We must update the Medicare program to include a prescription drug benefit. This bipartisan, comprehensive bill will provide universal coverage to all 39 million Medicare beneficiaries in this country. As you know, Medicare was established in 1965 at a time when prescription drugs were not widely used. These days, drug therapies have replaced overnight stays in hospitals and long convalescence in nursing facilities. In light of this, we must update the Medicare program to keep pace with these scientific and medical advances.

This legislation does many things that other legislative proposals do not. First, it provides universal coverage on a voluntary basis to every Medicare-eligible individual. Second, it is based on a standard insurance model, with coinsurance, a deductible, and a defined stop-loss benefit. In other words, once a senior pays $4,000 in annual drug costs, our plan covers the rest. Third, the amount of a senior’s premium would be directly related to his/her income, on a sliding scale. In other words, the lowest-income senior will receive the greatest subsidy. Conversely, the highest-income senior will receive the lowest federal subsidy.

Finally, this legislation emulates market-based insurance coverage by allowing multiple “pharmacy benefit managers” (PBMs) to contract with Medicare to provide the pharmaceutical benefit to seniors. This would ensure competition in the delivery of this benefit, which means a better benefit and lower prices for consumers. This competition would also prevent the government from “setting” drug prices. In my view, price setting would weaken the ability of pharmaceutical companies to conduct valuable research and development into new drug therapies that one day may cure diseases such as cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS.

In sum, I believe our proposal to be one of the most responsible and comprehensive drug bills in Congress. It achieves these twin goals while relieving seniors of the huge burden of high drug bills. Seniors should never have to choose between filling a prescription for needed medication or buying groceries. Sadly, this is often the case today.

This past April, I received a letter from an elderly couple in Rhode Island, with a list of their prescription drug expenses for the first quarter: $7,000 in 1999 on these prescriptions. They are living on a fixed income, and told me that their savings are being wiped out by the high cost of prescription medications. In addition, the grandmother of one of my staffers was unable to get her Prilosec prescription from her daughter, who has it prescribed and then ships it to her mother. This should not be happening. Our bill will ensure that these seniors will get the prescription medications they need without having to worry about their personal savings or resort to getting the prescription through a relative. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this important legislation and finally provide this necessary medical coverage to our nation’s seniors.

**ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS**

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 190, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit former members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. CHAFEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1036, a bill to amend parts A and D of title IV of the Social Security Act to give States the option to pass through directly to a family receiving assistance under the temporary assistance to needy families program all child support collected by the State and the option to disregard any child support that the family receives in determining a family’s eligibility for, or amount of, assistance under that program.

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1333, a bill to expand homeownership in the United States.

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. KERREY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1805, a bill to restore food stamp benefits for aliens, to provide States with flexibility in administering the food stamp vehicle allowance, to index the excess shelter expense deduction to inflation, to authorize additional appropriations to purchase and make available additional commodities under the emergency food assistance program, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. COVERDELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2358, a bill to provide for the disclosure of certain information relating to tobacco products and to prescribe labels for packages and advertising of tobacco products.

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2356, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the operation by the National Institutes of Health of an experimental program to stimulate competitive research.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2417, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to increase funding for State nonpoint source pollution control programs, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. COVERDELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2417, a bill to amend the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 to authorize the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide assistance to fire departments and fire prevention organizations for the purpose of protecting the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards.
June 20, 2000

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(Mr. DODD), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. CAMPBELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2585, a bill to amend titles IV and XX of the Social Security Act to restore funding for the Social Services Block Grant, to restore the ability of the States to transfer up to 10 percent of TANF funds to carry out activities under such block grant, and to require an annual report on such activities by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

S. 2635

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2635, a bill to reduce health care costs and promote improved health by providing supplemental grants for additional preventive health services for women.

S. 2690

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2690, a bill to reduce the risk that innocent persons may be executed, and for other purposes.

S. 2735

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2696, a bill to prevent evasion of United States excise taxes on cigarettes, and for other purposes.

S. 2768

At the request of Mr. EDWARDS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 268, a resolution designating July 17 through July 23 as “National Fragile X Awareness Week.”

S. RES. 301

At the request of Mr. THURMOND, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. ABRAHAM), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. ASHCROFT) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 301, a resolution designating August 16, 2000, as “National Airborne Day.”

S. RES. 303

At the request of Mr. VOINOVICH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 303, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the treatment by the Russian Federation of Andrei Babitsky, a Russian journalist working for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

S. RES. 304

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 304, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the development of educational programs on veterans’ contributions to the country and the designation of the week that includes Veterans Day as “National Veterans Awareness Week” for the presentation of such educational programs.

S. RES. 309

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 309, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding conditions in Laos.

AMENDMENT NO. 3252

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3252 proposed to S. 2549, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2001 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3473 proposed to S. 2549, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2001 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 324

Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers are one of the greatest sports franchises ever;
Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers have won 12 National Basketball Association Championships;
Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers are the second winningest team in National Basketball Association history;
Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers, at 67-15, posted the best regular season record in the National Basketball Association;
Whereas Shaquille O’Neal led the league in scoring and field goal percentage on his way to winning the National Basketball Association’s Most Valuable Player award, winning the IBM Award for greatest overall contribution to a team, and becoming just the sixth player in the history of the game to be an unanimous selection to the All-National Basketball Association First Team;
Whereas Shaquille O’Neal was named Most Valuable Player of the 2000 All Star game, scoring 22 points and collecting 9 rebounds;
Whereas Shaquille O’Neal dominated the 2000, playoffs averaging 38 points per game and winning the Most Valuable Player award in the National Basketball Association Finals;
Whereas Kobe Bryant overcame injuries to average more than 22 points a game in the regular season and he led the Los Angeles Lakers to 1 of the most dramatic wins in playoff history;
Whereas Coach Phil Jackson, who has won 7 National Basketball Association rings and the highest playoff winning percentage in league history, has proven to be 1 of the most innovative and adaptable coaches in the National Basketball Association;
Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers epitomize Los Angeles pride with their determination, heart, stamina, and amazing comeback ability;
Whereas the support of all the Los Angeles fans and the people of California helped make winning the National Basketball Association Championship possible; and
Whereas the Los Angeles Lakers have started the 21st century meeting the high standards they established in the 20th century; Now, therefore, be it,
Resolved That the United States Senate congratulates the Los Angeles Lakers on winning the 2000 National Basketball Association Championship Title.

SENATE RESOLUTION 325—WELCOMING KING MOHAMMED VI OF MOROCCO UPON HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. ABRAHAM submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 325

Whereas Morocco was the first country to recognize the independence of the United States;
Whereas Morocco and the United States signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1777;
Whereas the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation stands as the basis for the longest unbroken treaty relationship between the United States and a foreign country in the history of the Republic;
Whereas the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation has established a close, friendly, and productive alliance between the United States and Morocco that has stood the test of history and exists today;