

emergency room, which was then required to treat her without payment until her condition stabilized. Since money was no longer an issue, the hospital performed 25 emergency surgeries on Nikki, and she spent six months in critical care.

"When Nikki showed up at the emergency room, she received the best of care, and the hospital spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on her," her step-father, Tony Deal, told me. "But that's not when she needed the care."

By then it was too late. In 2006, Nikki White died at age 32. "Nikki didn't die from lupus," her doctor, Amylyn Crawford, told Mr. Reid. "Nikki died from complications of the failing American health care system."

"She fell through the cracks," Nikki's mother, Gail Deal, told me grimly. "When you bury a child, it's the worst thing in the world. You never recover."

We now have a chance to reform this cruel and capricious system. If we let that chance slip away, there will be another Nikki dying every half-hour.

That's how often someone dies in America because of a lack of insurance, according to a study by a branch of the National Academy of Sciences. Over a year, that amounts to 18,000 American deaths.

After Al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 Americans, eight years ago on Friday, we went to war and spent hundreds of billions of dollars ensuring that this would not happen again. Yet every two months, that many people die because of our failure to provide universal insurance—and yet many members of Congress want us to do nothing?

Mr. Reid's book is a rich tour of health care around the world. Because he has a bum shoulder, he asked doctors in many countries to examine it and make recommendations. His American orthopedist recommended a titanium shoulder replacement that would cost tens of thousands of dollars and might or might not help. Specialists in other countries warned that a sore shoulder didn't justify the risks of such major surgery, although some said it would be available free if Mr. Reid insisted. Instead, they offered physical therapy, acupuncture and other cheap and noninvasive alternatives, some of which worked pretty well.

That's a window into the flaws in our health care system: we offer titanium shoulder replacements for those who don't really need them, but we let 32-year-old women die if they lose their health insurance. No wonder we spend so much on medical care, and yet have some health care statistics that are worse than Slovenia's.

My suggestion for anyone in Nikki's situation: commit a crime and get locked up. In Washington State, a 20-year-old inmate named Melissa Matthews chose to turn down parole and stay in prison because that was the only way she could get treatment for her cervical cancer. "If I'm out, I'm going to die from this cancer," she told a television station.

Mr. and Mrs. Deal say they are speaking out because Nikki wouldn't want anyone to endure what she did. "Nikki was a college-educated, middle-class woman, and if it could happen to her, it can happen to anyone," Mr. Deal said. "This should not be happening in our country."

Struggling to get out the words, Mrs. Deal added: "The loss of a child is the greatest hurt anyone will ever suffer. Because of the circumstances she endured with the health care system, I lost my daughter."

Complex arguments are being batted around in this health care debate, but the central issue isn't technical but moral. The first question is simply this: Do we wish to be the only rich nation in the world that lets a 32-year-old woman die because she can't get health insurance? Is that really us?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday we began our Nation's Hispanic Heritage Month. Hispanics comprise over 45 percent of New Mexico's population, and our State's Hispanic community has deep roots and a rich history in our State. I am truly honored to highlight this important community in Congress today.

For a population that is expected to triple in size in our country by 2050, education continues to be an issue of fundamental significance. Preparing our children for the future is the greatest investment that we can make for our long-term economic vitality and for our country's ability to compete in the 21st century. We have many disparities to address in education and a long way to go to ensure the success of our children throughout their elementary and secondary education, particularly our Hispanic students.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today to highlight an example of a New Mexico institution of higher learning that is doing a tremendous job of serving our Hispanic students.

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This month the University of New Mexico was given top rankings by Hispanic Business Magazine's list of top 10 schools in the Nation for Hispanics in the fields of engineering, business, law and medicine.

UNM, which is located in my district, is our State's flagship university. UNM's success at serving the Hispanic community is the result of decades of hard work by the university's administration, their faculty, many organizations, and their students.

UNM's Law School, which the magazine ranked number one in the country for the third year in a row, has an outstanding number of Hispanic faculty and a school-wide emphasis on the engagement of students, faculty, and alumni in the wider community. Organizations like the Mexican American Law Student Association recruit local Hispanic high school students and then mentor them through their undergraduate years and help them to prepare for admission to the law school. It's worth noting that the UNM Chapter of MALSA was just named Law Student Organization of the Year by the Hispanic National Bar Association.

UNM's School of Medicine, which the magazine ranked sixth in the country,

has also formalized a pipeline program called "Joining Communities to Increase Access and Reduce Disparities." There, mentors from the School of Medicine recruit students from underrepresented high schools to consider careers in health care, enroll them in the New Mexico Clinical Education Program for undergraduates, and support students taking the MCAT.

UNM's School of Engineering, which earned a seventh-place ranking, has steadily grown its enrollment of Hispanic students to 32.7 percent this year. Much of that increase is owed to the school's leadership in creating the Hispanic Engineering and Science Organization's Annual Science Extravaganza with more than 500 youths from our State.

And, finally, at the Anderson School of Management, which Hispanic Business Magazine ranked sixth in the Nation, the number of Hispanic students entering their graduate program in the fall of 2009 was double from the previous year. Much of the Anderson School's success is owed to innovative programs such as a regular breakfast that they hold with members of the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce to increase interest in the MBA and the master's of accounting programs.

Mr. Speaker, across the University of New Mexico community, there is an ingrained commitment that strives to ensure that the university is representative of our community. That commitment is not just symbolic; it is essential to the service that UNM graduates offer to our congressional district once they graduate.

I want to congratulate the University of New Mexico for its national recognition as a top university by Hispanic Business Magazine, and I wish them continued success in serving our community and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that when our Hispanic students succeed, New Mexico succeeds and our Nation succeeds.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)