

including \$360 million owed to the United States. Argentina's willingness to pay its debts to the Paris Club demonstrates its capacity to go further and compensate private American creditors, who have been trying to collect outstanding debt from Argentina for years. The fact that Argentina has agreed to pay its public debts to other sovereign nations is a welcomed first step. However, private U.S. creditors are still owed billions of dollars.

As I mentioned before in this Chamber, these private creditors have won over 100 U.S. Federal court judgments against Argentina. Now that Argentina has shown that it can and will pay its debts through the Paris Club negotiations, the administration should work to get this issue resolved for the remaining American bondholders and taxpayers.

I hope my colleagues will join me in urging the administration to protect the well-being of the American citizens impacted by Argentina's failure to pay its debts.

Rx IMPACT DAY

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise today in advance of the Third Annual National Association of Chain Drug Stores RxIMPACT Day to recognize pharmacy contributions to the American health care system. Over the course of the next 2 days, over 300 members of the pharmacy community, including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, State pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives, will visit Capitol Hill to share their views with Congress about the importance of protecting access to neighborhood pharmacies and utilizing pharmacists to improve quality and reduce health costs.

Pharmacists play an important role in improving our health care system by providing services and expertise that help patients manage their medications and overall health. In many communities, pharmacists are the most accessible health care provider group. Today's pharmacies offer a variety of preventive healthcare services including immunizations and vaccinations, health screening services, disease management services and routine advice on the best and most effective over-the-counter products for patients' specific needs.

Through medication therapy management, MTM, pharmacists reduce medical errors and help patients manage and adhere to their prescribed therapies. Drug therapy management services can play a critical role in improving the quality of care and containing health care costs, as these services help patients make the best possible use of their medications. MTM services require a partnership of the pharmacist, the patient or their caregiver, and other health professionals to promote the safe and effective use of medications and help patients achieve targeted health outcomes. I am pleased

the Affordable Care Act recognized the health benefits and cost savings associated with MTM and includes a series of grant programs to encourage MTM as part of coordinated care models and chronic disease initiatives. Reform also improves the MTM benefit in Medicare Part D and establishes a bonus payment for Medicare Advantage plans that promote MTM.

Analysis conducted by the New England Healthcare Institute estimates that the overall cost of incorrect use of medication is as much as \$290 billion per year, not to mention the avoidable loss of quality of life for patients and their loved ones. With increasing evidence this benefit can improve patient health outcomes, I support community pharmacy's efforts to strengthen the MTM benefit. I joined colleagues earlier this year in introducing the Medication Therapy Management Empowerment Act. In addition to extending MTM services to seniors and others struggling with chronic conditions, this bill provides appropriate reimbursement for pharmacists' time and service. The bill also establishes standards for data collection to evaluate and improve the Part D MTM benefit.

Throughout my service in Congress, I have been a strong supporter of pharmacies and recognize their important role in our health care system. Today, I celebrate the value of pharmacy and support efforts to protect access to neighborhood pharmacies and utilize pharmacies to improve the quality and reduce the costs of health care. I commend pharmacy leaders, pharmacists, students, and executives and the pharmacy community for their contributions to improving the health of the American people.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise today, March 8, to celebrate International Women's Day, on which we honor the economic, political, and social achievements of women in Colorado and across the world. It also happens to be the 100-year anniversary of International Women's Day. For 100 years, diverse nations have spoken as one to honor the achievements of women and look forward hopefully to a future with greater economic opportunities for all women, including my three daughters, Caroline, Halina, and Anne.

I would like to celebrate today by discussing ways that we can build toward that future and create better economic opportunities for women in all countries—from Afghanistan to Zambia, two countries which, incidentally, celebrate International Women's Day as an official holiday.

All too often, in many developing countries, women represent a disproportionate number of the poor. According to the United Nations Development Program, women represent 60 percent of the 1.4 billion people living on less than \$1.25 a day. They also lack

access to the same educational and health services as men. For example, two-thirds of the world's illiterate people are women.

These disparities are stark, and their causes are the product of historical second-class citizenship for women. Such historical disadvantages are pervasive and systemic. Only with the determined effort of the international community can we begin to break down these barriers and foster true economic opportunities for women.

Many women and girls are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty because of their limited access to basic financial services. Women often manage the household and produce food for the entire family, but they are unable to save money, protect against calamity, or obtain a small loan—simple banking tools you and I take for granted.

For example, 75 percent of the world's women cannot obtain formal bank loans, partly because they lack permanent employment, capital, and assets, such as land. In some countries, like Burkina Faso, laws do not specifically discriminate against women, but they do establish landowner criteria that effectively exclude women.

One way to bridge this gap is to connect women with access to financial services and microfinance. Very small loans can help some women start and expand small businesses. Others need a safe place to store money as they save for school fees and health care services for their children. Some small businesswomen and female heads of households wish to purchase simple forms of insurance to protect against unexpected illnesses, which can often wipe a family out. By increasing women's access to such basic financial services, we can help countless women weather unexpected storms and gain agency over their economic well-being.

Creating economic and financial opportunities for women worldwide is the right thing to do, and it is also the smart thing to do. In countries like Pakistan and Yemen, supporting women can lead to measurable progress in the economic success of families and the direction of tomorrow's youth. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, these efforts can help small-scale, subsistence farmers, most of whom are women, prevent future food crises and help stabilize struggling democracies.

Mr. President and all other Members here today, please join me in celebrating International Women's Day by supporting efforts to expand economic opportunities for women around the world.

TEACHING GEOGRAPHY IS FUNDAMENTAL ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act, introduced by Senator COCHRAN and myself last week. Increasing geography literacy is essential to STEM education, and investing in our children's science