

As CMS pointed out, it is unlikely these Medicare payment cuts are going to be sustainable without driving hospitals and doctors and other health care providers out of business. When they start reacting to this and those Medicare cuts are no longer sustainable, then you have built in all this new spending, and there is no way to pay for it without raising taxes dramatically, which would be, I guess, something the other side—since they have already demonstrated a significant willingness to raise taxes in this bill or borrowing, neither of which is good for the future of the country or our economy.

Right now, our economy is trying to come out of a recession. Small businesses, which create the jobs in our economy, are faced with higher taxes under this bill. They have come forward and said—every conceivable business is saying this will drive up the cost of doing business, and it will raise the cost of health care in this country.

So you have all these small businesses saying we are not going to be able to create jobs. You have that specter out there. You also have the idea of the Medicare cuts, which are, according to the CMS actuary, unlikely to be sustainable, leading to borrowing and debt, which means we are already running a \$1 trillion deficit every year and piling more on the Federal debt and there will be a movement here to raise the debt limit by almost \$2 trillion. So we will pass this on to future generations, future young Americans, who are going to bear the cost of this massive expansion of the Federal Government.

There isn't anything in this that is good for the American public, which is why they are reacting the way they are, and why you are seeing these 61 percent of Americans coming out in the polls against it.

I say to my friend from Wyoming, his thoughts with regard to this issue, these Medicare cuts being sustainable, how it is going to impact the delivery of health care around this country, and what it will do to future generations in terms of the additional debt and borrowing.

Mr. BARRASSO. As my friend knows, small communities—

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I am sorry to interrupt my friend. I ask unanimous consent that he have 1 minute to finish, after which the floor would go to the majority.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. To follow up, the small communities of this Nation have great concerns about these cuts in Medicare because the small community hospitals that stay open know they have to live within their means. When Medicare cuts total over almost \$½ trillion, it is the small communities that have just one hospital in a frontier medicine mode taking care of people who may live 50, 100, or 150 miles away, those hospitals' very survivability is at stake.

That is why we cannot pass this bill, which will hurt seniors, raise taxes on the American people, cost jobs, and cause people who have insurance to have their premiums raised. For all these reasons, this bill is the wrong prescription for America.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, first of all, I ask unanimous consent that the amount of time by which the other side went over the allotted time be added to our block of time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to speak about something a colleague of mine spoke about last night, which I think he believes separates us when, in fact, it doesn't.

Before I do that, I wish to talk for a moment about the amendment of mine now pending on the floor of the Senate, dealing with the issue of prescription drug pricing.

I offered this amendment, along with my colleague, Senator SNOWE, with the support of a broad bipartisan group of Members of the Senate—Republicans and Democrats—at a time when there has been so few bipartisan amendments. The amendment I have offered is, in fact, bipartisan and had bipartisan speeches in favor of it in the last several days. That is unusual, but I think it is also refreshing.

The amendment is very simple. It has been around for a long time. It has been hard to get passed because the pharmaceutical industry is a very strong, assertive industry. It is a good industry, but I have strong disagreements with their pricing policies. This amendment simply says the American people ought to have the freedom to access FDA-approved drugs wherever they are sold—as long as they are FDA approved—and offered at a fraction of the price they are sold at in the United States.

I ask unanimous consent to show on the floor, once again, two bottles of pills.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. This bottle contained Lipitor, perhaps the most popular cholesterol-lowering drug in the world. This was made by an American company in an Irish plant—made in Ireland and shipped around the world. This bottle, as you can see, is identical to this one. One has a red label and one has a blue label.

The only difference in a circumstance, where you have the same pill, put in the same bottle, made by the same company, is the price. Americans pay \$4.78 per tablet and, in this case, folks in another country pay \$2.05. Why the difference? Again, it is

not just one country. This bottle is shipped to virtually every other country, including Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, and it is sold at a much lower price.

The question is, Should the American people be required to pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs and not have the freedom to access those drugs in the global marketplace?

Some say: Well, if you did that—if you allow the American people to access that drug from Canada or Germany at a fraction of the price, we would get counterfeit drugs.

It is interesting that in our amendment we actually have more safety provisions than exist in our domestic drug supply. There does not now exist a tracing capability, pedigree, or batch lots. That would be a part of our amendment. That doesn't exist for America's drug supply today. We will actually improve the safety of the drug supply with this amendment.

I didn't offer this amendment to cause trouble for people. I know this is causing great angst in the Senate. We have been tied up several days now on this issue. I know the pharmaceutical industry has a great deal of clout. This issue revolves around \$100 billion, \$19 billion of which will be saved by the Federal Government in the next 10 years and nearly \$80 billion saved by the American consumers because they can access FDA prescription drugs at a fraction of the price.

So I understand why some are fighting hard to prevent this. But this is important public policy. The price of prescription drugs has gone up 9 percent this year alone. Every single year, the price of prescription drugs goes up. Every year since 2002, drug price increases have risen above the rate of inflation. We can't, in my judgment, pass health care reform through the Congress and say: Yes, we did that, but we did nothing about the relentless increases in the price of prescription drugs. We will solve that not by imposing price controls but by giving the American people freedom. They are told it is a global economy. Well, it is a global economy for everything except the American people trying to access prescription drugs at a fraction of the price in most other countries.

Again, I didn't offer this amendment to try to cause trouble; I offered this amendment to try to solve a problem. This Congress should not, in my judgment, move ahead with health care reform and decide it ought to leave the question of the American people paying the highest prices for prescription drugs—leave that alone and let that continue to be the case for the next 10 years or the next 20 years. I will speak more about it later.

#### TRADE WITH CUBA

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I came to the floor to speak about a speech a colleague, for whom I have great affection, gave yesterday on the floor of the