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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE 1195

has no children and his only family support comes from a sister and brother-in-law in At-

lanta, Georgia. They help him with money
-management. Case managers and case work-
ers with the Area Agency on Aging helped
him find a Medicare Advantage plan that is
affordable.

In the meantime, Delbert applied for and
awaited approval from the Alternatives Pro-
gram for Adults with Physical Disabilities, a
state Medicaid program. Once approval
came, he received funding and assistance in
having his bathroom retrofitted to be handi-
capped accessible.

He was also provided with personal care
and housekeeping assistance. Delbert also
began to receive home delivered meals. Last
October, Delbert celebrated his 65th birth-
day. Because he was confined to a wheelchair
and very isolated and lonely, his doctor pre-
scribed socialization and exercise to combat
his depression. Now, every Tuesday and
Thursday Delbert rides in a handicap acces-
sible van to the Benton County Senior Serv-
ces Center where he participates in an exer-
cise program.

He now enjoys his newfound friends and
enjoys games and other activities at the senior
center. Thanks to these aging and disability
support services, Delbert lives with dignity
and independence. Without this assistance he
would, no doubt, have spent the past few
years in a long-term care facility at enor-
mous cost to the public.

If SSBG gets cut severely this year, millions of Meals on Wheels to home-
bound seniors may not be delivered next year to people who rely on them.
States are already scaling back con-
gregate and home delivered meal pro-
grams because of last year’s Federal
funding cuts. Although Congress in-
creased Older Americans Act funds for
home delivered meals by 31% last year, it
simultaneously cut the Social Ser-
vices Block Grant and the USDA Nutri-
tion Program for the Elderly, which re-
sulted in a net loss of $300,000 in Fed-
eral funds to Arkansas. Unless we act,
this year’s cuts will be even greater.

To put the cost of home delivered meals in perspective, the cost of pro-
viding home delivered meals to a sen-
or for one year costs about as much as
one day’s stay in the hospital for one
person. I don’t know about you, but I
think that is pretty affordable.

The irony of the situation is that
these draconian cuts to SSBG come at a
time when our budget is experiencing
unprecedented surpluses. That is why I
respectfully disagree with some of my
colleagues who support these crippling SSBG funding cuts. They argue that
Governors can offset these cuts with
another solution of reducing most of
their tobacco settlement funds on health
related initiatives and smoking preven-
tion programs.

I supported an amendment during
last year’s Labor/HHS-Education ap-
propriations bill to restore funding to
the SSBG, although it did not pass.
Recently I cosponsored legislation
by Senators GRAHAM and JEFFORDS to
restore SSBG funding. When I was in the
House of Representatives and voted for
welfare reform, an agreement was
made between Congress and the states
to decrease SSBG from $2.8 billion to
$2.4 billion until welfare reform was
firmly established. In FY 03, Congress
was to restore funding to the $2.8 bil-
ion level. Clearly, Congress has not op-
erated in good faith in honoring this
agreement.

I believe that the Older Americans Act and the Social Services Block
Grant are vital safety nets for our na-
tion’s seniors. I hope the Senate will do
the right thing by passing a pro-senior
Older Americans Act and restore funds
to the Social Services Block Grant.

I don’t know about my colleagues,
but I do know there is not a day that
goes by that I don’t think of the con-
tribution of an elderly person in my
life. I would like to close by reading a
quote by Senator Hubert Humphrey
that you may be familiar with:

It was once said that the moral test of gov-
ernment is how that government treats
those who are in the dawn of life, the chil-
dren; those who are in the twilight of life,
the elderly; and those who are in the shad-
ows of life—the sick, the needy and the dis-
abled.

I think we have a wonderful oppor-
portunity to help the young, the old,
the sick, the needy and the disabled by re-
store the cuts to the Social Services
Block Grant and reauthorizing the
Older Americans Act.

Let’s get to work!

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I
have come to the floor to speak as a
member of the Judiciary Committee,
but I will back up the Senator from Ar-
kansas on one very key point that I
hope can happen in this Congress. I
urge, as she has done, that a bill to re-
authorize the Older Americans Act
come to the floor of the Senate because
it has been so long since that law has
been reauthorized on a permanent
basis. I understand it has been reau-
thorized on a year-to-year basis, but
on a permanent basis as it ought to be,
or at least for a multiyear basis. So
I urge that action to be taken at this
time.

INTERNET MEDICAL PRIVACY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I
come to the floor to speak on the sub-
ject of technology. The message on
technology is very simple. Technology
is moving fast, but somehow Congress
does not pass laws that keep up with
technology. I wish to state the pro-
nouncement that, from the standpoint of
the right to privacy, our laws cannot
be left behind. Every day, more and
more Americans are waking up to what
technology can do to improve their
lives. It appears to be such a part of the
American people in the technology sec-
tor, we live in an amazing time. Con-
gress didn’t bring about this revolu-
tion, and Congress should not do any-
thing to impede the rapid changes tak-
ing place in technology.

However, one of the main threats to
the growth of electronic commerce is
the risk of a massive erosion of pri-
vacy. While the Internet offers tremen-
dous benefits, it also comes with the
potential for harm. If we lack con-

fidence that our privacy will be pro-
tected online, we won’t take full ad-
vantage of what the Internet has to offer.
The Judiciary Committee is now con-
sidering a bill to protect the pri-
vacy of Internet users. I want to focus
on one particular issue, and that is
maintaining privacy of personal health
information obtained by web sites.

I happen to believe, as a matter of
basic principle, that our health infor-
mation is very personal, and nobody
else should know that without my per-
mission. I am pleased to join my col-
league from New Jersey, Senator TORRICELLI, in cosponsor-
ning an amend-
ment on this issue before the Judiciary
Committee. I think it will be up this
week, on Thursday.

The amendment Senator TORRICELLI
and I plan to sponsor will give citizens
data protection to control the infor-
mation that they might provide while
surfing the web. None of that will be
passed on to others without their ex-
plicit permission. Our amendment sim-
ply provides that a commercial web
site operator must obtain permission
from a person before sending personal in-
formation to another entity. In addi-
tion, it would require that individuals
be told to whom their medical informa-
tion will be released if permission is
given.

I know to people watching this
sounds like a pretty simple, common-
sense thing, that there would be no dis-
pute and it ought to be part of the laws
of our country under our Constitution
that personal information not be sold
or used by anybody else without the
personal permission of the person who
medical information is about. It
sounds pretty simple that it ought to be
part of our law. It appears to be such
common sense that maybe we should
not even have to deal with that; it is
just common sense that nobody else
should profit from your personal infor-
mation without telling you about it
and showing your permission.

It is only fair—that is not only to
myself and to Senator TORRICELLI—to put that
burden on the web site operator and
not on the consumer. Medical informa-
tion can be highly personal, and con-
sumers face serious risk if it becomes a
public commodity that can be bought
and sold without the individual’s con-
sent. If that is allowed, then we are all
at risk.