

the function of our current health care system is not to provide quality health care to every man, woman, and child, but, in fact, to allow people within the industry—the private insurance companies, the drug companies, the medical device suppliers—to make as much money as they possibly can.

Amazingly enough, according to the papers in the last few days, the health care industry has spent over \$130 million in the last quarter on lobbying. There are 100 Members in the Senate and 435 Members of the House—to spend \$130 million?

Where do they get that money? They get that money, if they are a drug company, by charging the American people the highest prices in the entire world. I was the first Member of Congress to take Americans over the Canadian border a number of years ago where women with breast cancer who were fighting for their lives were able to pick up breast cancer medicine at one-tenth the price. The drug companies cannot lower prices in this country—they have to charge us the highest prices in the world—but somehow they do manage to come up with tens and tens of millions of dollars to try to buy Members of the Congress.

While more and more people are losing their health insurance, we are seeing many of these private insurance companies seeing huge increases in their profits. We are seeing the insurance companies, the drug companies paying, in some cases, tens of millions of dollars in compensation packages to their CEOs.

For anybody to suggest that this country does not need health care reform is simply not to understand what is going on from one end of this country to the other. We are a great nation. There is no reason in the world why we should end up spending almost twice as much per person on health care as any other nation and yet have inferior health care outcomes in terms of infant mortality, in terms of life expectancy, in terms of preventable deaths.

We can do better. And right now, despite all of the lobbying money coming in from the health care industry, the moral imperative is for Members of Congress to think about the folks back home, the people who have no health insurance, the people who are underinsured, the people who are going bankrupt, the people who are staying at their work, not because they want to but because they have a decent health insurance program or the small business people who cannot invest in their company because they are busy spending all of their money on health care. We can do better than that. We must do better than that. Now is the time.

I hope the American people work with us in standing up to very powerful special interests and moving us toward real health care reform.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to briefly, before he leaves the floor, com-

mend my friend and colleague from Vermont. He has been a remarkable advocate, and this evening is yet one more example of it. He speaks with that passion I love to hear about these issues and talks about real people and what they go through every day.

I was thinking as he was talking, I say to Senator SANDERS, there is a wonderful small business guy in Connecticut named Penn Ritter. I have known his family a long time. He got up and talked about his business and how difficult it has been to buy health care for his employees. He talked about one particular case which is very moving.

They were laying people off. The economy was down. They didn't need people. One of the people they were going to lay off had terminal cancer. He knew if he laid him off, he would have no access to the kind of health care coverage he would need to go through the difficult period he was about to go through. But the verdict was clear. This small business decided this was not going to happen. So they kept the man on, not because they could afford to keep him on—because they couldn't afford it—but in good conscience they couldn't do that. There are people like that in small businesses all across our country, in every community in which we reside, who make a difference every day. There are wonderful providers and hospitals and places that take in people and treat them every single day. I would like to see us, in this Congress, at least rise to the level of our citizenry who do these things every day—the Penn Ritters of America, the doctors who work at Manchester Memorial Hospital in Connecticut, those people who work at AmeriCare, those volunteer doctors who show up every day. I could go down a long list, and every one of us can talk about what happens in our communities by caring people who help people maneuver and navigate in a difficult time during this health care crisis.

The least we should be able to do is to figure out how to meet the challenges they meet every single day, and my colleague from Vermont is as eloquent as any other Member on this subject matter, and I thank him for his comments.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank my colleague very much.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE—H.R. 2997

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, August

4, at 10:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed; that prior to the second vote, there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form; and that the time for the second vote be limited to 10 minutes: McCain amendment No. 1912 and McCain amendment No. 2030; that no amendment be in order to either amendment prior to the vote; and that following the second vote, the Senate then recess until 2:15 p.m.

