

serves as an anchor of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world;

(2) supports United States efforts to strengthen military, diplomatic, trade, economic, and people-to-people cooperation with Australia, including initiatives to positively shape the evolving strategic and economic environment that connects the Indian and the Pacific Oceans; and

(3) urges close consultation between the Governments of the United States and Australia in preparation for the East Asia Summit to be chaired by Indonesia on November 19, 2011, and encourages other, new forms of cooperation with the Government and people of Australia that strengthen regional architectures to enhance peace, security, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY AND NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 302 and that the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 302) expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging the people of the United States to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any related statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 302) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 302

Whereas there are approximately 408,000 children in the foster care system in the United States, approximately 107,000 of whom are waiting for families to adopt them;

Whereas 56 percent of the children in foster care are age 10 or younger;

Whereas the average length of time a child spends in foster care is more than 2 years;

Whereas for many foster children, the wait for a loving family in which they are nurtured, comforted, and protected seems endless;

Whereas in 2010, nearly 28,000 youth "aged out" of foster care by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home;

Whereas everyday, loving and nurturing families are strengthened and expanded when committed and dedicated individuals make an important difference in the life of a child through adoption;

Whereas a 2007 survey conducted by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption demonstrated that though "Americans overwhelmingly support the concept of adoption, and in particular foster care adoption . . . foster care adoptions have not increased significantly over the past five years";

Whereas while 4 in 10 Americans have considered adoption, a majority of Americans have misperceptions about the process of adopting children from foster care and the children who are eligible for adoption;

Whereas 71 percent of those who have considered adoption consider adopting children from foster care above other forms of adoption;

Whereas 45 percent of Americans believe that children enter the foster care system because of juvenile delinquency, when in reality the vast majority of children who have entered the foster care system were victims of neglect, abandonment, or abuse;

Whereas 46 percent of Americans believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality there is no substantial cost for adopting from foster care and financial support is available to adoptive parents after the adoption is finalized;

Whereas both National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month occur in the month of November;

Whereas National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system;

Whereas since the first National Adoption Day in 2000, more than 35,000 children have joined forever families during National Adoption Day;

Whereas in 2010, adoptions were finalized for nearly 5,000 children through 400 National Adoption Day events in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; and

Whereas the President traditionally issues an annual proclamation to declare the month of November as National Adoption Month, and National Adoption Day is on November 19, 2011: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month;

(2) recognizes that every child should have a permanent and loving family; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to consider adoption during the month of November and all throughout the year.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, the resolution just approved by unanimous consent is a very important resolution that Senator GRASSLEY and I are proud to support, along with Senator INHOFE and others. It is a resolution recognizing that this Saturday is National Adoption Day.

I am happy to report that on this Saturday, there will be over 3,500 children who will be adopted into permanent families.

This day was started about 10 years ago by some very enterprising organizations, and the Senate and the House of Representatives have been helping to promote the concept of National Adoption Day for many years now, maybe as many as 10. We sure have been working to help highlight this special day. It was started by nonprofit organizations to highlight the fact that we have orphans in the United States.

People don't believe this, but there are over 100,000 children in our foster care system between the ages of 0 and

21, who are in our foster care system, whose parents' rights have been terminated for good reason—maybe terrible or gross abuse or neglect. Those parents are unable or unwilling to raise their biological children. These children need a forever family, a relative to step up, a cousin or an aunt or a grandmother to step up, or they need someone in the community to step up and say: You can be a part of our family.

People don't stop needing families when they are 21 years old. They age out of the foster care system, unfortunately, at 21 despite the good work we have done here to extend that time from 18 to 21. Unfortunately, every year 25,000 children age out of our foster care system, as the Senator from Iowa knows—he has been a phenomenal leader on foster care reform—without ever having been adopted.

When you are 25 or 24 or 23 and you are trying to apply for your first job, it would be nice to have a mother, father, grandmother, or a grandfather to call and ask: How do I dress? What should I say? Does my resume look OK? These children don't have that. When you are engaged, it would be nice to be able to call a parent and say: Can you help with the expense of the wedding or can you be there for me? These children don't have that. That is what National Adoption Day is about, highlighting the fact that there are children in our foster care system—beautiful, strong, intelligent children who need a forever family. We are doing our best to promote adoption for them.

Not only in our system in the United States, but sadly there are around 163 million children around the world living outside of family care. We think that number is conservative because we have reason to believe that even those who do a lot of counting are not really counting all the children in orphanages. The number is probably larger than that.

It sounds overwhelming—and it can be at times—to think about our goal to try to find a home for every one of these children. But just to put in perspective the U.S. numbers, it is 107,000 children. But the good news is that we have 300,000 churches in America alone—not counting synagogues or mosques. Mr. President, you can easily do that math. If just one family out of every three churches adopted one of these children in foster care, we would not have any more orphans in America.

That is why we are promoting this today and this week, National Adoption Month and National Adoption Day. You don't have to be perfect or wealthy; you just have to have a big heart and step up and be willing to add this blessing to your family. So many families have been blessed by adoption. As many people know, our family has been blessed by adoption.

This day is to commemorate National Adoption Day. In fact, I said 3,500, but it is 4,500 children who will be adopted on this day, and 5 will be

adopted in New Orleans, LA. I thank Judge Ernestine Grey and all of the judges for their good work to make that possible. We want to finalize these adoptions in all 50 States.

Saturday, we will celebrate families who adopt and encourage others to adopt children from foster care, build stronger collaborations among local adoption agencies, and, again, raise awareness about the 107,000 children who are waiting. Many of these children, despite our laws that mandate an 18-month wait period, maximum, sometimes wait more than 3 years.

In conclusion, let me just say we need to do more. We can do more. I wish to highlight for the record two wonderful organizations that, in my mind, have been going above and beyond the call of duty.

One is the Dave Thomas Foundation Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program. They are a great example of just one organization that is doing great work to find homes for children who are considered "unadoptable" or "hard-to-place" simply because they are 7 or 8 or 10 or 12 and not 1 or 2. They are "too old" to be adopted. I never thought I would hear the words "too old" when referring to a child who is 7, 8, 10, or 12, but that is what people think. They have worked hard—Wendy's Wonderful Kids—and have come up with a new approach, a better approach. They have had extraordinary success in piloting a new child focus recruitment plan and finding 2,500 children permanent homes since 2004. Rita Soronen, executive director of Dave Thomas Foundation, is a leader, and Wendy's Wonderful Kids is a great example.

Let me just put into the RECORD another organization that has a gallery right here, the National Heart Gallery, which has an exhibit here at the Capitol in the Russell Senate Rotunda. The National Heart Gallery is another very organic, nonprofit, community-based movement. They took beautiful portraits of these children to show their personalities and life. When people are looking at their portraits, they could be pulled in by the beauty and true reflection of the child's personality. So the National Heart Gallery is another wonderful organization, and I want to recognize those two. There are many others.

In conclusion, I thank the Senator from Iowa. He and I chair the foster care caucus together. It has been a pleasure working with him. We look forward to another great year ahead. We have had some success—actually, a great deal of success—in promoting adoption out of foster care and reforming the foster care system. It is a pleasure to work with Senator GRASSLEY.

I yield the floor to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the kind words of the Senator from Louisiana. Likewise, it is a pleasure not only to work with her, but the two of us have been able, on most fos-

ter care and adoption issues, to find a broad coalition of Senators. Many people don't have permanence because of the lack of adoption or because of faults within the foster care system. These Senators are very interested in bringing changes in legislation that makes that permanence and stability more a fact and creates a better quality life for these young people. I thank Senator LANDRIEU for her leadership.

I likewise, as she has, rise to honor National Adoption Month. I will take a few minutes to discuss my support for S. Res. 302 and for policies that promote and encourage adoption.

