

Employees younger than 65 will also be on their own for medical costs. A fund set up by LTV when it last emerged from bankruptcy to pay for employees' health care probably will be out of money in less than a year, said Mr. Tomasch, the LTV spokesman. Among the benefits that will be lost is a medical plan that covers 80 to 90 percent of the costs of prescriptions ordered by mail. Last year, the company paid \$200 million in health care costs, he said.

If LTV's unions are unable to secure the loan, their best hope is to find a buyer for the mills.

"Plan A is to keep LTV operating and to do our work in Washington, D.C.," said Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a Democratic representative from the Cleveland area, where LTV has its biggest mill. "Plan B is to prepare our community to invite a new buyer for LTV, including providing incentives."

Finding a buyer for the Cleveland mill will not be easy. "There is excess capacity around the world, and the Cleveland mill is one of the highest-cost mills," said Mr. Bradford, the independent analyst.

Even if a buyer is found, that might not help LTV's current employees. The mills will be more attractive to a buyer without the workers, Mr. Bradford said, because then they would not be forced to assume the health care costs.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will read a paragraph:

LTV's workers are laboring fiercely to pull off an 11th-hour rescue, but their prospects are dim. Their union is hoping for a \$250 million loan backed by the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board, an arm of the Commerce Department. "We're going to fight like hell to get this loan, and fight like hell to save this company," said Leo Gerard, international president of the steelworkers union.

Mr. President, I along with other Senators who try to represent workers and working families and steelworkers, have written a letter to this Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board in the Commerce Department asking them to grant this loan. On the Senate floor today, I wish to associate myself with President Gerard's comments. If there is any vehicle—we are down to the wire here—if there is an economic stimulus package or economic recovery package, I will have an amendment which will give that loan board better authorizing language to make it clear that, indeed, this is their mandate to guarantee just these kinds of loans. I don't know whether or not we are going to have that package. That is being negotiated.

I have also made it clear that I think if there is any other bill that passes through in terms of providing relief for this sector of the economy or that sector, that from my point of view there also has to be an amendment which represents relief for those people who are flat on their back, out of work, without unemployment insurance any longer, without health care coverage or soon to be without coverage, or to help these steelworkers.

I wanted to cite this article because I am sure President Gerard and the steelworkers sometimes think they are

shouting in the wind, that they are not being heard. Industrial work is being spit out of the economy. LTV shut down. At the taconite plant in the Iron Range of Minnesota, 1,400 workers are out of work.

I went with them the day the local president called everybody together to tell them it was over. And I got really mixed advice about whether to go because people said, if you are there, like a politician, people are just going to turn on you because they are so angry about losing their jobs. They didn't do that. People appreciate the fact you go up and you are with people, especially in these times.

But the fact is, not just for the sake of these workers who want nothing more but to work, but for financial security as well, we ought to pay attention to what has happened in the steel industry. We should pay attention to what is happening to certain vital sectors of the economy.

Again, just so President Gerard and the International Steelworkers Union don't think there aren't Senators who support them, I know others do as well. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been at this a long time. This was Senator BYRD's original idea. This Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board of the Commerce Department can do this. This is their mission and mandate. They can say: We guarantee this loan. So far they have not done so. I wish we could rush through some additional language to make it clear this is their mission and mandate. We may not be able to do so. But they ought to go forward with this loan. If they don't, the consequences are going to be very harsh.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess until 3:30 today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:03 p.m., recessed until 3:30 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JOHNSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we have been hearing a steady drumbeat of complaints from our Republican colleagues about the pace of judicial confirmations by the Senate. For all who

know the facts, there is no basis for the charge that Democrats have engaged in delay tactics on judicial nominees. In fact, the Democratic Senate has been significantly more diligent in confirming judges under the Bush administration than the Republican Senate was at any point under the Clinton administration.

In the 5 months since Democrats gained control of the Senate, the Judiciary Committee has already held 11 hearings on judicial nominees. Under Chairman LEAHY's leadership, we held hearings during the August recess, and also just 2 days after the terrorist attacks. In addition, we held a hearing in the Capitol Building, when the Senate offices were closed by the anthrax contamination.

As a result, 27 judges have already been confirmed in the 5 months since Democrats took control of the Senate. By the time the Senate adjourns, we are likely to have confirmed more than 30 judges—more than were confirmed during the entire first year of President Clinton's first term in office when Democrats controlled the Senate, and more than double the number confirmed during the entire first year of the first Bush administration.

Our record is good by any measure. It becomes even better when we compare it to the record of the Republican majority when they controlled the Senate during the Clinton administration.

We have held 11 judicial nomination hearings in just 5 months, almost all of which have included several judges per hearing. In 1999 and 2000, the Republicans held an average of only seven hearings for the entire year.

In confirming 24 judges since the August recess, we have had a more productive post-August-recess period than any Republican-led Senate did for a comparable period in the last 6 years.

Some Republicans are now blaming Democrats for the current number of vacancies on the Federal bench. But these vacancies were largely caused by the tactics of the Republican majority over the last 6 years. We know that our colleagues worked to impede President Clinton's executive branch nominees such as Bill Lann Lee, nominated to head the civil rights division, and Dr. Satcher, the nominee for Surgeon General. Our colleagues also blocked or attempted to block President Clinton's judicial nominees by delaying or refusing to hold hearings, and refusing to allow the Senate to vote on some nominees. The average length of time a circuit court nominee waited for a hearing under the Republican Senate was about 300 days. Some nominees waited up to 4 years for a hearing. In 6 years, the Republican Senate failed to confirm nearly half of President Clinton's nominees to the circuit courts. As a result, vacancies in the Federal courts increased by 60 percent.

