

while the remaining 10 have had to use alternative forms of insurance—perhaps a spouse who works has a good insurance plan. He is hoping that the reform will address the burden shouldered by small businesspeople and that Congress will craft legislation that protects small businesses from high insurance deductibles and premiums.

The Presiding Officer was in business before he was Governor of Virginia and understands this as a business person. When you have a small number of employees, you pay a lot more per employee for insurance than if you are a larger company. Even worse, if you have 20 or 30 employees and 2 or 3 of them get very sick and get very expensive care, that small businessperson—the owner, the company—sees their premiums, their costs go way up or they sometimes get cut off entirely.

This legislation will allow Bob and his business to take his entire business, if he so chooses, into the exchange and go to Signa or go to Medical Mutual in Cleveland—it is a not-for-profit Ohio company—or go to Aetna or go to BlueCross or go into the public option. Bob would have that choice in his business. He also would be eligible for significant tax credits as a small businessperson.

Ricky from Garfield Heights, OH, writes:

My doctor tried to order a MRI for my back pain. The insurance company declined the request, saying I had to try therapy which only worsened [my condition]. Finally, insurance approved an MRI.

But shortly after that, my employer could no longer afford that insurance and had to switch to a new provider, which also meant I had to find a new doctor.

Still suffering from back pain, the new doctor told me I needed another MRI. I asked about using the first MRI, but the new insurance company told me I had to get another one. So I am back to square one, with a bulging disk in my back.

One of the important things in this legislation is you can keep what you have. If you have a physician, you will not be forced into another plan and have to choose another physician or another hospital or another physical therapist, as happened in Ricky's case, or another occupational therapist.

Sharon from Springboro, OH, between Dayton and Cincinnati, in Warren County.

My husband had a stroke in June 2009 and was released from the hospital a few weeks ago. That's when the real problems started. Our private insurer increased co-pays to \$560 a week for the therapy my husband needs. I also learned insurance will stop by the end of the year.

There's been a lot of worry. We need help now.

That is the point. This legislation, some people have said—I had townhall meetings, meetings all over my State, as many did here. Typically, more people were supportive, who showed up—more were for the bill than against, but there was certainly a significant number of people against it. But a lot of people said: You have to slow down; we don't want to take this too fast.

As President Obama said the other night, Teddy Roosevelt wanted this 100 years ago. Harry Truman, President Kennedy, President Johnson, President Nixon, President Clinton—so many people tried to do this. We have been working on this legislation intensively all year. The Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that Senator Kennedy chaired, on which I sit, had 11 days of what is called markup, intensive debate, vetting—I have never seen a committee have that long a period of examination of a bill like that. We accepted 160 Republican amendments, and I voted for most of those amendments. This bill has a lot of bipartisan aspects in it. On the big questions, there are philosophical disagreements to be sure. The point is, every day we wait, 30 people in my State lose their insurance—30 people every single day.

Sharon from Springboro doesn't want us to wait any longer. We waited. We worked on this. We need to do this by the end of the year.

I will conclude with this one because I know Senator BOND wants to take the floor in a moment.

Vondolee from Franklin County:

We need health insurance reform. My stepfather has Medicaid, without which he would have died some time ago. As a young man, he had routine shoulder surgery but was transfused with blood that was contaminated with Hepatitis C. He subsequently suffers from other health problems, including deep bone ulcers. Thank goodness he had Medicaid because he would not have been able to pay for his care and recovery.

Please help the people, not the insurance or pharmaceutical companies.

Mr. President, your comment on the insurance and pharmaceutical companies—I was here in the House of Representatives when the Medicare partial privatization legislation was written 5 or 6 years ago. By and large, it was written by the drug and insurance companies. It provided a lot of private dollars that went to both of those industries.

Frankly, there is a very strong insurance lobby here in this Congress today. The insurance industry is spending up to \$1 million a day lobbying against it. Insurance companies don't like this legislation.

A lot of the myths we hear in our town meetings, the myths about illegal immigrants getting coverage under this plan, getting subsidies—not true; the myths about death panels—not true; the myths about euthanasia—not true. A lot of that comes from the insurance companies in this town. They have a lot to lose. If this legislation passes, the insurance companies will not do quite as well as they have been doing, but this bill is in the public interest, not in the special interests.

Those are some of the letters I have received. I know many in this body receive letters just like this from people all over their States.

This legislation is necessary. We need to work hard and move forward on this in the weeks ahead.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

SUCCEEDING IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, 8 years ago today, terrorists based in Afghanistan carried out the deadliest attacks on American soil since Pearl Harbor. It was on that horrifying September morning in 2001 that America's worst fears were realized. No longer was terrorism something that only happened on the other side of the globe. Instead, those terrorist killers had struck the very heart of America here at home.

