

compromise, working together in accommodation. I know the Senator looks forward to that. I hope we can achieve that result.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, I say in response to that, that is absolutely true. Around here I think, traditionally, tax extenders have been something both sides have worked on. Generally, it tends to be kind of noncontroversial. I think our side is very open to discussions and would welcome an opportunity to sit down with the majority and the Senator from Montana and others, whenever they feel necessary, to work something out. We stand ready and willing to have that discussion and hopefully to get this thing put behind us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. I would add a final point to these remarks; that is, the approach I take. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I try not to bring up these extenders bills until they have been worked out. With sufficient work on both sides, I believe that leaves at least 60 votes available, and I hope we can achieve a result quickly.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today marks 6 months since Congress enacted the new health care reform law.

Americans have reason to celebrate.

The new law put America on the road to a more sustainable consumer-friendly health care system.

The new law put America on the road to a healthcare system in which all Americans have access to quality, affordable health insurance.

And the new law put America on the road to a health care system in which patients and their doctors—not insurance companies—control patient care.

These transformative changes will not happen overnight. But we heard the distressed cries from American families and businesses for immediate relief from insurer abuses. Congress included in the new health reform law many consumer protection provisions that take effect today, September 23, 2010.

These provisions—a new Patient's Bill of Rights—put an end to some of the worst insurance company abuses. The new law puts consumers in control of their health care decisions. And the new law extends important new coverage benefits under insurance plans.

Starting today plans cannot discriminate against children with pre-existing conditions. No longer will insurance companies be able to deny tens of thousands of families insurance each year for their children because of a pre-existing condition.

Starting today insurance companies are banned from canceling your coverage due to an unintentional mistake on your application. No longer will insurance companies be allowed to arbitrarily drop your coverage when you get sick and need it the most.

Starting today insurance companies can no longer place lifetime or restrictive annual limits on coverage. No longer will families need to worry that their coverage will run out when they need it the most.

Starting today when you purchase or join a new insurance plan, you have the right to choose your own doctor in your network. No longer will insurance companies be able to arbitrarily decide which doctor you have to see.

Starting today, if you purchase or join a new insurance policy, you will be guaranteed the right to appeal insurance company decisions to an independent third party. No longer will consumers find themselves with nowhere to turn when insurers deny them coverage or restrict their treatment.

Starting today, providers and suppliers—that is doctors and medical equipment manufacturers—who fail a fraud screening will be denied eligibility for payments under government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. No longer will providers and suppliers be able to defraud the government and taxpayers instead of provide quality health care.

There is more. Starting today, young adults will be allowed to remain on their parents' plan until their 26th birthday, unless they are offered coverage at work. No longer will young adults be without affordable coverage options. Now they will have choices to transition them into their adult lives and protect them from financial ruin.

And starting today, if you purchase or join a new insurance plan, you will be able to receive free recommended preventive care. No longer will Americans have to forgo valuable preventive care until it is too late.

All of the benefits that begin today are in addition to the benefits that families and businesses already enjoy as a result of the new health reform law.

Already because of the new law, across the Nation, federally subsidized preexisting condition insurance plans are available for Americans with pre-existing conditions who have been denied coverage by insurance companies.

Already because of the new law up to 4,000 small businesses are eligible for tax credits this year if they provide health insurance for their employees.

Already because of the new law, more than 2,000 businesses have qualified to receive reimbursement for the retiree coverage that they provide.

And already because of the new law, more than a million seniors have received rebate checks to reduce their prescription drug out-of-pocket costs in the donut hole.

Today, with this 6-month mark, we pass a key milestone on our road to providing quality, affordable health care to all Americans.

This milestone is just one of many along the road. But this milestone is one that signals an end to the insurance companies' worst abuses. This milestone signals the beginning to pa-

tient-controlled health care, and that is something to celebrate.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LUMBEE RECOGNITION ACT

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss an issue that is vitally important to North Carolina's economy, and to the heritage and cultural identity of more than 40,000 Americans. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Lumbee Recognition Act.

The Lumbee Indians are among the earliest North Carolinians. They descended from the coastal tribes of North Carolina and lived along the Lumber River before our Nation was founded.

During that time, the Lumbee have maintained a distinct community in what is now Robeson County, NC, with more than 40,000 current members in and around the county seat of Lumberton.

Tribe members have worked diligently throughout the generations to sustain a strong tribal society.

Each and every Lumbee can trace his or her ancestry to the tribe's base roll, which is comprised of school and church records and early 20th-century census data. This common ancestry has bound the tribe for generations and established the Lumbee as a long-standing, distinct community in southeastern North Carolina.

Nearly two-thirds of the tribe live within 15 miles of the city of Pembroke, where they start families and businesses, run for tribal office, and attend the annual Fourth of July parade.

The Lumbee fought alongside the American Colonists during the Revolutionary War, and helped shape North Carolina's history.

But because the tribe lacked a formal treaty relationship with the new United States, the tribe has worked for over 120 years to win the recognition that they so clearly deserve.

As has been noted by the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, "The Lumbees have a longstanding history of functioning like an Indian tribe and being recognized as such by State and local authorities. Since 1885, the Lumbees have maintained an active political relationship with the State of North Carolina."

The State officially recognized the tribe in 1885, and established a separate school system for Lumbee children.

With initial enrollment limited to children who could demonstrate at least four generations of Lumbee descent, this autonomous school system has remained in place for over 100 years.