

could not possibly have a public option—except for the fact we already have it in half our States, including our own; but we are not going to talk about that right now, we are just going to say we could never have it—that is the quality of the debate, when we have this huge win-win in front of us.

I hope everybody has a chance to sort of think about this over the break when we are gone and that we can come back with a new spirit of bipartisanship to really address this problem, seize that win-win, change the cost curve down, and solve this problem for the American people.

I will make one last point.

We have misled the public a little bit in our discussion, and we have done so because of the Congressional Budget Office and its professional capabilities. The Congressional Budget Office is very good at predicting what costs are going to be. So everybody has heard that our bill might be \$600 billion, that the Finance bill might be \$900 billion. They see the costs and they say: Well, how could you possibly be talking about savings when all we hear about are costs? All CBO can say about savings is that—and this is a quote—large reductions in health care costs are possible—large reductions. But they cannot quantify it. They cannot give us a number. And they have told us why they cannot give us that number.

They cannot give us that number because we can give the Obama administration, here in Congress, the tools to solve this problem. We already passed the electronic health records legislation. If, God willing, we pass the chairman's legislation from the HELP Committee, they will have the tools to improve the quality and turn the curve. They will have the tools to improve prevention and turn the curve. They will have the tools to reduce the unnecessary, wasteful administrative fighting between doctors and hospitals and insurance companies, that try not to pay them. That whole fight can disappear or at least shrink a lot, and that will help turn the curve.

But CBO cannot predict how effectively the Obama administration will do that. Like any CEO, the President of the United States and his staff are going to have to manage this problem, and that is where the savings will come. So people should not be misled that there are not real savings possible. Not only are they possible, they are mandatory. We have to turn this curve, and we have to do it dramatically. We can do it because we could drop our GDP expenditure of this by 50 percent and still have health care as good, if not better, than all of our competitor nations: France, New Zealand, Canada, England, Holland—all these countries—Japan. We can do it.

The promise is out there. We should not let the CBO scoring fool the public. That is my last point.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I will relieve the distinguished Presiding Officer so he can speak as the Senator from Colorado.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I will do the same. And, again, my thanks to SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island. He has just been a stellar advocate of the kind of change we need.

I know the Presiding Officer, as well, as a new Member of this body, has spent an inordinate amount of time on these questions, as well, in his own State and has listened to people in Colorado talk about this issue and what we can do together to get it right. I welcome his participation immensely as well.

I wish all of my colleagues a very healthy and safe break in the month of August, as I do for all Americans. But I hope my colleagues will keep in mind, I did not recite these numbers to put anyone on the spot. But sometimes we need to talk about numbers that are real to people, and these are real numbers that will potentially affect many of our fellow citizens. So we need to come back here with a renewed commitment to get this done.

We have the capability. We have good people here who care, I know, about these issues. And none of these decisions we can make are going to necessarily predict with absolute certainty that everything is going to work as well as we hope they would. But you have to begin. And we have to take a chance and work forward and hope these ideas we put on the table work. And to the extent they do not, you modify and change it, as will certainly be the case in the years ahead. But inaction, just saying no, is unacceptable. The answer "no" to health care ought to be rejected by every citizen in this country. This is a difficult problem, but being too difficult is an excuse that history will never forgive us for. It will never tolerate that excuse: This was too hard to do. When you think about previous generations and hard choices and difficult decisions, we wouldn't be here today if those generations had quit because it was too hard. We are here today because they made hard choices, they made the difficult decisions, and we have no less of a responsibility as a generation to do it on this issue. This is hard and it is difficult, but that will never be an acceptable answer to future generations if we bankrupt our country because we couldn't figure out how to solve this problem.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

COMMENDING RICHARD BAKER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a man who has been serving the U.S. Senate for almost 35 years. Now that is how I and many other Senators may begin remarks about a colleague who is retiring. My remarks today are indeed about a colleague but not about a fellow Senator. These remarks are about Senate Historian Richard Baker, an important member of the Senate community who has made the Senate a better institution during his tenure.

Remarkably, until 1975 the U.S. Senate did not have a Historical Office charged with preserving the institutional memory of this great body. Dick Baker is the original and only Director and the Chief Historian for the past 34 years. Under his leadership, the Historical Office of the Senate has worked to recover, catalogue and preserve the history of the Senate.

Building this office from the ground up required Dick Baker and his team to collect and maintain records on current and former Senators, record oral histories, document important precedents, statistics and Senate activities. And as a photographer I must point out that this work included the cataloging and preservation of a huge trove of Senate-related photographs.

From the beginning, Dick Baker knew his responsibility at the Historical Office was not only to preserve the history of the Senate but to make it more accessible. That included providing access to records for members, staff, media and scholarly researchers. He exposed more of the Senate and its rich history to the general public through exhibits in the office buildings, presenting materials via the Web and working with C-SPAN to incorporate Senate history into its programming. And as an author, Dick Baker disseminated information with his publications on Senate history, including a biography of the former Senator from New Mexico, Clinton P. Anderson.

His greatest impact on me, however, and I believe the Senate as a whole, has been his placing of our work here in proper context. Most Senators and I look forward to the historical "minutes" that he presents at the opening of many of our caucus lunches. He has also been accessible to me and other Senators in providing presentations of the Senate history at many different venues. My staff and I thoroughly enjoyed a presentation he provided to us on the history of the Vermont Senate delegation. His alacrity and care for describing Senate history has reminded all of us about the significance of our work here.

As much as visitors feel the weight of history when they enter this building, it is no less important for those of us who represent them to be well aware of the 200-year history of the Senate. It is important to remember that although great men and women preceded us, and even greater ones will undoubtedly follow, our words and actions will continue to echo through these halls long after we are gone. Dick has reminded us of that regularly, and for that we thank him and wish him well.

COMMENDING RON EDMONDS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is fitting that we in the Senate take note of the retirement of Ron Edmonds of the Associated Press, a veteran news photographer who has long and superbly documented public life in the Nation's Capital, including here on Capitol Hill.