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

COMMENDING NEVADA ASSOCIATION FOR LATIN AMERICANS, INC.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of the Senate to the 40th anniversary of the Nevada Association for Latin Americans, Inc. NALA is a Las Vegas-based organization that strives to provide low to moderate income families educational and social services to enhance their quality of life. NALA aids the people in the Silver State with exceptional services in education, language immersion, health prevention and immigration.

NALA was established as a nonprofit organization in 1969. As a Hispanic social-service organization, NALA acquired a small daycare center in 1978. At the time it was serving mainly African-American families, but now the center serves all low-income members of the community. The Social Services that NALA offers include emergency rental, utility assistance, food vouchers, and food pantry assistance to individuals who qualify for assistance. During these difficult economic times where many families are in dire need, we are grateful for NALA's excellent services and resources.

The association's affordable preschool/childcare program benefits more than 400 children annually. The preschool program includes an exceptional ESL program and meals for the children. Many of these children become so well versed in English, that most become teachers to their limited-English speaking parents. NALA offers HIV prevention services and outreach to those living with AIDS through counseling, health care, and job training. In addition to their educational and health outreach, NALA offers immigration services through their targeted program that assists with application processing, naturalization preparation and employment referrals.

I praise the Nevada Association for Latin Americans, Inc. for their 40 years of support to the low-income community of Nevada. It is through the hard work of organizations like NALA that low-income families across Nevada and the United States will be able to overcome the challenges of our current economy.

BURUNDI

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, Burundi is a country that should receive much greater attention from this Congress and the Obama administration in the months and year ahead. As many of my colleagues will recall, Burundi was devastated by political violence throughout the 1990s, leaving over 100,000 people dead. Yet with the mediation of the late Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and then South African President Nelson Mandela, and the active engagement of President Clinton, a peace agreement was finally signed in August 2000. Several armed groups refused to accept the agreement, but they were brought into the fold over subsequent years. And in 2005, Burundi held multiparty national and local elections, a major milestone on its transition to peace.

In 2010, Burundi is set to hold its next round of elections. These elections have the potential to be another milestone in Burundi's path toward reconciliation, lasting stability and democratic institutions. Over the last 4 years, Burundi has made significant progress in that direction. However, there are still persistent tensions within Burundian society, which could be strained during this electoral period.

Despite all the progress that has been made, Burundi remains a fragile state and regularly appears on watch lists of countries vulnerable to internal conflict. For example, the Brookings Institution's Weak States Index last year listed Burundi as the fifth weakest state in the world, behind Iraq, the DRC, Afghanistan, and Somalia. Moreover, according to the U.N. Human Development Index, Burundi continues to be one of the poorest countries in the world.

I have been particularly concerned by reports that both the Burundian government and the armed opposition Forces for National Liberation—FNL—continue to resort to violence, intimidation and repression. According to the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," members of the army, the police, and the National Intelligence Service were responsible for killings, torture, and beatings of civilians and detainees in 2008, although there were fewer such reports than in the previous year. Human Rights Watch has documented a number of abuses committed against democratic political opponents by state agents and unofficial proxies in the first few months of 2009. Meanwhile, the FNL reportedly continues to abduct civilians and use violence against local officials.

In the run-up to the 2010 elections, it is quite possible that these abuses and killings will increase as the parties compete for political power. Therefore, it is critical that the international community speak out now against human rights violations and the importance of maintaining the rule of law. We need to press the Burundian government to ensure it is not partici-

pating in any abusive behavior and help it to improve the independence and capacity of its judicial institutions. We also need to engage with and help strengthen the Electoral Commission so it can guard against any manipulation actual or perceived of the electoral process. Finally, we need to continue working with the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and the new Partnership for Peace in Burundi to advance disarmament and demobilization, transitional justice, reconciliation and development efforts. Burundi's peace process has come a long way, but the process is far from complete.