For years, I have championed efforts to increase awareness of adoption and help streamline the process for families who open their hearts and homes to children who have no other family. S. Res. 302 helps promote national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrates children and families involved in adoption, and, lastly, encourages the people of the United States to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

As cofounder and cochair of the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have taken a keen interest in helping children who find themselves in the foster care system. In the United States today, more than 400,000 children live in the foster care system. Many of these children have been welcomed into adoptive homes. However, over 105,000 of those in foster care are still waiting to be adopted.

According to the Administration of Children and Families in my home State of Iowa, more than 4,700 kids entered the foster care system last year, a total of 6,500 kids were in my State's foster care system in 2010.

Foster youth simply desire to have what so many of us were blessed to have; that is, a home with caring, loving parents and siblings. In other words, in a short statement, they want permanency. They want stability. Too many older children in foster care, especially those with special needs, are often the ones who wait the longest to leave foster care. These kids are less likely than younger children to find what we refer to as "forever homes."

While research shows that 40 percent of the Americans have considered adopting, many are reluctant because they are unsure of the adoption process. They have inaccurate perceptions about the children who are eligible to be adopted. Some believe children in foster care are there because of delinquency and other behavioral problems. The unfortunate fact is most children who are in foster care are there because they are abused, neglected or abandoned. These vulnerable children desperately need a family structure. They need parents who serve as positive role models, helping them become bright and successful members of their community.

While progress is being made to increase adoption, there is always more work to be done. Helping in this proc-

ess are numerous agencies and nonprofit organizations that work tirelessly to find worthy American families who want to be adopting parents. In Iowa, one such agency is Four Oaks Family and Children Services of Cedar Rapids, IA. Four Oaks has had a recruiter working with Wendy's Wonderful Kids since 2005.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids is an innovative program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, named after the late American business icon who founded Wendy's Restaurants. The foundation's mission is to promote adoption. It recently released a report about the success of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program. Specifically, the program is more focused on hard-to-place children. Recruiters work with children to find them the most appropriate placement. This program is a success story.

Congress has also adopted and acted on legislation. In 2008, I was part of a bipartisan effort to pass the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008. This new law represented the most significant and most far-reaching improvement in child welfare in over a decade. It provided additional Federal incentives for States to move children from foster care to adoptive homes. It included legislation that I had introduced to make it easier for foster children to be permanently cared for by their own relatives, including grandparents, aunts and uncles, and to stay in their home communities. That, of course, is one way of bringing about greater stability.

Provisions in the law also made all children with special needs eligible for Federal adoption assistance. Previously, that assistance had been limited to children who were removed from very low-income families. The law broke new ground by establishing opportunities to help kids who age out of the foster care system at age 18 by giving their respective States the option to extend their care and by helping them pursue education or vocational training.

In late 2009, Senator MARY LANDRIEU and I formed the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth to give older youth in and out of care and their families a place where their voices could be heard. We wanted foster youth to be part of this legislative process. By hearing from young people and from their families who have experienced the foster care system firsthand, congressional leaders will become more aware of the issues facing young people and their families.

The caucus has and will continue to generate new ideas to prevent negative outcomes and create new opportunities for success. We wanted to focus on helping young people when they age out of the foster care children, typically at age 18. As many as 29,000 children age out every year without ever having found adoptive placement. Without the security of a family, they often end up homeless, end up incarcerated or end up maybe addicted to

drugs. Children who age out of the system enter adulthood without knowing what it was like to be raised having their own families because they were under the State's supervision. In a sense, the State was their family, and that is not much of a family. They missed out on having a mom and a dad and maybe brothers and sisters to grow up with and to learn from and with whom they would have relationships for the rest of their life. They missed out on a very important part of childhood that they will never know, one that too many of us take for granted.

They are thrown into the world and forced to take care of themselves. They struggle to pay bills, to find and hold a job, and to simply make ends meet.

