

rely on their Social Security as their sole income, they are not able to get by with those drug prices.

We know we have a problem. The theory is this: If this federal government, through Medicare, will pay for the removal of a kidney, or will pay for the amputation of a leg, is it not irrational that we would not pay to fund drugs that would keep people from having to have a kidney removed or keep people from having to have an amputation because they are diabetic?

We are at a point where drugs are such a central part of health care in America, that we cannot leave them out of Medicare.

The seniors I visited with in Alabama want us here in the Senate to address the high cost of drugs. They believe they are higher than they need to be—and I agree. They would like to see less paperwork in the process, less bureaucracy, and less fraud. They would also like to see that they can go to their local pharmacy and buy the drugs there and talk to a pharmacist about them if they choose. They would like to be able to buy through direct mail and mail order if they choose. Those are things we will have to wrestle with. I intend to be talking with more seniors as time goes by so we can listen to their concerns and desires and see what we can do to pass a responsible bill.

We are not doing anything to help Medicare beneficiaries pay for drugs today. We should not fail to act at all and do nothing simply because we can't do everything we would like to do today.

We need to have some relief now. We have people this day who are having to choose between food and rent and drugs. They often are not able to buy the drugs they need to keep themselves healthy, and that leads to complications and even greater health care costs.

We need to quit putting this off. If we cannot afford the Cadillac, we need a Ford. We need to do something to move forward. Seniors need help now.

People who need drugs, seniors who need drugs, all Medicare beneficiaries who need them and simply cannot afford them need help. We can do that through the budget we passed last

year. There is, through President Bush's plan, an idea of using group purchasing power to reduce the cost through a prescription drug discount card. A number of my pharmacist friends are concerned that could hurt them. That was not the intent. They have challenged this card. But a card plan should not harm our pharmacists. We ought to be able to drive down the cost of prescription drugs by up to 20, 30, or 40 percent. That would be a tremendous savings. It would be good if we could do that today—and not wait any longer. It would be a monumental step forward.

We want our seniors to have choice and to not have to give up their current coverage plans. We do not want them to have to enter into some sort of mandatory plan that costs them more and provides less benefits.

Beneficiaries should have information and the choice to choose between whether they want generic drugs or name-brand drugs. That is a choice that many can make. We need to make sure that option is available to them.

We did vote for a budget last year that provides for \$300 billion for prescription drugs. We have allowed our spending here to get out of control. Our discretionary spending last year hit about a 7 percent increase. This year, likewise, with defense and supplementals, it could be greater than that. If we get our spending under control and contain excessive spending, we ought to be able to fund a plan that would meet the needs of thousands of seniors who are in a crisis situation today.

Politics should be put on the back burner. It is time to ask ourselves how we can accomplish passing a piece of legislation that we all can support, that the American people would like to see passed, and that we can afford. We can do this, if we watch our cost and do not let it get out of control. If we are smart and work at it and do it in a way that is bipartisan as this generic bill we passed out of the HELP Committee last week, we can make good progress for America. I look forward to the debate and hope we can achieve that before the recess.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, the Senate stands in adjournment until 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, July 16, 2002.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:12 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 16, 2002, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate July 15, 2002:

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

GLENN BERNARD ANDERSON, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2002. VICE YEKKER ANDERSSON, TERM EXPIRED.

GLENN BERNARD ANDERSON, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

MILTON APONTE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2003. VICE AUDREY L. MCCRIMON, TERM EXPIRED.

BARBARA GILLCRIST, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2002. VICE LILLIAM RANGEL POLLO, TERM EXPIRED.

BARBARA GILLCRIST, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

GRAHAM HILL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2002. VICE HUGHEY WALKER, TERM EXPIRED.

GRAHAM HILL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

JOEL KAHN, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2004. VICE DAVE NOLAN BROWN, TERM EXPIRED.

PATRICIA POUND, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

MARCO A. RODRIGUEZ, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2002. VICE EDWARD CORREIA.

MARCO A. RODRIGUEZ, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DAVID WENZEL, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2004. VICE BONNIE O'DAY, TERM EXPIRED.

LINDA WETTERS, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 17, 2003. VICE GERALD S. SEGAL.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate July 15, 2002:

THE JUDICIARY

LAVENSKI R. SMITH, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT.