

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF GERTRUDE SILVIA RUDIAK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the 100th birthday of an incredible Nevadan, Gertrude Silvia Rudiak. For more than 70 years, Gertrude has been a leader in southern Nevada and has remained committed to her family, community, and faith.

Nearly a century ago, on August 2, 1915, Gertrude was born to Jewish immigrant parents in Dickinson, ND. As a child, her family moved from place to place across the country, but it was her parents' understanding of the value of higher education that brought them to the west coast. In California, she attended the University of California, Berkeley, where she received her bachelor's degree in music. Later, Gertrude built upon her skill set and earned credentials from the Business College of Oakland in office procedure. With undeniable tenacity and the knowledge she gained, she was able to work through the Great Depression.

In 1942, Gertrude met the love of her life, George Rudiak, and they married in September the same year. George was born in Moscow, Russia, and the experiences he and his family endured as they immigrated to the United States greatly shaped the man he became and the civil work he pursued later in his life.

George had received a law degree from the Boalt Hall School of Jurisprudence at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1940, but finding a job was a challenge. He was able to do some work for the State of California and the U.S. Employment Services; and in the midst of World War II, George enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. The first place he was assigned was the Western Flying Training Command at Santa Ana. George was later transferred to the Las Vegas Gunnery School, which is now Nellis Air Force Base. Though the young couple was only stationed in Las Vegas for a short time, they fell in love with the city and moved back to plant their roots in the desert sand as soon as George was honorably discharged in 1946.

The Las Vegas of the 1940s was quite different from the Las Vegas of today. Approximately 21,000 people called the city home, and there was racial segregation. Some even referred to Las Vegas as the "Mississippi of the West." As the first city attorney of North Las Vegas, a Nevada Legislator, and chairman of the Nevada Equal Rights Commission, George was committed to bringing equality to Nevada. Gertrude

supported his efforts; and for more than 70 years, has made civic, religious, and humanitarian contributions of her own that have shaped our community. Today, all Las Vegans benefit from the compassionate work of Gertrude and George to make our community a better and more just place.

George Rudiak was a lawyer's lawyer. He was the lawyer we all looked to as the gold standard for an ethical, competent, experienced trial lawyer.

There are truly selfless people in the world, and Gertrude is one of these people. She is dedicated to her five children, their children, and their children's children and still finds time to improve her community. Over the past seven decades, she has filled traditionally male-held positions on community boards, including becoming the first female to serve on the board of Temple Beth Shalom, and has been a champion of secular and Jewish education in Las Vegas and Israel. Her efforts have been recognized by the Jewish National Fund, the United Jewish Appeal, and the Anti-Defamation League. Additionally, Mayor Carolyn Goodman presented Gertrude with the rare honor of a key to the city of Las Vegas in 2014. On more than one occasion, the city has declared August 2, Gertrude's birthday, Gertrude Rudiak Day in recognition of her long-standing commitment to Las Vegas.

I am grateful for Gertrude's contributions to our State, and I wish her a happy 100th birthday. May this year bring Gertrude and her family much health and happiness.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1965, millions of Americans and nearly half the country's seniors couldn't afford basic health care. But that began to change 50 years ago today. President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Medicare program for the elderly and the Medicaid program for low-income adults, children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.

Although it was signed by President Johnson, it "started with the man from Independence," . . . Harry S. Truman. In 1949, Truman became the first President to publically support a national health insurance program and sent a bill to Congress that would give health insurance to everyone age 65 and older. Critics called the idea "socialized medicine," and the effort failed.

Sixteen years later, President Johnson believed "the times had caught up with the idea." And he was right. Today, 46 million older adults and 9 million people with disabilities depend on Medicare for health care and economic security. In Illinois, 1.9 million people are enrolled in Medicare.

And because of the Affordable Care Act, the program has grown stronger. The Medicare Part A trust fund is now expected to be solvent for an additional 13 years because of the Affordable Care

Act. The Affordable Care Act is also helping seniors with the cost of their prescription drugs. Since the passage of the ACA, people with Medicare in Illinois have saved over \$554 million on prescription drugs, because we closed the donut hole. That is an average savings of \$925 for each Illinois senior. The Affordable Care Act also expanded Medicare coverage of certain preventive services, such as mammograms or colonoscopies, without any cost sharing.

Let's not forget this is also the 50th Anniversary of Medicaid. Medicaid has been a lifeline for millions of people, especially children. My friends on the other side of the aisle find it easy to discredit a government program, but this isn't about a program. It is about the people who benefit from them.

Over 54 million people benefit from Medicaid. Before the Affordable Care Act, two out of three people on Medicaid were pregnant women and children. That is 36 million of our most vulnerable citizens. Medicaid also serves people with disabilities, including many low-income Americans with disabilities who would have nowhere else to turn.

Before the Affordable Care Act, almost 3 million people were covered by Medicaid in Illinois and more than half of all births were covered by Medicaid. Now, anyone living below 133 percent of poverty can join Medicaid. That's a single person earning less than \$15,654 a year, or a family of three bringing in \$26,720. And for this population, the Federal Government picks up 100% of the cost. Because of the Affordable Care Act, more than 570,000 people in Illinois are now covered by Medicaid. I call that a success.

Just ask Christopher Greenwood if this law is making a difference. Christopher Greenwood is a community health and prevention coordinator for the City of Rockford working to help people sign up for health insurance. He helped a 50-year-old woman enroll in Medicaid, and she was excited to have coverage for preventive services like a mammogram.

According to Christopher:

People aren't realizing the benefits of the Affordable Care Act. It's all about prevention services. When we tell people they need to sign up, they think they don't need it. But when we start telling them the benefits, to see the looks on their faces, it's all really cool.

You know who else benefits from Medicaid? Providers, hospitals and doctors. Ask a provider back home: What would you prefer? Reimbursement by Medicaid or not be paid at all? The answer is obvious.

Medicare and Medicaid save lives. The programs provide high quality health care to millions of people. Yes, we owe something to Truman for this idea. We owe something to Johnson for signing it into law. And today, we should focus on further strengthening these programs so they can serve future generations.