That is why adoption awareness is so very important and hence the resolution we are talking about. Since the First National Adoption Day in 2000, more than 35,000 children have joined "forever families" during National Adoption Day. In 2010 alone, adoptions for almost 5,000 children were finalized through 400 National Adoption Day events in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

These are impressive numbers—numbers that make us proud of the work being done to help foster children get the proper care. But there is always more work to be done. I have said that twice but can't say it too many times. It is through awareness such as this that we can help the work to continue.

In passing S. Res. 302, this body will make an important statement about our collective support for the needs of foster children. It recognizes the families who took the giant leap to open their homes to other children. National Adoption Month is about kids who need a home, it is about kids who just want a mom and a dad, it is about helping children who are victims of neglect and abuse, and it is about giving children living in foster care the ability to live their dreams.

We need to keep working together to break down the barriers to adoption so every child feels the relief of a solid family. I am proud to support the many kids who wait for permanency and stability but, more importantly, I want to salute the many organizations that are helping to make their dreams come true.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEBATE ON GUN CONTROL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, because of the attack against Congresswoman GIFFORDS, there has been some legislation introduced for more gun control. We are going to have to take a good look at that piece of legislation,

as we have unanimously passed legislation after the tragic shooting in Virginia Tech in April of 2007. I am not going to deal directly with that specific piece of legislation, but I wish talk about some of the general approaches to gun control that are being discussed.

Getting back to Virginia Tech, the national debate surrounding updating Federal gun laws gained national attention following the tragic shooting at Virginia Tech and now, of course, has come up again because of the attack against Congresswoman GIFFORDS.

Following the terrible tragedy at Virginia Tech, Congress passed the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. That goes by the acronym of NICS, N-I-C-S, so I will be referring to the national instant criminal background check by that acronym.

This bill, as I said, passed the House and the Senate by unanimous consent and was signed into law by President Bush. Despite the strong bipartisan support the NICS Improvement Act had, the improvement act was not a perfect piece of legislation and is a good example of why we need to be very careful when we legislate to avoid unintended consequences. So I am raising some of these issues in regard to the possible consideration of legislation that has been introduced because of the terrible attack on Congresswoman GIFFORDS.

For example, in the next bill it actually—with unintended consequences but still doing it—stripped thousands of veterans and their beneficiaries of their second amendment rights simply because they had a fiduciary appointed on their behalf. Oftentimes, a fiduciary is appointed simply for managing disability compensation pensions or survivor benefits.

Under an interpretation by the Department of Veterans' Administration, veterans who have a fiduciary appointed are often deemed "mentally defective," and are then consequently reported to the FBI's NIC system and consequently prohibited from purchasing a firearm.

Under the NICS Improvement Act—and that was a bipartisan bill—with unintended consequences, this happened: Around 114,000 veterans and their beneficiaries have been automatically denied their second amendment rights.

It is a terrible irony that veterans, who have served their country on the battlefield, who have been entrusted with our national security and have been provided firearms by their very government, are the same people the NICS Improvement Act harmed by taking away their second amendment rights, all without a hearing or formal adjudication.

We honored and celebrated Veterans Day last Friday. Yet, we are possibly going to be debating new legislation to restrict the second amendment rights of citizens without fixing the unin-

tended consequences of our last major gun law, the NICS Improvement Act.

While the horrific events in Tucson are still fresh in our memories, as we discuss new gun control laws we also need to move forward on bipartisan legislation, such as the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act, introduced by a bipartisan couple, Senator BURR and Senator WEBB. This bill would fix the unintended consequences to thousands of veterans caused by the NICS Improvement Act.

A hearing we had this week offered me an opportunity to discuss illegal firearms tracking and the government's efforts to stop it. At the forefront of this is the Department of Justice's failed operation called Fast and Furious, where the ATF knowingly allowed illegal purchasers to buy guns. The more we learned about Fast and Furious, the more we have discovered that senior Justice Department officials knew or should have known about these nearly 2,000 guns ending up in the hands of criminals, including the drug cartels in Mexico.

