

control without a copay jumped from 14 percent to 56 percent. That means some serious costs were avoided for many women.

The average annual savings for women last year was \$269. In total, women in the United States saved \$483 million on contraceptives, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Among those women were 917,000 in North Carolina alone who were eligible for preventive services without additional copays. Many of these women sought and used birth control medications for reasons that had absolutely nothing to do with planning pregnancy. In fact, oral contraceptives are a key treatment for at least three major medical conditions that affect women. Polycystic ovary syndrome affects 5 to 10 percent of women of reproductive age, and if left untreated can lead to the development of ovarian cysts or infertility. In addition, 11 percent of women are affected by endometriosis in their lifetime, and 40,000 women each year are diagnosed with endometrial cancer. Many women are at risk of developing ovarian cancer—one of the most deadly cancers in the United States—and women with ovarian cancer also can receive treatment via birth control. And yes, one of the best known ways to reduce the risk of these conditions is birth control.

Employers who make their female employees pay out of pocket for contraceptives aren't just imposing their personal beliefs, they are also making it more difficult for women to access important lifesaving medical treatment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I would like to ask for another 45 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HAGAN. That is why I believe it is so important to debate and to pass the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act. This bill would fix the Hobby Lobby decision by making it illegal for any company to deny their workers specific health benefits, including birth control, that would be required to be covered. It would make clear that bosses cannot discriminate against their female workers and would ensure equal treatment under the law for tens of thousands of workers for which coverage hangs in the balance. It would preserve and codify the existing accommodation for our nonprofit religious employees.

It is troubling to me that in 2014 we are even debating women's access to contraception. Nearly all women—99 percent—will use it at some point in their lives, and they should have access to safe, effective birth control if they choose to use it—plain and simple.

This bill would ensure that those decisions about an employee's health can stay between the woman and her doctor, not between the woman and her boss. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

CONGO ADOPTION POLICY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to talk about an issue today that transcends party lines: the humanitarian crisis we are seeing in Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In September of last year the Congo informed the United States that they would no longer issue exit visas for Congolese children who were in the process of being adopted by American parents. These are kids that have gone through the adoption process and yet the Government of the Congo says they cannot leave the country. This terrible and unjustifiable action has left hundreds of children and their families here in the United States in limbo.

Last Friday the Congolese Government announced an end to exit permit exceptions until the country passes what they deem are new adoption laws. I stand here today to express our deep concern and commitment to resolve this crisis from so many in the Senate. We have over 50 cosponsors for a resolution calling on the Congo to do the right thing. Those of us who have cosponsored this are looking for a way to help these children who have already been adopted to be reunited with their families permanently.

More than 350 families have finalized adoptions of Congolese children. They have obtained the necessary U.S. approvals, including U.S. visas authorizing their children to immigrate to the United States. There were 400 additional families in the process of completing adoptions at the time Congo imposed this moratorium. In every way that matters, including in what they feel in their hearts, these are their children.

All told, more than 800 children are caught in this diplomatic nightmare. By the way, that is about 10 percent of total adoptions worldwide by American families last year. These are international adoptions, so it is a significant number. Many of these kids have special needs, and those needs are not being met. Until they are able to come home and be with their families, those needs will not be met. In fact, some lives have been put at risk. In fact, six of these children have already died.

I had the opportunity to meet with some of the parents of some of these children and have seen some of the photos and heard some of the stories. If the Congolese Government would simply do the right thing and allow these exit permits, lives would be saved. We can't remain silent in the face of this tragedy.

Together with Senator LANDRIEU of Louisiana, I am offering a resolution calling on the administration to take action and demand that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo resume processing these adoption cases and issuing exit permits so these kids can leave. They need to

prioritize the processing of inter-country adoptions which were initiated before the suspension began.

I thank Senator LANDRIEU for her hard work on this matter, as well as 50 of our colleagues from both sides of the aisle who have joined us.

Last week I met with a number of families from Ohio, and we had the opportunity to talk about some of these kids and some of their specific circumstances. We also talked about what these families are ready to do, and they are ready to give these kids the support and love they need.

I met with the Millimans from Columbus, OH. They are adopting a little girl who has very serious medical conditions. They are in the final stages of the adoption process, and they fear they will not be able to provide her the treatment and care she needs.

I also met with the Webb family. The Webbs are in the process of adopting a child from the Congo to bring to their home in Wooster, OH. The Webbs' biological daughter Heather is also in the process of adopting from the Congo. They were both in the Capitol to talk about their kids and what they have been through.

These families represent the very best of our country and our values, a respect for these young people's lives and a commitment to live with humility, prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable children. This diplomatic impasse is keeping these families apart. It is time the administration joined with Congress to support the families and the children involved in this crisis in every way possible.

In the coming days, I hope we will speak with one voice and demand that Congo reverse their decision and process these adoptions as quickly as possible. It is my sense this is an issue that will come up in committee this week. I hope before this session is out we will be able to take this up on the floor of the Senate, pass it, and begin to put some pressure on the Congolese Government to do the right thing. It is time to allow these children to be with their loving families.

With that, I yield back all time and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last week I heard the majority leader speak about people who are happy with the President's health care law. While I agree that some people have been helped by the law, many Americans have been hurt by the law's destructive side effects. Republicans have given examples of people from all across the