The United States has a unique role to play in these efforts. Because of our role in helping to broker the Arusha peace accord, the United States has significant good will in Burundi and is seen by many as a credible arbiter. In the years since, we have continued to work with regional stakeholders in support of peace. In the months leading up to Burundi's election, we need to increase that support and amplify our voice against abuses and political violence. I know President Obama's nominee to be our next ambassador to Burundi, Ambassador Pamela Slutz, understands these challenges and I look forward to working with her. Working together, regional leaders and the international community can help Burundians avert an electoral crisis and keep the peace process on track.

COMMENDING RICHARD "DICK"
PEMBROKE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to salute Richard "Dick" Pembroke, of North Bennington, VT, for his years of service and dedication to the State of Vermont.

Dick has been chosen as this year's honoree at the fourth annual Living History Day that will be held August 9, 2009. Dick's friends and family will pay tribute to him in downtown Bennington, for his many achievements and contributions to Bennington and to the State of Vermont.

I have had the good fortune to have known Dick for many years. Born and raised on a family farm in my hometown of Montpelier, Dick and I also share St. Michaels College in Vermont as our alma mater. He is a good friend and I am delighted for him and the recognition that he is being given.

In honor of Dick Pembroke, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the Bennington Banner's story, "Pembroke will be honored August 9 as 'Living History,'" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Bennington Banner, July 23, 2009]

PEMBROKE WILL BE HONORED AUGUST 9 AS
"LIVING HISTORY"

NORTH BENNINGTON.—Richard "Dick" Pembroke of Harrington Road will be this year's honoree for the fourth annual Living History Day to be held on Aug. 9 in front of Powers Market.

A different resident is chosen each year to be recognized for their achievements and contribution in shaping the local community. The two-hour event offers others a venue to share stories about the honoree and enjoy time with neighbors and friends. In addition to stories, there will be music, Kevin's hot dogs and much more. The event takes place from noon to 2 p.m., is free and open to all ages.

Pembroke has lived a spiritually rich and diversified private and public life. He was the eldest of four children, born and raised in Vermont on the family farm in Montpelier. He attended St. Michael's College in Winooski and subsequently served in the Navy during the Korean War and afterward, from 1951 to 1955. He met and married his wife, MaryAnn, while stationed in Pensacola, Fla. Upon returning to Vermont a short time later, he was employed at the First National Grocery Store Corp.

Pembroke managed several stores before opening one in Bennington in 1962. His love of horticulture and the outdoors was insatiable. To fulfill this passion, he began a landscaping business on the side, which gradually grew. In 1973, he left the grocery business and directed his full attention to Pembroke Landscaping.

Being the father of one daughter and three sons kept him busy and involved with loyal education. Pembroke coached Little League and helped to construct the local Little League park. He was also a member of the Mount Anthony Union High School Booster Club from 1973 to 1980 as well as other school organizations. Pembroke joined the Lions Club in 1957 and was involved with building the current Lions Field. He was a member of the University of Vermont board from 1980 to 1986, director for the American Red Cross and a member of the Knights of Columbus since 1963. He served on the Bennington Zoning Board of Adjustment from 1975 to 1987 and was chairman for 11 years.

In 1986, he discovered another avenue of public service that suited him quite well: He was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives, where he was chairman of the House Transportation Committee for 12 of the 16 years he served. He championed the construction of Route 279 in and around Bennington and worked diligently on many infrastructure projects related to safety and economic development.

In 2006, he was voted chamber of commerce person of the year. "Retirement" is not a word in Pembroke's vocabulary. He continues to keep a foot in the door of Pembroke Landscaping and currently sits on the State Environmental board as well as trustee/director of the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING EDDIE LEE PEPPLER

● Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, today I honor Mr. Eddie Lee Pepple, varsity basketball coach at Mercer Island High School, in retiring after 52 years of faithful service to our Nation and our youth. His distinguished career has culminated as varsity coach at Mercer Island High School where he has taught basketball for 42 years, leading the team to win 4 Washington State AAA Championships, and inspiring thousands of young students.

Coach Pepple was born in Denver, CO. He graduated from the University of Utah in 1955 with a bachelor of arts