Long before 9/11, there were deadly warnings, warnings that for the most part went unheeded. For over two decades, al-Qaida and other terrorists attacked our Nation, from the marine barracks bombing in Beirut in October 1983 to the Pan Am 103 bombing in 1988, from the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 to the Embassy bombings in 1998, to the USS *Cole* attacks in 2000. While al-Qaida declared war against the United States a long time ago, it took the tragedy of September 11 and the loss of thousands of lives before America decided to fight back.

Today, as we reflect on the anniversary of 9/11 and the lives lost that day, we can honor the victims and their families by finishing the job in Afghanistan and defeating the terrorists who are bent on death and destruction.

I agree with the comments of my colleague, the Senator from Michigan, who said that we need to build the Afghan Army to 240,000. We need to build and strengthen the Afghan police. But we also must support President Obama's chosen general, GEN Stanley McChrystal, in his request for needed troops and resources.

President Obama has called Afghanistan an "international security challenge of the highest order." I agree. When the President stressed that "the safety of people around the world is at stake," he did not overstate the importance of succeeding in Afghanistan.

President Obama used even starker terms when he spoke to our veterans at this year's VFW convention and said:

Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which al-Qaida would plot to kill more Americans. So this is not only a war worth fighting, this is fundamental to the defense of our people.

I could not agree more. While the President has used this week to pitch health care reform, I hope after reflecting on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks, he will refocus his attention and that of the American people on achieving victory in Afghanistan.

To repeat, terrorism is the premiere challenge of our time. If we fail to conquer this challenge, nothing else will matter much, not even health care reform. As Vice Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I can tell you that al-Qaida and other radical Islamic

terrorists have not stopped trying to strike Americans at home and our allies around the world.

It is critical that my own party, Republicans, support President Obama in the fight against terrorists. We Republicans must demonstrate that politics ends at the water's edge and strongly support the strategy the President has laid out with his generals for victory in Afghanistan.

Let's avoid the politics we too often saw in Iraq, declaring defeat where our troops in theater were fighting for their lives and our freedom; undercutting our President while he tried to help rally allies to join us in the battle.

For my Democratic colleagues, I hope they follow the stirring words of the leader of their party at the VFW and do not give in to the pundits peddling pessimism. Do not give in to the leftwing that has prematurely declared defeat in Afghanistan, as they so readily declared in Iraq; much, I might add, to the grave concern of our troops in harm's way, which I heard firsthand by e-mail from my son in Fallujah.

Many of the naysayers are saying that victory in Afghanistan is not possible. We hear the refrain over and over: It has been 8 years. Why have we not left? Unfortunately, our country has a history of abandoning Afghanistan.

Earlier this week in an interview, Defense Secretary Robert Gates acknowledged what a serious strategic mistake our Nation made turning our backs on Afghanistan after Soviet forces were defeated there two decades ago. Sadly, under administrations of both parties America has repeatedly ignored the lessons of history, repeatedly turned our backs on Afghanistan. It is no wonder the people of Afghanistan doubt our commitment to their defense.

The problems we face in Afghanistan today are in many ways more complex than those we faced on September 12, 2001. We know al-Qaida has found sanctuary in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The Taliban government is gone, but the Taliban insurgency has risen and has grown in strength. This insurgency has prevented the new Afghan Government from establishing its writ throughout Afghanistan and threatens Afghanistan's long-term stability.

If not stopped, this insurgency could once again allow a terrorist safe haven, whether for al-Qaida or other terrorist groups, to flourish in Afghanistan. We cannot let that happen. President Obama's new strategy, being implemented by General McChrystal, is our best chance of success.

Now, do not get me wrong. While we are on the right path to long-term victory in Afghanistan, the road will not be easy. In fact, it is going to get worse before it gets better. We have seen evidence of this already. The fighting has been tough in Afghanistan the last few months, and too many of our brave troops have been wounded or killed in action. Those recent casualties should

not come as a surprise, however, to anyone who has been following events in Afghanistan. U.S. Marines recently began clearing rural areas in southern Afghanistan that have served as Taliban safe havens for years.

Before these operations began, our military commanders very clearly warned Congress and the American people that taking southern Afghanistan back from the Taliban would be costly. As the father of a marine who served two tours of duty in Iraq, I did not take this news lightly. But many of my colleagues in the Senate and I agreed then and agree now that defeating the militants is a job that must be done.

Our brave marines will no doubt succeed in clearing these areas in southern Afghanistan of terrorists, the same terrorists who brazenly throw acid in the faces of young girls on their way to school and coldly murder mullahs who have the audacity to disagree with their brand of hatred. But even after this is accomplished, much work will still need to be done in a country recovering from decades of war.

Key to our success is General McChrystal's recognition of the importance of building sustainable security in Afghanistan through the use of "smart power," combining military power with economic development, education, and diplomatic strategies.

While we need military forces to build security in the short term, sustaining long-term security requires smart power. Before Afghans can choose peace and the democratic process, they need enough food to eat and a stable community in which to live. That is exactly what "smart power" seeks to do. This same strategy is already proving successful in Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province.

During a visit to Afghanistan in 2006 with General Eikenberry, I heard from him and President Karzai of the need to improve and rebuild the agricultural sector in Afghanistan. I tried to do so through the creation of a land grant university consortium that would set up an agricultural extension service through USAID. Unfortunately, USAID lacked the capacity to implement this vision.

So I turned to my friends, the soldiers and airmen in the Missouri Guard who, in their civilian lives, were farmers and possessed other agricultural expertise to empower the Afghans. For over a year, the Missouri National Guard's Agricultural Development Teams, ADTs, have been helping Afghans harvest high-value alternatives to opium poppies and build irrigation systems and wells for clean water.

Decades of war in Afghanistan have left most of the country mired in 18th century practices. These ADTs provide agricultural specialists to help the Afghans rebuild their agricultural know-how and literally sow the seeds of peace in Afghanistan. Thanks to the ADTs' dedication and hard work, poppy production in Nangarhar has been vir-

tually eliminated, where it was the second most prolific producer of poppies before.

The first of these teams started to work in Nangarhar in February of 2008. The second rotation is underway. I just joined friends and family back in Missouri to celebrate the send-off of the third rotation of the ADTs. By showing a consistent commitment to the people in Nangarhar, these citizen soldiers have built relationships and trust at the local level, influencing hearts and minds to reject the deadly influence of the radical extremists.

Like "The Show Me State" motto, Missourians have shown the way forward. Thanks to their leadership, 10 other States are now sending specialized Agricultural Development Teams to provinces throughout Afghanistan.

These successes make it clear that we need to increase the investment in smart power strategies through these agricultural teams. Ten other State National Guards are now committed to the vital mission of building sustainable economies, protecting them with military force province by province. We need appropriate military protection in every province in Afghanistan. The Guard is uniquely suited to this mission. But we also need Federal military and economic efforts.

In addition to smart power, General McChrystal also understands that a counterinsurgency strategy is key to success in Afghanistan. I have been disappointed to listen to the talking heads in Washington advocate recently for an alternative approach, a mere counterterrorism strategy.

It is easy, of course, to play arm chair general from thousands of miles away. But these talking heads seem to have forgotten that a counterterrorism strategy alone failed in Iraq. Not surprisingly, it has failed so far in Afghanistan.

Counterterrorism by remote control does not cut it. The so-called surgical strikes, whether by air or ground, increase civilian casualties and only allow insurgents, from the Taliban to the drug lords to al-Qaida, to filter back in once the attacks are over. This approach leaves the people in the country subject to retaliation if they do not cooperate with the terrorists, which, not surprisingly, they do.

Conversely, the counterinsurgency strategy will ensure the violent insurgents are defeated and do not come back. I also agree with the administration that part of this strategy must allow some of the "day fighters," those who are hard-core al-Qaida supporters or Taliban ideologues, to lay down their weapons and to return to peaceful lives.

If we are getting the job done right, we will naturally lure desperate young men away from the false promises of extremism. A viable and appropriately resourced counterinsurgency strategy is not only essential for success in Afghanistan, it is pivotal in the future of Pakistan.

Driving terrorist safe havens out of eastern and southern Afghanistan is crucial, but not if al-Qaida and Taliban militants continue to find sanctuary in the remote border regions of west Pakistan. The threat these transplanted terrorists pose has become even more real over the last 6 months as the world watched Taliban militants creep closer to Pakistani nuclear facilities.

We must support the Pakistan Government and its newly aggressive military action to take out the terrorists threatening their country and Afghanistan.

The horrors of nuclear-armed terrorists would be put at risk and put at risk freedom-loving people everywhere. This is not a risk we or the world can take. The stakes of turning our backs on this conflict could not be higher. America ignored the fact that Afghanistan became one giant camp for terrorists in the 1990s, and thousands of Americans died on 9/11 as a result. And thousands of our brave troops have died in defense of our Nation since then.

We face a similar threat today, 8 years after 9/11. Al-Qaida has shifted their terrorist sanctuaries from Afghanistan to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, FATA, of Pakistan. The Taliban, the same people who sheltered Osama bin Laden and defied U.S. demands to hand him over, now fight efforts by the international community to bring stability to Afghanistan.

Our U.S. withdrawal, in whole or in part, from Afghanistan now would be a tacit yet unambiguous approval for the return of Taliban control over Afghanistan. In turn, this would lead to the establishment of safe havens for many of the world's most violent and feared terrorists. American abandonment of Afghanistan now could possibly hand over the keys to a nuclear-armed kingdom to violence-loving terrorists.

