

Secretary and the appropriators, and the fairness of the organ allocation system.

Mr. President, I will take only a moment or two more—because the time is moving on—to refer to the Institute of Medicine report, which really is the authoritative report on this whole issue. I will mention relevant parts of the institute report, and focus on the conclusion that the Institute of Medicine had on the whole question of developing rules on fairness for organ transplantation—the question of how to best address the moral issues and the ability of people to be able to be treated fairly under a system of organ distribution.

The Institute of Medicine's analysis shows that patients who have a less urgent need for a transplant sometimes receive transplants before more severely ill patients who are served by different OPOs. There is no credible evidence that implementing the HHS's recommendation would result in closure of smaller transplant centers.

Mr. President, that fear about the fate of small centers is the heart of the argument of those that have put on this rider. A rider that has no business being put on this legislation.

The Institute of Medicine analysis further found that there is no reason to conclude that minority and low-income patients would be less likely to obtain organ transplants as a result. Likewise, data does not support the assertion that potential donors and their families would decline to make donations because an organ might be used outside the donor's immediate geographical area.

The Institute of Medicine recommended that HHS—and this is on page 12 of the report—should exercise the legitimate oversight responsibilities assigned to it by the National Organ Transplant Act, and articulated in the Final Rule, to manage the system of organ procurement and transplantation in the public interest.

Federal oversight is needed to ensure that high standards of equity and quality are met. Those high standards of equity and quality were included in the Secretary's excellent recommendation. By tampering with those, we are undermining enormously powerful and important health policy issues. And this extremely controversial rider is added onto underlying legislation which is so important to millions of disabled individuals in our country. Individuals who thought—when this legislation moved through with very strong bipartisan support in the Senate, and then through the final months, has moved through the House of Representatives, and has the strong support of President Clinton, and has had the bipartisan support here in the Congress—thought that there was going to be a new day for those who have physical or mental challenges and disabilities to have the ability to participate in the workforce and become more productive, useful, active, and independent citizens in this country, and also to be able to con-

tribute to the Nation in a more significant way.

I certainly hope we can work through this process because the legislation, which as I mentioned, has been completed and supported in a bipartisan way, is a lifeline to millions of Americans and deserves passage.

I see my friend and colleague, Senator JEFFORDS, who has been instrumental in having this legislation advanced. I am glad to see him on the floor at this time. I hope he will address the Senate on this issue.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

The Senator from Vermont.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 1 p.m. with the time equally divided in the usual form.

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

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts. I would be happy if he desires to more fully discuss what we have done. I was not here to hear his full speech. I thank him. We have worked together. He was here years before I came to the Senate. In 1975, we had the initial big step forward for the disabled and were able to set up the 94142, as it was called then, to make sure all children got a good education, and specially those with disabilities.

As we have walked through this over a period of many years, we have fought year by year to remove block by block what the disabled community has had to face. Finally, we are at that point where we are opening the final door to allow them to do what all disabled want to do, and that is to have a meaningful life, to be able to seek employment, and get employment without having the doors slammed because they lost their benefits.

I can't thank the Senator enough for what he has done. Also, there are others, some who have left this body, such as Bob Dole, who was another leader for the disabled. I praise him also for the work he did, and especially in this area where he helped us introduce the bill that we were so happy to be able to cosponsor and to see it put into the final steps.

I thank the Senator from Massachusetts profusely for all he has done. I would be happy to yield for any further comment.

Mr. KENNEDY. As I mentioned earlier, this has been a continuing process beginning with the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act, when we put into law protections for the disabled so they wouldn't be discriminated against in the workplace based upon their disability.

As the Senator knows very well, that has been enormously important and

has been effective. But as the Senator has pointed out, with this legislation complimenting what has been achieved with the Americans With Disabilities Act, we can open an entirely new dawn for millions who have some disability.

As we are getting closer to achieving that, I am sure the Senator agrees with me that when we finally have the President's signature on this, there will be people saying: What has taken them so long? This is such a common-sense approach. But as the Senator knows, this has been a battle every step of the way. There have been those who have felt that if we do this for this particular group, we might be establishing some form of precedent that may be used somewhere down the road, and worry if we know where it might lead.

There are a number of strong negative voices out there. Nonetheless, I think with the leadership of the Senator from Vermont and others—he mentioned certainly Senator Dole, Senator Weicker, and our good friend on our human resources committee, TOM HARKIN, who is generally recognized in this body as one of the real authorities on disability issues—this has been a common effort of this institution. It is an area of public policy where this institution has done what it is challenged to do; and that is to find common ground in a bipartisan way to address a common concern that affects millions of Americans and make progress on it.

I again thank the Senator from Vermont for the opportunity to work with him. We still have a ways to go to make sure the legislation actually reaches the people and addresses the regulations in the way it is intended. But I think this is going to be enormously important—and I hope soon to finally have the President's signature on this legislation. We are much closer today than we have ever been in the past.

I join with the Senator to thank him for his good work. We hope to see that this is actually put into place and implemented so it will benefit those that it should benefit.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, again, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for those comments and for all the work he has done.

I am delighted to stand before you today, to speak about an extremely important piece of legislation. The bill we are sending to the President today, a bill I know he is eager to sign into law, will have a tremendous impact on people with disabilities. In fact, this legislation is the most important piece of legislation for the disability community since the Americans with Disabilities Act.

My reason for sponsoring this particular piece of legislation is quite simple. The Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 addresses a fundamental flaw in current law. Today, individuals with disabilities are forced to make a