

amount of money under the program. On average seniors are saving \$1,200 yearly on drug costs. A survey reported 80 percent of seniors are happy with the Part D benefits that went into effect recently. Folks in Wyoming are certainly telling me they like the plans that are available there. There are fewer plans available in a smaller population State than there are in some others. Nevertheless, there are plans available. They are available at the local drugstore, and they have an option of several plans from which to choose which is very important for us to maintain in the Part D program.

The costs are 30 percent lower than the original estimates, and it has caused competition. It has caused the private sector to come about with reduced estimates. That is very good. Even the expert the Democratic majority put in place to head up the Congressional Budget Office says this legislation that is proposed to have the Government do the negotiations with drug companies would not save money, according to the CBO. In an April 10 letter to Chairman BAUCUS, the CBO writes:

We anticipate that under the bill the Secretary would lack the leverage to negotiate prices under the broad range of covered Part D drugs that are more favorable than those obtained by Prescription Drug Plans under current law. Without the authority to establish a formulary or other tools to reduce drug prices, we believe that the Secretary would not obtain significant discounts from drug manufacturers across a broad range of drugs.

CBO also testified that negotiating Medicare drug prices could make costs go up for everyone else. We have to understand we need a drug program, a Medicare program for everyone. There are certain ways it would have to be done for the elderly, for the underfinanced, and so on. But the plan needs to be there for everyone.

The Government Accountability Office has said price fixing may result in limited access. You can imagine if there is negotiation on prices, some of the pharmaceutical companies are going to say: OK, we are not going to offer this drug; we won't offer that drug. Under this plan, you have alternatives and alternative programs from which you can choose to take on different ideas.

Why do we want to take away a plan that has been moving toward success and still has an opportunity for more success and change it before that opportunity has been worked through? Last week the Finance Committee, of which I am a member, held a markup to consider the pending legislation. We asked the proponents of that to come up with their plans. Frankly, they didn't have any specifics as to how this would be handled.

With just the idea we would have the Government negotiate, it sounds like, wow, we would come up with some real good stuff. The fact is—the bottom line is—I think most of us want to see the market work. When there is competi-

tion, when there are these kinds of things, it does cause the market to work.

So I think before we pass any bill, we should know and consider, find out, as clearly as we can, what impact it has on the folks. We do not want to talk too much, it seems, on the Senate floor about how that will work. I think we should talk about how it works.

I have great respect for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but they believe expanding the Government is the way to solve health problems. I do not agree. I do not believe Government price fixing is the answer to the question.

Current law has increased choices, has lowered prices through market competition, and that is the system we have in this country. Market competition is where we need to go. So we should let the market continue to work and say, as the saying goes, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." So I think that is how we are challenged.

I am hopeful we can move forward. I think we have a lot of things to do. We need to get on with immigration. I do not think there is anything more important to the country than to have an immigration law that works, that we have a closed border, that we have people coming to work legitimately and legally who return after their period of work or go through the process for becoming citizens. The system we have now is not working, and we need to change that.

I think energy continues to be a factor in the future, very clearly. There is no doubt there is going to be more demand. There is no doubt there is going to be a more difficult time in acquiring energy sources from around the world. We have to depend more on our own, including alternatives. I think alternatives are a very good solution over time as we find out ways to use them and use them in the volumes that are necessary to fill our needs.

In the meantime, I think we need to be very careful to assist in developing those things we know how to do now that will make us have supplies in the interim as we wait for these alternatives to develop—coal, for example. Coal is our largest fossil resource. We know ways to have plants develop electricity from coal, where we can extract carbon, reinject the carbon, help with the climate change, and at the same time have a supply of energy we need.

So these are some of the things I guess I am a little frustrated we cannot move toward. We spend too much time hassling over some of these problems that should not take that long. We should get on with dealing with health care, get on with dealing with energy, get on with dealing with immigration, get on with dealing with spending, get on with dealing with the size of the budget. These are the real issues out there that I think the American people—and I am sure Wyoming people—are concerned about.

So I urge we move as quickly as we can, working together, so we can find

ways to move forward and solve some of the problems that are before us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Mr. DURBIN. First, Mr. President, let me say that every parent remembers when their kids left the nest. There is that moment when they finally reach that age where they are off to college. I can recall when Loretta and I took our three kids off to their colleges of choice. It was kind of an emotional moment, with mixed feelings: proud they had reached this point in their lives when they were off on their own, sad that now they are leaving their little family setting that had been so familiar and so happy for so many years. But you knew if you were lucky enough as a parent to have attended college that they were facing an extraordinary personal opportunity to go to college and meet so many other students and expand their horizons and learn what it means to live on your own resources.

So that is why the tragedy of Virginia Tech is so sad, that the happy setting of college, where parents have entrusted their students to the university campus, can turn into a scene of horror as we found yesterday in Blacksburg, VA. We are all stunned and heartsick over the staggering and incomprehensible loss of life yesterday. We offer our deepest condolences to the families who lost precious sons and daughters in that shooting rampage, and to the victims who survived it.

As police search for clues, I hope those of us in Congress will come together to also search honestly for answers about what can be done to prevent another tragedy. This has been billed as the worst massacre in American history on a school or college campus. I can still recall 8 years ago in the room behind me, the cloakroom, when we heard of the Columbine shooting when 15 students lost their lives. In Blacksburg, the estimate is somewhere between 32 or 33 who have lost their lives. It is unspeakable to think about the placid setting of that college campus turning into a bloody scene yesterday morning. Now we will go about the grim task of identifying those who were injured and burying the remains of the ones who were killed as the Nation grieves with Virginia Tech University.