

member of numerous social service organizations and committees.

The daughter of Swedish immigrants, Liz was born and raised in Monroe, WA, and has lived in Everett for 45 years. Liz and her husband, Don, who is retired from Weyerhaeuser, have two grown sons and two grandchildren. Liz's announcement of retirement was met with expressions of regret and loss from her colleagues and constituents, but they understand that she deserves more private time with her own family and, I am sure, some new challenges.

I believe Liz chose politics as a way to accomplish community good on a larger scale than was possible as a lone caring individual. A strong believer in the two party system, she has long been active in her own Democratic Party, but always respected and was respected by her friends in the Republican Party. She did not lose her civility nor her sensitivity to other points of view. And she never forgot her personal responsibility to her constituents. A fellow councilwoman, Karen Miller, says: "She always looked at how what we did would affect people in their day-to-day living."

Ms. Liz, I salute you. In these days of intense cynicism about politics and politicians, your career stands out as a shining example of what a politician can accomplish and can be. You provide a model, in your motivation and in your performance, for all who seek to be entrusted with the public trust.●

ZEBRA MUSSELS AND SEA LAMPREY

● Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. President, I would like to take this time to express my appreciation to the managers of the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill for their support and acceptance of an amendment which would provide funding for research on non-indigenous species in the Great Lakes—zebra mussels and sea lamprey.

While zebra mussels may sound harmless, they have caused health hazards as well as economic and environmental devastation in the Great Lakes region. For example, zebra mussels are largely responsible for increasing the bacteria levels on beaches surrounding Lake St. Clair. Because the zebra mussels consume particles in the lakes, sunlight is able to shine through the clear water. This increased sunlight reaches the aquatic plants on the lake floor causing them to grow more rapidly and prolifically than they would without the aid of zebra mussels. While this may not sound problematic, these plants then trap bacteria which cause health hazards to swimmers. The Lake St. Clair beaches have been forced to close due to the unhealthy levels of e-coli bacteria in the water.

In addition, while each zebra mussel is not much larger than a fingernail, they can cause multimillion-dollar problems to energy systems in the Great Lakes. These tiny animals attach to water intake valves needed to

generate power for our communities. They attach to each other and create a reef-like barrier in these important intake valves. Clearing the zebra mussels out of these valves is a multimillion-dollar task.

I comment the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab for their work on eradicating the zebra mussel population and again I thank the managers for their support of GLERL's work.

I also appreciate the managers' support for additional funding for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. This commission is the only organization conducting research on reducing the sea lamprey population in the Great Lakes. The commercial fishery in the Great Lakes was all but eliminated in the early 1950's largely due to the impact of the invading sea lamprey. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission's work so far has helped the fishery rebound to a current economic value in excess of \$4 million annually.

Because of the explosion in the sea lamprey population, Canada intends to increase their contribution to the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. By treaty, however, the United States must provide 69 percent of the funding for the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. Therefore, we must increase our contribution in order to leverage additional Canadian funding. I am pleased that the Canadians are working with us on this problem and am confident that the funds spent on sea lamprey research will be beneficial on a national as well as an international level.●

WE MUST SAVE MEDICARE—BUT WE MUST DO IT RESPONSIBLY

● Mr. DORGAN, Mr. President, if there is one thing that everyone seems to agree on in the debate over Medicare, it is that the future of the program must be guaranteed. Thanks to Medicare, 99 percent of older Americans now have health care coverage. It would be a tragedy for this program to become insolvent, and I am prepared to vote for the changes necessary to preserve it, just as I have done in the past.

Where I differ with some congressional leaders, however, is over how much projected Medicare spending must be cut in order to save the program. The 7-year budget plan, which passed the Congress in June over my objections, cuts projected Medicare spending by a whopping \$270 billion. This same budget plan also cuts projected Medicaid spending by \$182 billion while providing \$245 billion in new tax breaks.

I believe it is wrong to be making an unprecedented level of cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and education while granting tax relief largely to taxpayers making over \$100,000 per year and to large corporations that take advantage of tax loopholes.

MEDICARE SOLVENCY

And according to Medicare experts, the amount needed to save the Trust Fund is \$89 billion, not the \$270 billion

the budget would cut. Clearly, the vast majority of the Medicare cuts—\$181 billion—have nothing to do with keeping Medicare solvent. The reason this budget cuts Medicare three times more than is necessary to save the Trust Fund is to pay for the one big cost item in the budget: new tax breaks.

THE PLAN PROPOSED BY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERS

Under the plan passed by the Senate Finance Committee, premiums for Medicare part B, which pays for physician services, would double and could exceed \$100 per month in the year 2002. This premium would be deducted monthly from seniors' Social Security checks. On top of that, the part B deductible would also increase from \$100 to \$220.

Beneficiaries would also be given three options for receiving care: First, seniors could choose to remain in the traditional, fee-for-service plan; second, beneficiaries could choose to move into private managed care plans, like health maintenance organizations [HMO's]; or third, seniors could set up medical savings accounts [MSA's] to pay for their health care expenses. I believe Medicare should be expanded to give seniors more choices for coverage, but the same basic level and quality of care now available to beneficiaries must be assured. I would also oppose a proposal that would force seniors into health plans which restrict their choice of doctor.

The wealthiest seniors—individuals with incomes over \$75,000 and couples making more than \$150,000—would be asked to pay more for their Medicare by reducing the part B premium subsidy they receive. I support this proposal as a part of an overall effort to control the rate of growth of Medicare spending.

The Senate proposal would also increase the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 67 between the years 2003 and 2027. This would mean that people born since 1938 would have to wait longer for Medicare.

Finally, the majority of savings would come through reducing payments to hospitals, physicians, and other health care professionals who provide Medicare services.

IMPACT ON SENIORS

So what will these cuts mean to Medicare beneficiaries? I think the impact could be quite serious. Medicare premiums and deductibles will increase for North Dakota's 103,000 senior citizens, and quality and availability of care for all North Dakotans will be threatened.

I am concerned that the premium and deductible increases could make Medicare coverage unaffordable for some seniors. Most older Americans have very modest incomes; 75 percent of seniors on Medicare live on less than \$25,000 a year. And in North Dakota, older Americans get by on even less: 70 percent of our State's seniors have incomes of under \$15,000.

Already seniors spend 21 percent of their income on health care costs. In 1994, the average older American spent \$2,500 for health care costs not covered by Medicare. Those over 75 pay even more, and these numbers don't even include the cost of long-term nursing home care, which averages nearly \$40,000 per year.

The portion of the cuts which do not fall on beneficiaries directly will be borne by the doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers who deliver Medicare services. Because of this, I am concerned that the proposed level of cuts could create a quality gap between Medicare and the rest of the health system.

In effect, these cuts could create a second class health care system for the elderly on Medicare. Even now, Medicare reimburses health care providers at only 68 percent of the amount health providers get from private payors.

Another serious consequence of this budget plan on seniors is the substantial, \$182 billion cut in projected spending on Medicaid. On top of new Medicare costs, Medicaid cuts could force hundreds of thousands of middle class seniors and their families to assume the burden of nursing home costs as well.

IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Cuts of this magnitude could have devastating consequences for our health care system, particularly in rural areas.

These cuts would take \$537 million out of North Dakota over the next 7 years. That's \$5,213 per Medicare beneficiary in North Dakota.

According to the North Dakota Hospital Association, as many as 12 to 20 rural hospitals in North Dakota are in danger of being shut down by these cuts. Rural hospitals rely heavily on Medicare patients, and many are already in very precarious financial condition. Other rural health care providers are similarly dependent on Medicare patients for their livelihood. These cuts will make access to health care even more of a problem for all North Dakotans living in those areas.

Teaching hospitals are also in jeopardy. We need teaching hospitals to educate our health care professionals and to conduct invaluable medical research which saves lives.

Another concern I have is that cuts of this magnitude cannot be absorbed within the Medicare system alone and that health care providers will have no choice but to shift their uncompensated costs onto their other patients in the form of higher fees. This means higher medical bills and higher health insurance costs for the rest of the population.

MEDICARE COST GROWTH

Are Medicare costs growing too fast? Do Medicare costs need to be brought under control? Yes, absolutely.

Medicare Program costs are growing at a little over 10 percent per year. But roughly one-half of this growth is caused by the increasing number of

seniors in our country who become eligible for Medicare each month and the increased utilization of health care services that results from people living longer.

This year, 37 million Americans are covered by the Medicare Program. Every month over 200,000 older Americans enroll in Medicare for the first time. Just within the time frame of this budget, Medicare will cover 3.7 million more people than it does today.

A better measure of Medicare cost growth is to look at per person costs. Currently the cost of health care per person is increasing in Medicare at about the same rate it is increasing in the private sector—roughly 7.6 percent per year. The budget cuts would limit per person Medicare growth to 4.9 percent, while the private sector health care would stay at 7.6 percent.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

I believe it is possible to balance the budget and protect Medicare at the same time. But it will take the new leadership in Congress compromising on their tax cuts and being straight about the Medicare Trust Fund. It will also mean that Democrats must acknowledge that the current growth in Medicare spending is not sustainable and must be slowed.

We know that the amount needed to save the trust fund is \$89 billion, not the \$270 billion cut in the budget plan. This level of savings is achievable without any new increases in costs for beneficiaries and without hurting our world class health care system.

The first thing we must do is crack down on the waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare system. The General Accounting Office has found that as much as 10 cents of every dollar spent by Medicare goes to fraud and abuse. I regularly get letters from my constituents in North Dakota describing the wasteful duplication of services and paperwork that occur under Medicare. I have cosponsored legislation to address this problem once and for all.

We must also modernize Medicare so that it has the same management tools as the private sector to control costs. Case management services, for example, can improve the coordination and quality of care for beneficiaries and save money for Medicare at the same time. New computer technology can help prevent Medicare from making duplicative or improper payments. Adopting a single claims form for providers can cut down on paperwork.

I believe Medicare must also place greater emphasis on preventive care. Only a fraction of beneficiaries take advantage of the mammogram and flu shots covered by Medicare. We should improve these benefits and take steps to promote their use.

Removing barriers to practice for qualified non-physician providers will help Medicare save money and also help bring needed caregivers into more of rural North Dakota.

Finally, modest reductions in the rate of growth of Medicare spending—

only what's needed to reach \$89 billion—will ensure that Medicare remains solvent while protecting benefits so that Medicare remains a program worth saving.

With a little good faith all around, I am hopeful Congress can pass this kind of a plan later this year. It may take a Presidential veto before we get there, but I believe we can provide the fiscal discipline the American people want from the Federal Government without sacrificing the health security that they deserve.●

SECOND MUNICIPAL LEADERS' SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the municipal leaders' communique which was produced at the Second Municipal Leaders Summit on Climate Change. It is important for our Nation to be made aware of the problems and progress in the climate research and air quality fields. I ask that this communique be printed in today's RECORD.

The communique follows:

ARTICLE I—Local Authorities' Commitments to Climate Protection

1.1 We, the participants at the Second Municipal Leaders' Summit on Climate Change, urge local authorities, especially those in industrialized nations, who have not yet undertaken climate protection activities to:

(a) endeavor to reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 20% from 1990 levels by 2005;

(b) develop a local action plan to reduce urban level emissions of greenhouse gases and protect carbon sinks, which could include protecting and establishing municipal forests, managing urban growth, establishing sustainable transportation modes, reducing the procurement of tropical wood, etc.;

(c) set a target for emissions reduction appropriate to local municipal capacity and circumstances;

(d) undertake to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality's own operations, including building, facilities, vehicle fleets, and employee travel;

(e) undertake initiatives to change public attitudes and behavior to reduce energy consumption energy use;

(f) promote the advancement of renewable energy sources: hydro-energy, solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy, biogas, biomass, as the only sustainable alternative forms of energy, noting that existing nuclear technology is not an appropriate alternative to fossil fuels.

Specific target dates for the above activities will be established by ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection Campaign.

1.2 We urge local authorities in non-industrialized countries and countries in transition to strive to break the link between economic growth and energy consumption and, instead of imitating the path taken by industrialized nations, to take the wiser course and actively promote and give priority to renewable energy sources such as solar power and to newly emerging energy-efficient technologies. Energy efficiency will also enable the freeing up of financial resources for the economic and social development of these communities in a more sustainable manner.

ARTICLE II—COMMUNICATION TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

2.1 We urge national governments and their utilities to accord local authorities