No one suggests that Senate Democrats should follow the example the Republicans set over the past 6 years. The Judiciary Committee should and will continue to move forward in confirming nominees to the Federal court in a prompt manner. But it is wrong for any of us in the Senate to abdicate our responsibility to thoroughly review the record of each nominee. Lifetime appointments are at stake. The need for careful review is important not just for Supreme Court nominees but for nominees to the lower Federal courts as well. These courts hold immense power. Many important legal issues in this country are decided at the Court of Appeals level, since the Supreme Court decides fewer than 100 cases per year.

I voted to confirm most of the judges nominated by President Reagan and the first President Bush. The Senate's constitutional duty of "advice and consent" does not mean that the Senate should be a rubber stamp. It certainly does not require the approval of Federal judges who have displayed hostility to core Federal constitutional and statutory protections, or who have an extreme ideological agenda. Judges who are highly qualified, have a balanced judiciary temperament, and who are committed to upholding the Constitution and Federal law are judges that Senators on both sides of the aisle can support. But we should not support nominees with records that suggest they will roll back the rights and protections that Americans consider vital.

All nominees should have their records examined thoroughly, and they should have hearings to answer questions about their records. Because these are lifetime appointments to courts that make decisions deeply affecting the nation, full and fair review is the least the Senate owes the American people.

The Senate has worked well together this year on a number of bipartisan efforts, including education, airline security, and bioterrorism. On the issue of judges, all of us on the Senate Judiciary Committee know that we can work well with the administration and with Senators on both sides of the aisle to confirm nominees for our Federal courts who are highly qualified, fair, and committed to upholding the Constitution and the Nation's laws. I look forward to greater efforts in the time ahead to achieve that very important goal.

I am reminded of the fact, in reviewing the Constitutional Convention, that perhaps the last major decision made at the Constitutional Convention was to change what had been initially accepted by the Founding Fathers, and that was the Senate was going to appoint Federal judges. The Senate would do it by itself. One of the last decisions made by the Founding Fathers was to have this as a shared responsibility.

It seems to me that is something that sometimes this institution loses sight of, as do the American people sometimes. They believe that once nominated, we, in effect, should be a rubber stamp to these nominees. In reading constitutional history, we will find, to the Founding Fathers this was an issue of enormous importance and consequence. They made it extremely explicit that they believed the responsibility ought to be an equally shared responsibility between the President and the Senate. It does seem to me we should meet that responsibility in ways that are fair, that reveal the qualities of the individual, and make a judgment and a decision based upon that process.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN T. O'CONNOR

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to take this opportunity to remember my friend John T. O'Connor, who passed away on November 30, 2001. A lifelong fighter for social justice, John died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 46 while playing basketball, a sport he loved, at the YMCA near his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

John O'Connor's zest for life and boundless energy were apparent from the moment you first met him, and those extraordinary qualities continued to amaze even those who knew him best and longest. His undeniable charisma helped win an enormous circle of friends. But his life was always about causes larger than himself. He credited his passion for social justice to the example of his parents, Katherine and George, to the Catholic faith and training he felt so deeply, and to his many inspiring teachers, especially at Clark University in Worcester, his alma mater.

John's public journey began when he was still in college in the late 1970s, organizing fellow students to volunteer at the Mustard Seed, a Catholic worker collective in Worcester dedicated to feeding the poor and homeless. There he perfected his trademark eggplant parmesan. After graduation, John went to work for Worcester Fair Share, knocking on the doors of the three deckers of Grafton Hill in a successful campaign to end arson-for-profit in that neighborhood, a pattern he identified through disciplined research. The fire station built in response to that campaign remains a testament to John's first venture into grassroots organizing.

The combination of community organizing and strategic research led him to understand that the environment was also an urban issue, affecting the quality of life in low income neighborhoods as surely as in the great outdoors. He began this new work by organizing citizens to resist an ill-conceived landfill proposal and to nego-

tiate with local factory owners to reduce emissions.

Soon, John moved on to a large national campaign, setting out to rid the country of environmental threats such as the asbestos contamination he lived next to in his hometown of Stratford, CT. At a time when environmental activism was out of fashion among some in Washington, he began traveling across the nation, speaking out against polluters, and convincing more than a million Americans to sign petitions to support toxic waste cleanup. He built his organization, The National Toxics Campaign, into a grassroots campaign to mobilize people from across the country, providing timely and passionate support for the appropriation of \$8 billion for the Federal Superfund law in the mid-eighties, and helping to realize the promise of that historic legislation.

First and foremost, John was a community organizer. He took on a remarkable range of issues, and he always did so with great dedication and effectiveness. He worked with scientists to document health concerns for veterans of the Gulf War. He made the case for environmental cleanup programs from Boston Harbor to the Rio Grande. He argued against the misuse of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture. He was a strong believer in the importance of organized labor, and he fought alongside union members for strict protections for health and safety in the workplace. He co-authored a number of books on organizing and the environment, and a book on agricultural democracy was near completion. He was also interested for many years in responsible energy policy, and he led an effort in 1998 to repeal a Massachusetts electricity deregulation law, which he felt was unfair to consumers and the environment.

For John O'Connor, environmentalism was always as much about people as about our physical surroundings. It was logical that he would turn in recent years to the cause of assuring the best possible health care for every citizen. In 1999, he led efforts that obtained more than one hundred thousand citizen signatures in support of a health reform measure for the Massachusetts ballot. Momentum generated by that successful signature drive led to the passage of important but long-delayed legislation on the rights of patients in managed care. Looking ahead, he was poised to play an important and growing role in revitalizing prospects for universal coverage in Massachusetts.

John O'Connor was also an intense and tireless champion of racial justice. He was endlessly fascinated by the diversity of human experience. As an American of Irish heritage, he led the 1997 drive to create the first permanent U.S. memorial to the victims of the Irish Famine on Cambridge Common.