

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

#### NO APOLOGY NECESSARY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, earlier this morning a Member of the Senate described the circumstances on the floor of the Senate yesterday with respect to a vote on the issue of a prescription drug benefit for Medicare. Yes, there was a vote on that issue. I want to describe why that motion was offered and the importance of it.

I also want to say that, while I certainly have the greatest respect for my colleague, this was not a circumstance where the minority leader or anyone else intended to surprise anybody. When the minority leader or any other Senator is pursuing an agenda he believes is important for our country, he does not go desk to desk in the Chamber asking permission from anyone else to offer an amendment. That is not the way the Senate works, of course.

The minority leader believes very strongly, as does almost every single member of this caucus, and perhaps some others in the Senate, that we need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. Life-saving miracle drugs can only perform miracles for those who can afford them. Senior citizens all too often are choosing between groceries and the prescription drugs they need. If we were to create the Medicare program today, unquestionably we would have a prescription drug benefit in that plan.

We have been very relentless in saying we believe we must add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program and we should do it in this Congress. We cannot and will not apologize for being relentless in that pursuit. We have had very few opportunities on the floor of this Senate to pursue our agenda. Yesterday was one of them.

If, at the end of the day, we get a bipartisan agreement to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program, then we will be rewarded for our success by the senior citizens in this country who will be able to have access to the prescription drugs they need. If, at the end of the day, we do that, I guarantee that it will only be because, for the last couple of years, we have been relentless on the floor of the Senate and in the House, saying this Congress must do this.

We have had others who say, yes, we agree about the need for a prescription drug benefit, but we want to have the

private insurance companies write a plan, and so on and so forth. The fact is that the private insurance companies have said publicly, and they have come to my office and said repeatedly, "We will not write a plan; we cannot write a plan." It is not within the range of financial possibilities for us to do what the majority party is proposing. In fact, one company official said, "We will write a plan that has \$1,000 in benefits, and we would have to charge \$1,200 in premiums for the plan to cover the administrative and other costs of the benefit." That is the same as having no plan, the same as doing nothing in terms of adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare.

Our goal is to find a way to solve this problem in this Congress. This Congress, with all due respect, on some of the big issues, has been a Congress of underachievers. We can do a lot better than this. We can add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. We can pass a campaign finance reform bill. We can pass a Patients' Bill of Rights. We can pass an education bill that reduces class size and helps rebuild and renovate some of our nation's dilapidated schools. We can do these things if we put our minds to it. But somehow there is this notion by at least those who control the agenda that what we need to do is tuck in our wings and get out of town and do as little as possible.

I don't want to belong to a Congress of underachievers. I want our Congress to do the things we ought to be doing together. Yes, a prescription drugs benefit in Medicare is one of those items. We cannot apologize for what we did yesterday. We must, at every opportunity, continue to push and coax and pull those in the Chamber who don't really want to do this to join us and fix what is wrong with respect to this Medicare program.

What is wrong, in part, is that it doesn't have coverage for prescription drugs, and there are a lot of senior citizens who are prescribed medications that will allow them to live longer and healthier lives, and they discover they can't afford them.

A woman in Dickinson, ND, who had breast cancer was told by her doctor that in order to reduce the chances of a recurrence of her breast cancer, she must take this prescription medicine. This woman, who was on Medicare and had a small fixed income, said, "Doctor, there isn't any way I can afford that medicine. There is no way. I am just going to have to take my chances." This situation faces too many senior citizens who need prescription medicine and find that they cannot afford it. That is why we must put a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program.

Let's do something at the same time that puts some downward pressure on drug prices. Prices have risen too fast and too far on prescription drugs.

I just want to say that no one crossed any lines by not going to every desk in the Chamber about that motion yesterday. We are going to keep trying until we get enough votes in the Senate to add a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare plan. It is for a good reason. This country needs that sort of policy in place right now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business for a time not to exceed 20 minutes.

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

#### TWENTY YEARS OF CONGRESSIONAL SERVICE BY DAVID GARMAN

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor today to offer my congratulations and thanks to my Chief of Staff, David Kline Garman, who has dedicated his entire life to public service. Today, in fact, marks the 20th anniversary of David's service in the United States Senate.

David's public service career began even before he came to the Senate. While attending Duke University in the 1970s, he participated in Naval ROTC and during the summer of 1976 he served with the naval amphibious task force which rescued American Nationals from Beirut during the Civil War in Lebanon.

After graduating with Honors from Duke in 1979, he served in the Peace Corps working on rural water supply projects in Nepal. He came to the Senate on June 23, 1980 to work as an intern with Senator Richard Dick" Stone (D-Florida), beginning in the Senator's mail room and working his way up to assist on defense, finance, banking and energy issues.

After David attended the Democratic Convention in 1980, he began to reconsider his political affiliation and on the day Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, David joined my staff to serve as Legislative Aide on defense and foreign relations. He was soon promoted to Legislative Assistant for energy and natural resources.

In addition to his legislative expertise, David is extremely knowledgeable in the nuts and bolts of high technology. In the late 1980s he became Founding Coordinator for the U.S. Senate Microcomputer Users Group. This group was instrumental in changing Senate technology policy so that each office could decide what type of computer system it would utilize. Previously, Senate offices could only use a system selected by the Senate Computer Center.

David's broad range of intellectual interests led me to select him to join the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence when I was a