At the first House oversight hearing on Operation Fast and Furious, multiple ATF agents testified that fear spread through the Phoenix field division every time there was news of a major shooting event. So that brings us back to the tragedy for Congresswoman GIFFORDS.

Specifically with regard to the Congresswoman's shooting one agent said:

There was a state of panic, like, . . . let's hope this is not a weapon from that case.

And "that case" was the Fast and Furious case, where our government decided to encourage licensed gun dealers to illegally sell guns to straw purchasers with the idea that we would follow them across the border. But there wasn't any following. So it was an effort doomed to failure in the first place. The Fast and Furious operation was failed in concept, in design, and in execution.

As the Attorney General said last week, before our Judiciary Committee: It should never have happened. And the Justice Department officials who knew about this program, including those who allowed false statements to Congress, need to be held accountable.

I thought it was fitting that late last week, Attorney General Holder finally wrote to the family of Agent Terry, the person who was murdered with two of these Fast and Furious guns found at the murder scene. This is the very same Attorney General who had an opportunity to apologize to the Terry family when he was asked by Senator CORNYN, Have you apologized to the Terry family? The Attorney General said, No. He said, Would you like to apologize now? That is what Senator CORNYN asked him. He gave an answer, but it wasn't an apology. So we have a letter late last week going to the Terry family. In his letter, he stated he was sorry for their loss, although he refused to take responsibility for the Department's role in Agent Terry's death.

At the root, then, of Fast and Furious—and a lot of rhetoric surrounding gun control legislation—have been the gun trafficking statistics provided by ATF. These unclear statistics have fueled the debate and contributed to undertaking such a reckless operation as Fast and Furious.

For example, in 2009, both President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton stated that 90 percent of the guns in Mexico were from the United States. But that statistic later changed to 90 percent of the guns that Mexico submitted for tracing to the ATF were from this country. This year, that number has become 70 percent of the guns submitted by the Mexican Government for tracing were from the United States. All the different percentages beg the question, what are the real numbers?

Articles discussing the 70-percent number misrepresent the facts, as I finding out in a letter to then-ATF Acting Director Melson in June of this year.

First, there are tens of thousands of guns confiscated at crime scenes annually in Mexico. The Associated Press stated that in 2009, over 305,424 confiscated weapons were locked in vaults in Mexico. However, the ATF has acknowledged to my staff, in a briefing on July 29, 2011, that ATF does not have access to the vault in Mexico described in that story.

ATF also acknowledges that only a portion of the guns recovered in Mexico are actually submitted to the United States for tracing. In a November 8, 2011 court filing, the chief of ATF's firearms operation division made a declaration saying—now, remember, this is in a court filing:

It is important to note, however, that ATF's eTrace data is based only on gun trace requests actually submitted to the ATF by law enforcement officials in Mexico, and not on all of the guns seized in Mexico.

That court filing further states that:

In 2008, of the approximately 30,000 firearms that the Mexican Attorney General's Office informed ATF that it had seized, only 7,200, or one quarter, of those firearms were submitted to ATF for tracing.

So if Mexico submits only 25 percent of the guns for tracing, then the statistics could be grossly inaccurate one way or the other.

The discrepancies in the numbers do not stop there. ATF also informed my staff that the eTrace-based statistics could vary drastically by a single word's definition.

We have an example of different definitions. The 70-percent number was generated using a definition of U.S.-sourced firearms. That happens to include guns manufactured in the United States or imported through the United States. Thus, the 70-percent number does not mean that all guns were purchased at a U.S. gun dealer and then smuggled across the border; it could simply mean that the firearm was manufactured in the United States.

So when my staff asked ATF, how many guns traced in 2009 and 2010 were

traced to U.S. gun dealers, the numbers were quite shocking in comparison to the statistics we previously heard. For 2009, of the 21,313 guns recovered in Mexico and submitted to tracing, only 5,444 were sourced to a U.S. gun dealer. That is around 25 percent.

