

in this legislation are taken into account, these two individuals would pay \$1,478 for their health insurance. But if they get married, their bill will increase to \$2,308, a marriage penalty of \$830, if you are at the 150 percent of poverty level or below. If you are at 150 percent of poverty or below, you don't have marginal income to mess around with. You need everything you have just to provide the basics. So if you are looking at this increase in the marriage penalty of \$830, you are saying: We can't afford to get married.

Is that the signal we want to send from the Federal Government? No. Everybody in this body would say that.

Let's take a pair of individuals earning 250 percent of the poverty level. One has no children; the other has two children. Unmarried they will, after subsidies, pay \$5,865 for their health coverage. If they decide to marry, they will face a penalty of \$2,050.

Let's turn to the new Medicare tax that will go into effect in 2013. The tax will apply to wage and salary income as well as certain business income for individuals. The tax will apply to income of that type for above \$200,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for joint filers.

The penalty is obvious on its face. Let's take an example. Two unmarried individuals earn \$200,000 each, and their total Medicare taxes would be \$11,600. But if they get married, the penalty is \$750. Or take two individuals, one making \$150,000 and the other \$200,000. Single, their Medicare taxes total \$10,150; if they get married, they will pay an additional \$500. This is on top of the marriage penalties that two earners face under current law. The marriage penalty is there. I don't think it is as significant as for the low-income individuals, but it is here as well.

My point is, why on Earth would that even be built into the base of the bill, particularly on the low-income couples? Why on Earth would you build in a marriage penalty on people who can't afford it? If combined income is over \$250,000, you can afford another \$500. I am willing to agree with that. But not this couple that is making at 150 percent of poverty or 250 percent of poverty, one with two kids. They can't afford that. Why on Earth would you build it into this? This is ridiculous that it be placed in the proposal. It makes no sense.

Creating and expanding on the penalties for marriage makes zero sense. Families are a critical determinant of the well-being of our society. Family structure also has a significant impact on economic well-being, on education, and the effect on the social fabric of this Nation is positive.

It is a fundamental law of economics that when you tax something, you get less of it. Why would we tax marriage, particularly for low-income individuals, when it is the best chance for those children involved with this couple to have a stable environment, if they will form a solid marriage unit? And we are going to tax it and discour-

age it. That is wrong. That is wrong as a policy matter.

There is a number of other problems I have had with this overall bill. This piece of it absolutely makes no sense to me, why we would do something like this. I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill, to take these sorts of things out, to take them out of the base law. Unfortunately, in the United States today, this is kind of repeating what already takes place in food stamps, what takes place in health benefits for low-income individuals right now. They cannot afford to get married or they lose their benefits. It is ridiculous. We ought to give people bonuses for getting married, not penalties for getting married. Now we are going to add to it by putting it in this health insurance bill. It is wrong and it is bad policy.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF ALAN D. SOLOMONT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on September 21, 2009, I announced my intention to object to proceeding to the nomination of Alan D. Solomont to be the Ambassador to Spain because of the incomplete responses that the Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS, had provided to my document requests regarding the removal of its Inspector General, Gerald Walpin. Mr. Solomont was the chairman of the board of CNCS at the time that my requests went unanswered, and he began the process that led to Mr. Walpin's removal by contacting the White House Counsel's Office on May 20, 2009.

Since September 21, the White House produced approximately 1,900 additional pages of previously withheld documents. During that time, my staff conducted a series of negotiations with CNCS and the White House Counsel's Office over the hundreds of pages of remaining documents that were being withheld or had been redacted. As a result of these negotiations, this week the White House authorized and CNCS provided: 1. descriptions of the information redacted from several CNCS documents, 2. 37-previously produced documents with substantive redactions removed, and 3. 370 pages of previously withheld documents. In addition, the White House made Mr. Solomont available for a follow-up interview on December 8, 2009, so that he could be questioned about new information that had been learned from these documents

and other sources since his initial interview on July 15, 2009.

In order to obtain this additional information, I agreed to no longer object to proceeding to Mr. Solomont's nomination if the White House took these steps. I have kept my word and informed leadership that I no longer intend to object. However, I remain concerned about the accuracy and completeness of Mr. Solomont's answers to questions during both his July 15 and December 8, 2009 interviews. I understand Congressman ISSA of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform shares those concerns and has sent a letter to Mr. Solomont to that effect.

Although CNCS has produced a total of approximately 3,000 pages of material responsive to my request, the record should also be clear that the White House continues to withhold 46 documents, on grounds of deliberative process and attorney work product privileges. The White House did not provide a detailed log of the documents being withheld despite my requests. I will continue to seek answers to the remaining questions in this matter.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3199. Mr. CORKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2786 proposed by Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DODD, and Mr. HARKIN) to the bill H.R. 3590, 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; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3200. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2786 proposed by Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DODD, and Mr. HARKIN) to the bill H.R. 3590, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3199. Mr. CORKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2786 proposed by Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DODD, and Mr. HARKIN) to the bill H.R. 3590, 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 399, strike line 10 and all that follows through page 403, line 17, and insert the following:

“(y) INCREASED FMAP FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEWLY ELIGIBLE MANDATORY INDIVIDUALS.—

“(1) 100 PERCENT FMAP.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Federal medical assistance percentage determined for a State that is one of the 50 States or the District of Columbia with respect to amounts expended for medical assistance for newly eligible individuals described in subclause (VIII) or (IX) of section 1902(a)(10)(A)(i) shall be equal to 100 percent.

“(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection: