

community intergenerational workshops at sites throughout the State. The association also contracts with the IRS to provide tax counseling services for the elderly.

The association is now seeking Medicaid waiver funding and hopes to soon venture into the arena of private sector funding. Project directors have taken the first step toward seeking private sector support by incorporating as a 501(c)(3) organization.

I am pleased to congratulate and commend the Alabama National Senior Service Corps Directors Association for developing an array of outstanding programs and for providing a model that illustrates the power and potential of these kinds of partnerships in providing important services to our senior citizens.

THE MENTALLY ILL AND THE HEALTH INSURANCE BILL

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I was informed by the chairman of Labor, Health and Human Services, Senator NANCY KASSEBAUM, that the conferees on the health insurance bill were not going to include—with reference to the mentally ill in this country—were not going to include even the compromise which had been offered to them that has been pending for the last 2 or 3 weeks. Frankly, the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to rid this country of a terrible, terrible plight, the discrimination against the mentally ill in insurance coverage in this country. And not only the discrimination but the lack of fairness and parity of coverage.

I say publicly now to the business community of the United States, in particular the large companies, some of which are self-insured—I do not say this very often—but “Shame, shame on you. Shame on you.” It is a very simple proposition of parity that is not going to cost very much and will say to the 5 million severely mentally ill Americans and their families that they are not going to be treated any longer like second-rate, if not third-rate, citizens.

All we asked of them in our compromise Senator WELLSTONE and I submitted was that if you are going to cover mental illness, if you are going to cover mental illness, that you must include two things: One, the same lifetime cap that is total coverage, and the same annual allowable per year as you include in insurance for everyone else.

Let me repeat, that amendment did not require any kind of insurance. It did not dictate coinsurance, deductibility or anything. So companies could still tailor mental health coverage. If they are concerned about abuses, they can write the abuses out before they even offer them.

All we asked for was the simple proposition to get started recognizing the discrimination that is in our current situation. That is to say, those who are mentally ill, do not cover them with

\$50,000 for life while you cover cancer patients with \$1 million, do not cover the mentally ill with a \$100,000 total lifetime if you cover those who have tuberculosis or have serious heart trouble with \$500,000 or \$1 million. Just parity, total coverage for total lifetime. On an annual basis, do not say to those who are mentally ill, you can only collect \$10,000 a year maximum where you have \$100,000 or \$50,000 for others.

I truly believe there is a total lack of willingness to understand the nature of this problem. This problem is a blight on America, a blight on our insurance companies, and a blight on the business community who continues to resist moving in the direction of parity.

I want to thank those companies in the United States that already cover the mentally ill. And there are many. And I can say they are not running around complaining about the extraordinary costs. As a matter of fact, if this amendment, the one we told them we would settle for, were adopted, the increases are almost insignificant according to the Congressional Budget Office, because there are not a lot of people who will reach those limits. It is just to make sure we do not say to them, you are second-rate citizens.

If you have insurance, your parents bought insurance, they cover somebody in their family with schizophrenia, they did not get the shock of their life that after they have spent \$100,000 they have no more for the rest of their life and look around at their neighbor who had a heart condition and they get \$1 million worth of coverage. No.

I am not sure where we are going to end up. But I can say that a counteroffer was proposed, and I regret to say it was tantamount to a whole menu of options. And if you have a menu of options, you are going to get nothing, you are going to dump the mentally ill where they are already being dumped.

So I hope that they will reconsider this decision. I, for one, am prepared to look, at this moment, at any way I can—I am not sure I can succeed—but at any way I can to make it hard to pass that bill. And any way I can find to make it impossible to pass that bill, I will do it. I am not sure on this conference I will accomplish a great deal, but we will make some noise about it because there is no need for this decision to go this way.

If those on the business side will look at the proposed amendment that was offered in lieu of the Senate-passed amendment, if they can come forth and tell me and tell those who support it how it will hurt them, how it is going to cost them, what their problems are, then I would be willing to say indeed they are trying to do something fair.

Thus far, I think it is stubbornness, I think it is totally shameful, and I, for one, have been a staunch supporter of making sure we do not put undue burdens on business. It is a joke to say they do not want any additional mandates when the whole bill is a mandate.

The whole bill is a mandate. We mandate insurance companies and businesses to pay for people with pre-existing conditions which is going to cost billions of dollars, and they do not talk about that. There is no excuse.

I, for one, believe we have made a reasonable case. We have been more than fair. The millions of Americans suffering from this disgraceful discrimination are willing to accept a foot in the door, a little bit, just a start, and we get the door slammed right on them.

Obviously, we have a lot of work to do, but any conferees that are unaware of the decision to give the mentally ill people of this country nothing in this conference report, maybe they ought to start with the conferees. That is what they are about to do.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I say that the Senator from New Mexico spoke with great eloquence and power, and speaks for me.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 640. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3846. An act to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the provision of assistance for microenterprises, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3870. An act to authorize the Agency for International Development to offer voluntary separation incentive payments to employees of that agency.

At 3:58 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate: