

Medicare, is going to be filled so that seniors will no longer have that period of uncertainty where their bills have reached a level where they are disqualified from payment—the so-called doughnut hole. It will be filled. It will give them peace of mind that if they have expensive pharmaceuticals, they will have no interruption in coverage in the future when it comes to those pharmaceuticals.

For seniors, these are two major things—to put Medicare on sound financial footing and to fill the doughnut hole under the Medicare prescription part of the program.

It also is going to give seniors for the first time access to the kind of preventive care—regular checkups—they need for peace of mind and so doctors and professionals can catch problems before they get worse.

This bill is a positive bill, a positive step forward.

Yesterday, we had a chance as a Senate Democratic caucus to meet with President Obama. We went to the White House, the Executive Office Building, and the President talked to us about what this bill means. He reminded us that seven Presidents have tried to do this and failed. He told us when he started this trek that he wanted to be the last President to deal with health care reform because he wanted to get it done. I feel the same way. I think the American people feel the same way.

I am sure there is confusion. There have been a lot of misstatements made about death panels and things that really have no basis in fact. But people should be confident that when the AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons, stands up and says this is a good bill for the seniors in America under Medicare and Social Security and for their families; when medical professionals, doctors and medical professionals, stand up and say this is a good bill, that we have the kind of support we need to say to the American people that this is an important step forward in health care protection in America.

It is time for us to make history and pass this bill. Let's do it and do it in time for Members to enjoy Christmas with their families.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to three young Americans who have been killed in Iraq since July 28. This brings to 882 the number of servicemembers either from California or based in California that have been killed while serving our country in Iraq. This represents 20 percent of all U.S. deaths in Iraq.

SPC Lukas C. Hopper, 20, of Merced, CA, died October 30, southeast of Karadah, Iraq, of injuries sustained during a vehicle roll-over. Private First Class Hopper was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC.

SPC Christopher M. Cooper, 28, of Oceanside, CA, died October 30 in Babil province, Iraq, of injuries sustained from a noncombat related incident. Specialist Cooper was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Schweinfurt, Germany.

PVT Jhanner A. Tello, 29, of Los Angeles, CA, died December 10 in Baghdad, Iraq, of injuries sustained from a noncombat related incident. Private Tello was assigned to the 3rd Aviation Support Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX.

I would also like to pay tribute to the 27 soldiers from California or based in California who have died while serving our country in Operation Enduring Freedom since July 28.

SPC Matthew K.S. Swanson, 20, of Lake Forest, CA, died August 8 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, of injuries sustained during a vehicle roll-over July 19 in Logar province, Afghanistan. Specialist Swanson was assigned to the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Fort Drum, NY.

LCpl Javier Olvera, 20, of Palmdale, CA, died August 8 while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Lance Corporal Olvera was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, NC.

PFC Brian M. Wolverton, 21, of Oak Park, CA, died August 20 in Kunar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with indirect fire. Private First Class Wolverton was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Fort Drum, NY.

LCpl Donald J. Hogan, 20, of San Clemente, CA, died August 26 while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Lance Corporal Hogan was assigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

CPT John L. Hallett III, 30, of Concord, CA, died August 25 in southern Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device. Captain Hallett was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA.

SPC Tyler R. Walshe, 21, of Shasta, CA, died August 31 in southern Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. Specialist Walshe was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA.

SPC Jonathan D. Welch, 19, of Yorba Linda, CA, died August 31 in Shuyene Sufia, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. Specialist Welch was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA.

PO3 James R. Layton, 22, of Riverbank, CA, died September 8 in Kunar province, Afghanistan, while supporting combat operations. Petty Officer 3rd Class Layton was assigned to an embedded training team with Combined Security Transition Command in Afghanistan.

Capt Joshua S. Meadows, 30, of Bastrop, TX, died September 5 while supporting combat operations in Farah province, Afghanistan. Captain Meadows was assigned to 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, Camp Pendleton, CA.

TSgt James R. Hornbarger, 33, of Castle Rock, WA, died September 12 as a result of a non-hostile incident in the Mediterranean. Technical Sergeant Hornbarger was assigned to the 9th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Beale Air Force Base, CA.

SGT Joshua M. Hardt, 24, of Applegate, CA, died October 3 in Kamdesh, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his contingency outpost with small arms, rocket-propelled grenade and indirect fires. Sergeant Hardt was assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO.

SSgt Aaron J. Taylor, 27, of Bovey, MN, died October 9 while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Taylor was assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron 372, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Alfonso Ochoa, Jr., 20, of Armona, CA, died October 10 while supporting combat operations in Farah province, Afghanistan. Lance Corporal Ochoa was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force,