

I am back today to tell the story of a woman whose child was sick. I want to tell every one about the story of this little boy, Marcelas Owens. I met him at a health care rally in Seattle. He was 10 years old and his two sisters who we see in this picture as well have been through a lot. Two years ago their mother Tiffany, who is not in this picture—that is his grandmother—lost her life because she was uninsured, 27 years old.

How did that happen? Tiffany was a single mom who felt strongly about working to support her family. She worked as an assistant manager at a fast food restaurant. She had health care coverage for her family. But in September of 2006, she got sick and missed some work. Her employer gave her an ultimatum: Make up the lost time or lose your job. Because she was so sick, she physically could not make up the time, and she did lose her job.

When she lost her job, she lost her health insurance. Without the coverage and care she needed, in June of 2007, Tiffany lost her life, and Marcelas and his sisters lost their mom.

Our health care system is broken. It is broken for moms such as Tiffany who work to provide for their families and do the right thing, and for men who lose their health care in this market we have today. It is broken for women we have heard about who have been denied coverage or charged more for preexisting conditions such as pregnancy or C sections or, tragically, domestic violence. It is broken for their families and for little boys such as Marcelas who will never get back what he lost.

Enough is enough. The time is now. The status quo that is being defended by the other side is not working. For women across this country, for their families, for our businesses, for our Nation's future strength that as mothers we care about so much, we have to get this right. We have to remember these stories. We need to be their voice. That is why we are here today and why we are going to keep fighting to make sure that we reform the health care insurance system in this country finally and do it right.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, as we wrap up our discussion on health insurance reform, I want to say as the senior Democratic woman that I am very proud of my colleagues today and how they have spoken up about the terrible practices of the insurance companies discriminating against women.

What you heard loudly and clearly today is that health care is a women's issue, health care reform is a must-do women's issue, and health insurance reform is a must-change women's issue because what we demonstrated is that when it comes to health insurance, we women pay more and get less.

We stand today on the Senate floor to say we want equal access and equal benefits for equal premiums. We women pay more and get less when we

do pay our premiums. A 25-year-old woman is charged more than a 25-year-old man of equal or similar health status. And at age 40, it is often up to almost 50 percent. And when we do pay our benefits, when we are able to cross that barrier of getting health insurance, we get less coverage because insurance companies have certain punitive practices.

No. 1, we are often denied coverage because of something called a pre-existing condition. These preexisting conditions are not catastrophic. We hear horror story after horror story that a woman who has had a baby by a C section which was medically mandated is then denied subsequent coverage because she had that. We have heard horror story after horror story in some States that victims of domestic violence are denied health insurance because they have been battered by a spouse and then they are battered by the insurance company.

This has to change. Coverage for women is often skimpy and spartan. I think people would find it shocking, good men would find it shocking that maternity care is often denied as a basic coverage or we have to pay more to get coverage for maternity care. Often on basic preventive care, such as mammograms and cervical screenings, we have to pay significant copays in order to get them.

So we the women are fighting for health care reform. We have very basic things we support. No. 1, we want to make sure that Medicare is strengthened and saved. We know that Medicare is a woman's issue and a family issue not only because there are more women on Medicare than there are men, but we know that with Medicare, often without it or if it is curtailed or shrunk, it would mean disaster.

Mr. President, you see that I am speaking from a wheelchair. It is because I had a fall coming out of 4 o'clock mass a couple of weeks ago. When going through the ER, the OR, the rehab room, if I did not have Medicare and my health care benefit, I would be bankrupt today.

If health care is good enough for a U.S. Senator, it is good enough to make sure we have health care for U.S. citizens. So we want to save Medicare.

We also want to close that doughnut hole. The doughnut hole for prescription drugs has been very difficult to swallow. It is time to change that. We want to end the punitive insurance practices of discriminating on the basis of gender—so whether you have had a C section or whether you need mental health benefits after you have been raped, you can get your coverage.

Later on this weekend, there will be many in my State who will be "Racing for the Cure." I think it is great that we are looking for a cure for breast cancer, and we salute the Komen Foundation. But we not only want to do the research to find the cure, we want to make sure women have access to the preventive screening for breast cancer,

and ovarian cancer, and cervical cancer. We are fighting to make sure that access is provided for these important screenings and there are no barriers for payment.

In a nutshell, we, the women of the Senate, have fought for equal pay for equal work. Now we are fighting for equal benefits for equal premiums. We hope that when the insurance debate comes to the Senate, we will be able to elaborate. But today, we wanted to say: Let's get rid of the mob scene that is going around the debate on health care. Let's focus on the important human needs.

I now conclude my remarks, and I believe this concludes morning business. I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2847, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2847) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Vitter/Bennett amendment No. 2644, to provide that none of the funds made available in this act may be used for collection of census data that does not include a question regarding status of United States citizenship.

Johanns amendment No. 2393, prohibiting the use of funds to fund the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now.

Bunning amendment No. 2653, to require that all legislative matters be available and fully scored by CBO 72 hours before consideration by any subcommittee or committee of the Senate or on the floor of the Senate.

Levin/Coburn amendment No. 2627, to ensure adequate resources for resolving thousands of offshore tax cases involving hidden accounts at offshore financial institutions.

Durbin modified amendment No. 2647, to require the Comptroller General to review and audit Federal funds received by ACORN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2626

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I send amendment No. 2626 to the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration or, if necessary, set aside the pending business and call up amendment No. 2626.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the pending amendment being set aside?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2626.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.