For 2010, of the 7,971 guns recovered in Mexico submitted for tracing, only 2,945 were sourced to a U.S. gun dealer. That is only 37 percent, a far cry from 70 percent or 90 percent that we have been hearing over a long period of time, not to mention that the guns in 2009 and 2010 from gun dealers could include some of the nearly 2,000 firearms that were walked as part of our own Justice Department's Operation Fast and Furious.

We need clearer data from ATF and from Mexico. Mexico needs to open the gun vaults and allow more guns to be traced, not just the ones the Mexican Government selects. We need to know if military arsenals are being pilfered as a source—as media articles have claimed the State Department points to in diplomatic cables.

When it comes to the diplomatic cables, I sent a letter to—actually it was yesterday—Secretary of State Clinton seeking all diplomatic cables discussing the source of arms from Mexico, Central America, and South America. I believe this information is relevant to Congress, given that I discovered in a July 2010 cable, as part of my Fast and Furious investigation, that cable titled, "Mexico Weapons Trafficking—The Blame Game," seeks to dispel myths about weapons trafficking. Among other things, the State Department authors discussed what they perceived as "Myth: An Iron Highway of Weapons Flows from the U.S."

These cables are vitally important to Congress's understanding of the problem. Further, given that they appear in documents that ATF submitted to Congress as part of Fast and Furious, there should be no reason for the State Department to withhold them as part of our legitimate oversight, even if they are classified.

There is a lot more to be said about the specific problems with the legislation that might be coming before the Judiciary Committee as a result of Congresswoman GIFFORDS' tragedy. We have to ask a lot of questions to flush out some of these serious problems. We don't want to happen in this legislation what happened in the NICS Improvement Act when 114,000 veterans were denied their second-amendment rights and, consequently, avoid these unintended consequences. We should not be legislating away any constitutional rights people have under the second amendment.

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

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

MEDICARE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am not going to speak very long tonight, and I am not going to speak very formally either. But I did want to come back to the Senate floor and make a point again that I have made repeatedly here on the Senate floor before; that is, there is a path to reform of our health care system that will improve the quality of care for patients, will improve the experience of care for patients, will improve the outcomes of care for patients and for our Nation, and will lower costs for our country.

The reason I come to raise that point again is that the Senate is now awash with rumors that the 12 Members of Congress—Senators and Congressmen—who have been tasked with trying to create a solution to our deficit problem are going to cut Medicare benefits by hundreds of millions of dollars. That is, as best I can tell, only a rumor. I certainly cannot vouch for it being true. Indeed, I hope it is not true.

The time I wish to spend this evening is to remind my colleagues it is a very unfortunate and mistaken path to take to follow the road of benefit cuts at a time when the road to reform is so promising in terms of the win-win of better care at lower cost.

It is not just me saying this. The President's Council of Economic Advisers has said the annual savings that could be accomplished with health care delivery system reform, without reducing anybody's quality of care or access to care—indeed, I would hypothesize actually improving quality of care—is \$700 billion a year in the American health care system.

The President's Council of Economic Advisers is not alone in that opinion. The Institute of Medicine has just said it is around \$770 billion a year. A few years back, the New England Healthcare Institute said it was \$850 billion a year. And the Lewin Group, which is a fairly well respected health care consultancy here in Washington, as well as George Bush's Treasury Secretary, Secretary O'Neill, have both agreed annual savings could be \$1 trillion a year—all by improving the quality of care and the coordination of care.

I do not know if it is exactly going to be \$700 billion or \$1 trillion, but my point is, there is a big savings target out there that everyone from President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, to George Bush's Treasury Secretary, to a lot of very well thought of groups in between, including our National Institute of Medicine, all agree on. So I think that makes it a very important target to pursue in this discussion.

It is not just me in believing, at this potential split in the road, we should work and fight very hard to make sure we are taking the right path and we do