

bring this bill in its then form to some final vote. But, in order to do so, we need the cooperation of Members. We need them to appear. We need them to speak to their amendments or speak to the bill, to let their views be known, to carry on the debate in the better traditions of the Senate.

So, Mr. President, I summarize by saying we are open and ready for business and any Member who wishes to do business will be welcome through the door.

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR DAVID PRYOR

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today for just a few moments to express my admiration and appreciation and my respect for DAVID PRYOR, our colleague, who has announced that he will not be running for reelection next year.

For those of us in Washington and, of course, for those people in public life all over the country, we meet all manner of different human beings, both in terms of the constituents that we meet and, of course, the colleagues with whom we work. While none are bad, some are different from others and some are better and some are best. And in the category of best, I would put DAVID PRYOR, the best kind of a human being, the best kind of a friend, the best kind of a public representative.

The people in Arkansas know very well what an outstanding person DAVID PRYOR is and what a great public servant DAVID PRYOR has been. He is beloved by virtually everybody in Arkansas to the extent that when he ran for reelection last time, he had no opposition, and had he run for reelection in 1996, it is undoubtedly true that he would have received an enormous majority of the votes cast in that election.

So DAVID PRYOR's record of accomplishment and achievement, the esteem in which he is held by people in Arkansas, is well known. Those of us here who have worked with him in the Senate are equally well aware of what it is that DAVID PRYOR has accomplished and what kind of a person he is. In my judgment, DAVID PRYOR is the best kind of a public servant, the best kind of a Senator, for many reasons, chief among which, in my judgment, is

the fact that he is a person who can and does work with all of his colleagues, regardless of which side of the aisle they happen to occupy. I believe that is an enormous virtue in a public servant, and that it is invaluable in the Senate where, in order to get things done in a constructive fashion, in order to keep the place working, people have to have a willingness and an ability to compromise their differences in order to get things passed, in order to keep legislation moving and, more importantly perhaps, in order to assure the people that we represent all over the country that this is an institution that can work.

DAVID PRYOR understands that as well as anybody I have met in my now 6 years here in the Senate. He practices that. Although we Democrats, of course, know how comfortable and how easy it is to work with him, I know it is equally true that Republicans recognize in DAVID PRYOR a person who, more than anything else, wants to get things done and in no way, ever, is interested in just impeding the work of the Senate.

So he is an outstanding person. Personally, DAVID PRYOR, when I came here 6 years ago, befriended me immediately. He went out of his way, recognizing that I was new to the process, and he went out of his way to see to it that I got along here and got to know my colleagues, got to know a little bit about how the Senate works, and in every way and at every turn, when I ran up against an obstacle or had a problem I did not know how to deal with, I felt comfortable talking to him. He was always receptive and always willing to put aside whatever it was he was occupied with in order to take care of my needs and to help ensure that I became a working Member of this body.

So DAVID PRYOR has been not only a great Senator but he has been a wonderful human being. I think that we can celebrate what he has accomplished in his career here in the Senate and celebrate it in a way which really does not, in any way, suggest that his career is over. He is not running for reelection in 1996. He says he wants to return to the private sector. Whatever he does, he is going to be good and effective at it. He is a person of public service, and his career in politics may go on at another time in another place and in another job. If it does, we will all be very well served.

So DAVID PRYOR, we love you and we respect you. We have great regard for what you have accomplished here among us, and we wish you well during these next 18 months when you will continue to serve with us. We certainly wish you, Barbara, and your family continued good health and happiness as you wend your way along the path of life.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

SENATOR DAVID PRYOR

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I happened to turn my television set on in my room and caught Senator KOHL making his brief remarks about our colleague, Senator PRYOR. It occurred to me that I should come over here and just say a few things also, about DAVID PRYOR, who has announced that he is not going to be running for reelection.

I can remember when I was in the House and I heard DAVID PRYOR speak to a breakfast meeting. I had known him just to say hello, but I was very favorably impressed and I have been favorably impressed through the years.

Two things I think of specifically in connection with our colleague, Senator PRYOR. One is the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. The Internal Revenue Service does excellent work, but whenever you have human beings, occasionally there are those who abuse their privileges and that is true in any organization—the U.S. Senate, the Internal Revenue Service. So DAVID PRYOR introduced his Taxpayer Bill of Rights, which gives the ordinary taxpayer, who may be abused, or feels he or she is abused by the IRS, an option and an ombudsman who can say: Let us take a look at whether we are doing the right thing.

The second thing I can remember is DAVE PRYOR standing here on the floor and going through an amazing list of consultants being hired by virtually every agency of Government. It was an astounding accumulation. I do not remember what the figure was, but it was absolutely astounding. I remember then the next appropriations, and the next budget, we whacked away at that. It may very well be creeping back up again, I do not know, but it is one of those areas that is very easily abused by Government. We hire consultants for everything from the Department of Energy, Department of Defense, foreign aid—whatever it is, we hire consultants.

I also think of DAVE PRYOR as someone who is genuinely interested in the well-being of our country. Yes, he is a partisan as we all are partisans, but frequently this body gets too partisan. I hear it in our Democratic caucuses. I am sure my colleague hears it from Republican caucuses. He has not invited me to any of his Republican caucuses, but I am sure he hears the same. And I think one of the things the public wants from us is that we say, "What is

good for the country?" And we follow that. DAVE PRYOR really has done that.

He has been just a distinguished Member of this body in addition to being a friend of all of us. It has been a real privilege to serve with him in the U.S. Senate. He has served Arkansas well, but I think more important than that, he has served the United States of America well. I am proud to have him as a colleague here in the Senate.

