

Mr. President, I, as I did yesterday, urge my colleagues to vote to confirm President Bush's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, the outstanding Governor of the State of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson.

Statements made during yesterday's session by Senators from both sides of the aisle made it apparent that the qualities that have made Governor Thompson so successful in Wisconsin also make him an ideal choice to lead this very all-encompassing Department of Health and Human Services.

Governor Thompson is a problem solver. He is an innovator and really is a leader with a record of success, particularly during the 14 years he has served as Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

His record as Governor of the State of Wisconsin should show everybody that he is a person committed to improving the lives of real people. The impressive results he has brought about in his great State should inspire all of us. In fact, his success in welfare reform there inspired Congress to pass the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. He was, even while Governor, an advisor to many Members of the Congress who felt we ought to move people from welfare to work, move people from the fringe of our economic society to the center, to the mainstream of that society so they can benefit, as others do, from the dynamics of our economy.

Most Wisconsinites—94 percent—have health insurance because of his leadership. The disabled and elderly persons needing long-term care have a state-of-the-art support system to turn to, thanks to Governor Thompson's leadership.

Programs such as Pathways to Independence and Family Care are efficient and effective and are part of a reliable safety net program. They call the program he instituted in Wisconsin the Wisconsin Works Welfare Reform Program. It has helped the State reduce its welfare caseload by nearly 95 percent. Think of that: reducing the welfare caseload by 95 percent. This is good for government, but, most important, we do not have welfare reform to help government; we have welfare reform to help people.

The program that has been before the country for the last 4 years is not doing everything we want it to do. It is not good to have people on the fringe of our society, people who know no other life than a public check coming from the welfare office. That is not a humane way to treat people. It is humane in our society to help people who cannot help themselves, but for those people who can help themselves—and people generally, if given the incentive, do want to help themselves—we have the responsibility to move them from the edge of society into the mainstream of society. That is exactly what happened in Wisconsin.

More specifically, there was a program in place in Wisconsin before we adopted ours in Washington, DC, for the entire nation, and that program reduced the caseload by 95 percent.

Governor Thompson's record in Wisconsin is, indeed, impressive, and we are prepared, I believe, to confirm his nomination. He will bring a wealth of knowledge, a very positive outlook, and an innovative style to the national debate on welfare reform and to Medicare improvements, including prescription drugs.

Governor Thompson made it clear during his nomination hearings that he welcomes the opportunity to work with any Member, Republican or Democrat, who has a special interest or special concern. One only needs to listen to the glowing recommendations from the distinguished Senators from Wisconsin, both Democrats, to be assured of his commitment to bipartisanship. Such bipartisanship, if anything is going to get done, is dictated by the makeup of the Senate and the closeness of the Presidential election.

More importantly, it is the way that Governor Thompson has worked in Wisconsin. Obviously, it is the way he is going to work with us.

I look forward to his collaborative approach to getting the job done and urge my colleagues to join me in approving this nomination.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time. Just in case there is an interest in speeding this nomination along, I am prepared to yield back any time I have left.

Before I sit down, Mr. President, I have this request from the leader.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREE-
MENT—NOMINATION OF NORMAN
MINETA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the 11:30 a.m. vote today, the nomination of Norman Mineta, to be Secretary of Transportation, be placed on the calendar. I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to its consideration and a vote on the confirmation of the nomination. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the vote, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Therefore, Mr. President, I am announcing for the leader, there will then be two back-to-back votes beginning at 11:30 a.m. today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the yeas and nays be in order en bloc on both nominations.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. I now ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

NOMINATION OF TOMMY THOMPSON TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to speak in support of the nomination of Governor Tommy Thompson to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Governor Thompson brings an extraordinary record to Washington, DC, and he has accomplished a great deal as Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

He began his political life in the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1966. He was elected to an unprecedented third term in Wisconsin, and then he broke his own record by being elected to a fourth term—of course again unprecedented. He has had remarkable accomplishments in the field of education, and tax cuts, where the tax rolls in Wisconsin have been very substantially reduced, in crime control, and perhaps his greatest achievement has been in welfare reform in Wisconsin. While Governor, Wisconsin got more waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services than any other State. Now it will be interesting to see how, in his capacity as Secretary of the Department, he will function to create policies in a climate where the Federal Government can articulate and implement policies which will not require States to seek waivers, as he was so successful at doing.

His reform of the welfare system in Wisconsin has received national acclaim. He initiated the program called "Learnfare." He was able to change the approach in Wisconsin to have work instead of welfare—all enormous accomplishments.

When I looked at the record of Governor Thompson, candidly, I wondered why he did not run for President with those accomplishments behind him. I know some consideration had been given by Governor Thompson to that. It is an onerous road, considering all the difficulties. Perhaps foremost was the formidable candidacy of Gov. George Bush of Texas, who is now our President. So we have done very well indeed on the Presidency, and on the designation of Secretary Thompson for Health and Human Services.

He will be facing some very difficult problems. One of the problems he will be facing is the controversial issue of stem cells, where I and others have introduced legislation to remove the ban on Federal funding for the extraction of stem cells from embryos. This has