

I recently—before Labor Day—visited Open M, a free health clinic in Akron, where I met Christine, who runs a small gift basket delivery business by herself but cannot afford health insurance. Fourteen years ago, while working, Christine was seriously injured in a car accident, leaving her with multiple knee surgeries, foot and back problems, and a cane to help her walk. She had to pay these expenses out of her pocket, draining her savings and compromising her economic security.

Last week, I spoke at the Center for Working Class Studies at Youngstown State University, one of the Nation's first and certainly one of the Nation's premier academic programs devoted to the many phases of the American worker—the factory worker in Lordstown or the home care nurse in Niles, the teacher in Youngstown or the truckdriver in Boardman. The center tells the story of working-class communities to a nation that it helped build.

Ohioans from across the Mahoning Valley showed up and listened while others told the story of working-class families struggling with the crushing costs of health care.

John from Champion, OH, described how his sick nephew lacks health insurance and cannot afford the neurologist he is supposed to see. He said that if health reform doesn't pass soon, his nephew probably won't live long enough to receive the care he so desperately needs.

Michelle from Youngstown asked the question at the root of all of the struggles that define the progressive labor movement. In her early thirties, she is one of the nearly 50 million Americans who are uninsured. She asked:

Isn't health reform a moral issue, where people in need and deserve care should have access to it?

The question of morality—whether coal miners' lives should be protected or food safety should be essential or the right to fair wages should be absolute—has long defined the labor movement's progressive mission.

The passing of Senator KENNEDY, a champion of the American worker, reminds all of us what government can, and should, do on behalf of American workers.

The history of our Nation shows that our workers helped transition our Nation from one industry to the next, driving innovation and creating economic prosperity for workers, communities, and industries, creating the middle class.

The history of our Nation shows that those who worked hard and played by the rules had something to show for it—a secure and good-paying job that supported their family and gave meaning to their community.

But today the American worker is confronted with economic challenges that threaten to undermine our economic security. Workers from Lorain to Wilmington, from Xenia to Zanesville, deserve a government that does more and does better for them.

Today President Obama and many in Congress are working to ensure workers be justly rewarded for their labor. As Ohioans understand, manufacturing recognizes the value of an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. We know that manufacturing is a ticket to the middle class. We know a strong middle class makes a stronger nation. That is why Americans deserve a manufacturing policy that works for them.

Manufacturing accounts for more than 10 percent of our entire economy and nearly three-fourths of our Nation's industrial research and development. Manufacturing jobs pay 20 percent more on average than service jobs. For every massive auto plant you see driving from east to west along the Ohio Turnpike, from Youngstown past Toledo, there are dozens of manufacturers making component parts and services for emerging industries in clean energy, aerospace, and biotechnology.

I applaud the administration's decision to tap Ron Bloom to direct a national strategy which will help manufacturers transition to the 21st century economy. It is not an easy task. It is one that requires hard work and progressive vision.

But in no uncertain terms, our Nation must establish a national policy to once again invest in our most important American asset—the American worker.

In the Economic Policy Subcommittee that I chair, we have looked at the elements of a national manufacturing strategy—investing in innovation, strengthening our component parts supply line, connecting workers with jobs in emerging industries, improving assistance for distressed communities, and revamping how our Nation does trade.

Done right, we can reinvest in our workers' capacity to build the next generation of technologies and rebuild our next generation of middle-class families.

Done right, we can create new industry, and we can create good-paying jobs and secure jobs.

Done right, we can ensure the future of our Nation's global economic competitiveness.

Let us honor the story of the American worker who built this country, who sustains our middle class by reinvesting in them. Labor Day is a time to honor a movement that respects the dignity of work and reflects the decency and dedication of our workers.

This year's Labor Day comes at a historic time in the progressive labor movement's ongoing march toward economic security and a new era of productivity for our Nation.

Along with a national manufacturing policy, health insurance reform must be part of this Nation's legacy of giving meaning to workers and giving hope to the middle class.

The vote on health insurance reform will be, next to my vote in opposition to the Iraq war 6 years ago as a Mem-

ber of the House of Representatives, the most important vote I cast in this Chamber. I hope at this time next year I will be reading the stories of Ohio workers who live with the health care they deserve and the dignity they have earned.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### RENO HIGH SCHOOL 130TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of the Senate to the 130th anniversary of Reno High School. Located in Washoe County, NV, Reno High School is the first and oldest high school in the city.

Until 1879, all Reno students went to school in a one-room building. That year they moved into a building officially named Central School, which gave high school-aged students their own floors. Though the school accommodated students from elementary through high school, it was often referred to as Reno High School throughout the community. In 1912, Reno's high school students moved into their own building and this school was properly dedicated as Reno High School.

I would like to take a moment to celebrate and cherish the rich history of Reno High School. It serves as a wonderful example of how a school can succeed through the hard work of its community members. Over the course of its history, Reno High School has educated thousands of bright individuals, cultivating their talent, and providing them with a nurturing environment in which to grow.

Notable alumni include U.S. Treasury Secretary Eva Adams, Pulitzer Prize winners Ann Telnaes and Warren LeRude, and Nevada State senator Bill Raggio. Its ranks also include a long list of local leaders who have made the Reno High School Alumni Association a robust organization, which now boasts the beautiful Link Piazza Alumni Center on campus. This freestanding building, completed in 2000, houses memorabilia dating back to Reno's earliest academic beginnings.

This school year begins by bringing students and alumni together in numerous events acknowledging the