Mr. GORTON. Will the Senator from Illinois yield?

Mr. SIMON. I will be pleased to yield to my friend from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. I enjoyed the description by the Senator from Illinois of the Senator from Arkansas. I agree with it. I may also say I believe the Senator from Illinois has described himself.

Mr. SIMON. My friend from Washington has been too generous in that remark, but I thank him anyway.

Mr. President, if no one else seeks the floor—I see my colleague from Colorado does not look as if he is quite ready. He is still making notes.

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

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as if in morning business for a period of not more than 10 minutes.

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

MEDICARE: THE TICKING TIME BOMB

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the approaching insolvency of our Medicare Program.

The Clinton administration has confirmed that Medicare is going bankrupt. We must act now to save it. We must reform Medicare to protect it, to preserve it, and to improve it.

Next year, for the first time in its 30-year history, the program will begin deficit spending. And on April 3, the Medicare Board of Trustees announced that Medicare will go bankrupt by the year 2002. In 7 years—well before I will be eligible for benefits—the program will have exhausted all of its resources and will cease to exist in its current form. We must act now.

This is not new information—Congress has been warned repeatedly of the Medicare time bomb. Mr. President, the clock is ticking—we must take action this Congress to save this vital program. I come before you today to discuss the successes and failures of this program, and to begin to look for ways to protect and preserve its long-term health.

What is Medicare? It is a Government program which gives 32 million older Americans and 4 million individuals with disabilities access to the private health care system. Medicare is actually made up to two entirely different programs: A hospital insurance program, which is compulsory for seniors, and a physician insurance program, which is voluntary, with 96 percent of all seniors participating in this voluntary insurance program.

Medicare's hospital insurance program—part A—is funded by a payroll tax on working citizens, a tax which entitles them to future benefits.

The physician insurance program, part B, in contrast, is funded by a combination of general tax revenues and premiums paid by the beneficiary.

Medicare has been very successful, successful in providing access to quality care. More than 37 million Americans today are covered by the program. Today's elderly live longer, live healthier lives, and enjoy a better quality of life than ever before. Medicare participants are extremely satisfied with the overall care they receive. Yet, Medicare has become a victim of its own success. All will be lost if we do not act to save Medicare.

Over the years, many have found fault with the program: it does not cover comprehensive benefits; it does not protect out-of-pocket costs; it does not really provide incentives for consumers to maintain cost-conscious behavior; it does not reward providers with keeping people healthy; and its costs clearly are growing out of control faster than the Nation's economy, faster than the budget as a whole, and faster than twice the rate of inflation. Medicare spending rose by 11 percent last year, while private sector health care spending rose by only 4 percent.

Thus, each of us comes to the Medicare Program with the hope of addressing one or more of these problems. As a citizen legislator, one who comes to the Senate directly from the private sector, I approach this challenge wearing many hats. I come to the table as a health care provider, a physician who on a daily basis has served the personal health care needs of thousands of Medicare patients. I come to the table as the son of two active parents, both of whom are 84 years of age. They have been beneficiaries of Medicare as they were treated for heart attacks, colon cancer, pulmonary edema, a fractured neck, bleeding ulcers, kidney failure, a broken arm, phlebitis, and a stroke. I come to the table as a father of three boys whose generation will be working to the pay the bills for my generation. And I come to the table as a legislator who sees the looming crisis of Medicare staring us straight in the face.

When Medicare was designed in 1965, the goal very clearly was to provide senior citizens with greater access to our country's health care system. Medicare at that time was structured to mirror the private system of the time which in 1965 was primarily Blue Cross

and Blue Shield fee for service. That means Congress paid providers based solely on the cost of the care delivered. There was no fee schedule of negotiated rates with providers. There was no real justification of costs. Furthermore, at that time Medicare insulated providers from the Government by allowing them to work through fiscal intermediaries and carriers, similar to private insurance.

Now, Medicare is an insurance program that pays for private services. Great Britain took quite a different approach. I spent almost a year as a physician in England, and I as a physician worked directly for the English Government receiving a salary from the English Government as an employee of the National Health Service. The English have replaced their national insurance program and moved directly into Government provision of services. Whereas our country relies on the private sector for control and direction, England relies on direct Government intervention. This underlying philosophy is fundamental to our understanding of Medicare. Medicare was established to give seniors access to the very same health care system available to all other Americans.

But as the American medicine delivery systems have changed over the last 30 years, and matured and diversified, Medicare has remained stagnant. Medicare fails to give seniors access to the full range of plans currently available to all other Americans. The private system has evolved and Medicare has failed to keep up. Changes and improvements are required today before seniors and the disabled fall even further behind.

Managed care illustrates that point. Today, 63 percent of working Americans obtain their care through some type of managed care program. In contrast, only 9 percent of seniors are enrolled in some type of managed care. Yet, it is important for people to understand managed care is only one of the options in the private system today. There are many others. And reasoned Medicare reform would open the Medicare Program broadly to the many options that are available to all other Americans in our private system today. It would allow seniors the freedom to direct their Medicare money to the plan of their choice. For some, that would mean an employer-sponsored plan. For others, it would mean an indemnity-type plan, and for still others a looser form of managed care. But the bottom line is that the Government should no longer restrict a senior's choice of health plans.

New to this body, I find it hard to understand why Congress has failed to pay attention to the ticking time bomb—Medicare. By failing to address the issue head on, we only delay the inevitable and make it more difficult for our successors. If we choose not to preserve Medicare's integrity, we resign ourselves to either substantial benefit reductions for seniors or repetitive tax