I returned this past August from Denmark and Greece, two relatively small countries but steadfast allies in their resolve to support the NATO mission and stabilize Afghanistan. Declaring defeat in Afghanistan today would signal to our allies that Americans no longer have the resolve to defeat terrorists. Declaring defeat in Afghanistan today would signal to our allies that simply by waiting us out, violent extremists can triumph over the combined military and economic might of the international community. Finally, declaring defeat in Afghanistan today would signal to the families of those who died on September 11 and the troops who have fought since then in the years since in service to their country that their loved ones died in vain. These are not signals our great Nation should ever send.

Instead, we must declare unequivocally our courage, resolve, and patience to provide needed resources and more troops to allow the smart power strategy of General McChrystal to succeed. This alone is the signal America should send.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

9/11 REMEMBRANCE

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, before I make some comments about our departed colleague, Senator Kennedy, I must comment on the gravity of the remembrance of this day in history several years ago.

There is not a person living who was old enough at the time on that fateful day in 2001 who does not remember exactly where they were when the tragedy occurred and this Nation was struck by terrorists, struck from within.

Our Nation had grown up in its history of always having been protected in the homeland, protected by geography, with two big oceans that kept us insulated from attack from without. Then suddenly we were shocked into the realization that we could be attacked on our own homeland. Of course, what America has done in reaction to that, in perfecting our defenses, in increasing our intelligence apparatus, so that we get the information before the terrorists can carry out their dastardly deeds.

That has been significant in the protection of this Nation and its people. Of course, we remember exactly that fateful day, every one of us. This Senator was only a few yards from this Chamber on the west front of this U.S. Capitol building in a meeting with leadership. We were aware that the Twin Towers had been struck with the first and second planes. Somehow we wanted to continue our meeting, even though our minds couldn't stay on the subject matter of the day, when someone burst in the room—I believe it is S-219—and said the Pentagon had been hit. We leapt to the window overlooking the Mall in the direction of the Pentagon and could see the black smoke rising.

It is interesting the reactions you have at a time such as that. My wife and I had, a few days before, moved into an apartment overlooking the southwest corner of the Pentagon. It is called Pentagon Row. Of course, I leapt to a telephone to try to get a message to her to get out of the apartment and get into the basement garage. Being unsuccessful to reach her, I came back into the room everyone had deserted and out into the hallway, seeing the hallway crowded with people going down the stairs and hearing the Capitol policeman at the bottom of the stairs saying: Get out of the building, run, run, get out of the building. Of course, the report had come in that the fourth airplane was inbound for Washington.

It was a day that brought Senator ROCKEFELLER and me together, as he beckoned to me to get into his car and, as we drove away from the Capitol complex, scrambling with our cell phones, trying to get office staff to tell them to get out of the buildings and

get to a location where they could inform us away from the Capitol complex. Senator ROCKEFELLER and I wound through streets in Washington until we got to a location where we could wait to try to get additional information. Since then, of course, our Capitol police force and the Department of Homeland Security have come through with procedures and instructions that are much more definitive than we had on that day.

I will never forget on that day when Senator ROCKEFELLER and I decided we needed to move away from the location we were—we wanted to get to a place we could get news; we went to his home—hearing not a sound in the sky since all air traffic had been ceased on order of the Secretary of Transportation, but then hearing that silent sky being pierced by the sound of F-15s overflying the Capitol. It was a day that we not only can remember but that we can take great lessons and instruction from to prepare not to let it happen again, one we remember today and those people who sacrificed, those people who were the victims.

REMEMBERING SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, it is equally a solemn subject on which I rise to remember our friend and colleague Ted Kennedy who died at the young age of 77. I say "young age" because it was another one of our colleagues, Senator John Glenn, who flew on a 10-day spaceflight at age 77. Today, 11 years later, he still looks as young as he looked back then. So 77 is way too young an age for cancer to take our friend Ted Kennedy.

From the funeral and the remembrances, we know that he was the youngest of nine children. He had four brothers. He was born in 1932 and elected to the Senate in 1962. He spent 46 years in the Senate, longer than all but two of our colleagues. He loved this institution, and he loved his fellow Senators. Of course, so many pieces of major legislation affecting the well-being of the American people if they don't have his name on it, certainly bear his fingerprints. Many of those pieces of legislation reflect the work of his pen.

He fought tirelessly for the sick, the poor, the disabled, the children, the old. He was the driving force behind efforts to guarantee rights to the disabled, to provide family and medical leave, and to ensure a fair minimum wage. He also remembered individuals, both his colleagues, his staff, and his constituents. He was the first person to call during hard times. Why do you think that yesterday, our most esteemed colleague, Senator BYRD, in his bent-over, physically disabled condition now, was wheeled to this floor in his wheelchair, and his voice rose to the occasion in memorializing his friend. I remember Senator BYRD telling me how thoughtful Senator Kennedy was on a major birthday in his