

Third, this bill will fix an injustice to doctors who treat America's senior citizens—those on Medicare. More than a decade ago, a Republican-dominated Congress passed a flawed policy regarding how doctors are reimbursed for seeing patients on Medicare. Tomorrow, these doctors will see those payments drop 21 percent—that is more than one-fifth—and it will drop overnight. That is grossly unfair to doctors and it is dangerous for seniors, veterans, and others they may soon no longer be able to treat.

But that is not all. Many HMOs and other providers base their reimbursements on Medicare rates. So you don't have to be a senior citizen or a veteran to be affected by the sharp cut scheduled to take effect tomorrow.

Some on the other side are still trying again to stand in the way. As I said, the doctors payment problem came out of a Congress that was dominated by Republicans. The Democratic Congress is determined to fix this.

Let's say a word about the BP disaster. Next week will mark 2 months since millions of gallons of oil started gushing into the Gulf of Mexico. But this week will tell us a lot about who is fighting for the taxpayers and who is fighting for corporate America.

The cost of the BP disaster isn't limited to the devastated waters and wildlife along our gulf coast. The damage extends to the lives and livelihoods of so many in that region—such as small businesses that can't operate at full speed, and the workers whose jobs are threatened when these businesses slow. Whether it is fishermen, shrimpers, or tourism businesses whose workplace—the Gulf of Mexico—has been polluted on such a large scale, the damages would stretch clear across the State of Nevada, from our California border to our Utah border. Understand how big that is. Nevada is the seventh largest State in the Union, areawise.

Another cost, of course, is the families forever changed when 11 men died in the explosion that caused the spill. Some estimate the pricetag for this disaster will climb to the tens of billions of dollars. But let's be honest: Someone is going to end up paying that bill eventually, but we are making sure it is not going to be the taxpayers. We are going to send the tab to BP.

That is why I sent a letter yesterday to Tony Hayward, BP's chief executive officer. I am pleased and encouraged that the vast majority of Democrats we could get hold of signed their names alongside mine. We told Hayward we are committed to ensuring BP is held fully responsible, and that we refuse to ask taxpayers to bail out one of the richest companies in the whole world. We asked our Republican colleagues to join us.

We are calling on BP to create a special accountability account—overseen by an independent trustee—to pay for the damages from their historic disaster and the cost of cleaning up their catastrophe. We are making these de-

mands because we don't have a lot of reason to give BP the benefit of the doubt. Shortly after the explosion, we learned of the shortcuts that led to it. We saw it all over—including a very nice piece they did on "60 Minutes." We also recently learned BP vastly understated the extent and rate of the spill. And in past disasters, we have seen other oil companies spend millions on lawsuits and public relations campaigns, all designed not to compensate the businesses and families they hurt but to improve their profits.

Our message to BP is as simple as this: If you drill and you spill, we are going to make sure you pay the bill.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FLAG DAY, HEALTH CARE AND EXTENDERS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, first, I would like to note a couple important anniversaries today. It was on this day in 1775 that the Continental Army was established and George Washington appointed to lead it. So June 14 has gone down in history not only as the beginning of America's defeat of the British Army but also as the birth of the greatest Army the world has ever known. The largest and oldest branch of the U.S. military, the Army is older than the United States itself. Its first leader became our first President. It continues to make Americans proud, and we are grateful on this day and every day for the men and women of the U.S. Army.

Incidentally, 2 years to the day after the establishment of the Army, the Second Continental Congress officially established the flag under which our military has fought ever since. The resolution in Congress said that 13 stripes would represent the 13 States, and that 13 stars would represent the Union in the form of a new constellation. President Wilson officially established this day as Flag Day in 1916. Ever since, Americans everywhere have honored this great symbol of freedom every year on Flag Day, June 14. We honor those who have fought for it, and we are proud of all that the flag of the United States of America represents here and wherever it flies around the globe.

On another topic, the Obama administration announced new regulations today that will give Americans a better sense of how the health care bill will affect them. These new regulations outline the various ways in which existing health plans will be forced to change under the new law. According to the Obama administration report we saw on all this today, these regulations could result in nearly 7 out of 10 workers—and 80 percent of workers at small businesses—seeing changes in their

plans. In other words, under the new health care bill, more than half of those who get insurance through their jobs may be forced to change their plans whether they want to or not.

This is not only bad news for the vast majority of Americans who like the plans they have. It also flatly contradicts the President's repeated promises to the contrary. A year ago this month, the President said the following on national television: "... Government is not going to make you change plans under health reform"

The implication here was that businesses might change your plans, but government won't. Today's regulations show that this isn't true. The government is about to change the plans most Americans have. Here's one more promise the administration has broken on health care and one more warning Republicans issued on this bill that's been vindicated.

Now onto the business on the floor. Since Democrats continue to argue among themselves about the extenders bill, I will be asking consent at the end of my remarks to pass a 30-day extension of the recently expired provisions in the bill that will give doctors and those looking for work the assurances they need to plan ahead. And rather than doing it in a way that simply adds to the deficit, this proposal would actually reduce the debt by \$2.5 billion. Moreover, later today Senator THUNE will offer an amendment that would provide for a long-term extension of these programs, plus the tax provisions which expired at the end of last year, without adding a dime to the deficit.

In fact, the Thune amendment would enable us to lower the deficit by \$55 billion by enacting the kinds of spending cuts Americans are demanding of lawmakers in Washington.

Many of these cuts have been proposed previously by Senator COBURN and received bipartisan support on the supplemental spending bill. We need to show the American people we are making serious efforts to cut spending. The Thune amendment gives us an opportunity to do just that today. I hope our Democrat friends join us in that effort.

As I indicated and mentioned to the majority leader when we were in private discussion a while ago, I will now propound the consent agreement to which I referred in my remarks.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3421

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 411, S. 3421; further, that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; before the chair rules, for clarity, this is a paid for 30-day extension of the extenders bill, which includes unemployment insurance, doc fix, COBRA, flood insurance, and the extension of the small business loan guarantee program and the 2009 Federal poverty guidelines.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?