a particular disease is of public health significance and should therefore constitute a ground for excluding noncitizens from entering or immigrating to the United States.

Last year, I strongly supported the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, which Congress passed and the President signed into law. Included was a provision that removed the language from the Immigration and Nationality Act mandating that HIV be on the list of diseases that bar entry to the United States. This provision returned regulatory authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to determine whether HIV should remain on a list of communicable diseases that bar foreign nationals from entering the United States.

By proposing this regulation the administration is making a clear statement that the United States does not discriminate against people with HIV and does not endorse misconceptions of the past. I look forward to seeing the proposed regulation finalized in the coming months.