

thing, rather than punishing them when they do the wrong thing.

Mr. BURR. The Senator is absolutely correct. What we can only hope to pass on to the next generation is an opportunity equal to what we have had. To strap them with this debt, to continue to go down this road and pile on the obligations, we will limit the next generation's opportunity. As you choke that opportunity for them, you will choke the fabric of this country in a way that the problems we are faced with today are minor in comparison to what they will deal with in the future.

As we sit here and debate the pluses and minuses of this health care legislation, I remind my colleagues, when you talk about \$2.5 trillion—and you probably never will save that money out of Medicare; you probably never will cut that doctors' reimbursement quite as much as in there—every time you don't do that, we are borrowing 43 cents of every dollar we spend. That is the obligation our children will inherit from us.

I am not willing to do that anymore. I want to make sure we are focused on the opportunity that is there for them. We can only do that if we do it in a responsible way, do the right thing as it relates to health care here.

Mr. COBURN. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that no amendments be in order to the pending amendments prior to the votes on Sunday, December 6.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### AMERICAN HOSTAGES

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal. These three young Americans have been in custody in Iran since July 31, 2009. That is more than 4 months.

Shane is from Minnesota, where his devoted mother, Cindy Hickey, still lives. I have been in constant and close touch with Cindy over the phone, and last month I was able to meet with all the families of the young hikers, and they have been back in Washington

again this week. I have to say, they are a remarkable group of people who want nothing more than to be reunited with their children. On behalf of their families, I have come to the floor today to urge the Government of Iran to make a humanitarian gesture and release these young Americans so they can be together with their families again.

As many of you know, Josh, Sarah, and Shane were hiking near the Iraqi-Iranian border in a remote region that is famous for a beautiful waterfall when they were taken into custody by Iranian authorities. The Iranians have indicated that the Americans strayed across the border in this remote region. There can be no doubt that it was an accident. Four months later, Josh, Sarah, and Shane remain in prison in Iran.

The Iranian Government has allowed the Swiss Embassy, in its capacity as protection power for U.S. interests in Iran, to have consular access to them twice during the time they have been held. I hope this will continue, and continue more regularly.

The Swiss have been enormously helpful in working with us to resolve the situation to bring these Americans home. I have been assured by one of the Swiss that Josh, Sarah, and Shane were all in decent physical condition as of the last visit. But it is also clear the imprisonment is taking its toll on these young people.

The President of Iran has indicated that their case will be examined expeditiously and with compassion, which is encouraging. President Ahmedinejad first made that statement around the time the U.N. General Assembly met this past September.

These young American tourists find themselves in unfortunate circumstances. One thing is clear: These circumstances do and should have nothing to do with politics. I hope that Josh, Sarah, and Shane's situation can be resolved on the same basis—as purely a human gesture by the Government of Iran. I understand that people on all sides tend to get caught in the middle of geopolitical events they have nothing to do with. That is a cycle that can and should be stopped. We do not want to perpetuate that cycle. Above all, I hope the Iranian Government will recognize that these Americans have committed nothing more than an innocent mistake and want nothing more than to be brought back together with their families. The Americans should be released.

In the meantime, I hope Josh, Sarah, and Shane will be able to speak with their families by phone immediately. That would be the first direct contact they have had since their detention over 4 months ago.

As we approach the holiday season and the end of the year, this is an especially important time for families to be together. That is not an American value or an Iranian value, it is a human value. It is my fervent hope that Josh, Sarah, and Shane will be

brought back together with their families now. I urge the Government of Iran to make a humanitarian gesture and make that family reunion possible.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 605

At the request of Mr. KAUFMAN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 605, a bill to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to reinstate the uptick rule and effectively regulate abusive short selling activities.

S. 1857

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1857, a bill to establish national centers of excellence for the treatment of depressive and bipolar disorders.

S. 2833

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2833, a bill to provide adjusted Federal medical assistance percentage rates during a transitional assistance period.

AMENDMENT NO. 2789

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2789 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3590, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2871

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2871 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3590, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2882

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 2882 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3590, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed Forces and certain other Federal employees, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2884

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2884 intended to be proposed to H.R. 3590, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the first-time homebuyers credit in the case of members of the Armed