

fight against cancer and that she was going to stand up for all of the other youngsters. She was a well-known advocate. She asked me to support Senator REED's legislation, and I am very proud to do it. In fact, she said to me at one point:

If you sponsor my legislation, you will be my hero.

The fact is, the real heroes of this legislation are these youngsters who have suffered, and suffered so greatly. So the decision made by the Senator from Oklahoma tonight is one that is going to benefit so many families in our country.

I want to pay particular tribute to Senator REED. He could not be here for the unanimous consent, but Senator REED has prosecuted this cause for months and months, working with the other body, working here with colleagues. So full credit for this cause goes to Senator JACK REED who is helping so many of our youngsters afflicted by cancer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The request is agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 5501) was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WYDEN. I wish to make one other quick comment. I know colleagues are waiting. I wanted to make this comment with respect to health care, because two of my allies in this health care cause, Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO, are on the floor. There is special significance about the two of them being here tonight for these additional comments on health. What we have seen again in the last few days is one of the worst positions in our country to be in, to be in your late 50s and laid off from work without health care. If you are laid off in your late 50s, let's say you are laid off at 56, 57, like a lot of these workers we have been reading about in the Midwest who had big layoffs in GM, for example, you go out into a broken individual insurance market. What the distinguished Senator from Louisiana, Ms. LANDRIEU, and the distinguished Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAPO, and I are trying to do—we are part of a group of 16 in the Senate, 8 on the Democratic side, 8 on the Republican side—is to help all those people in their late 50s who are being laid off.

In fact, under our legislation, the Healthy Americans Act, those people would not go out into a broken individual insurance market. If you are 57, 58, for example, and you are laid off in Louisiana or Idaho, under our legislation today, you can get discriminated against if you have a preexisting condition. What our group has been trying to do, with the leadership of Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO, is say that is not part of the individual market of the future. You can't be discriminated against under our legislation. So right away we are giving some hope to those older workers who are laid off.

The second thing we do in our group is, we give that laid-off worker who is

56, 57 years old some real tax relief, like she would have gotten through her employer if she still had her job. The irony is, if you are laid off, for example, and you are 57, 58 in the State of Louisiana, if you have some high flying CEO, they have an employer health package, and they get a write-off. But you don't get a write-off if you are a laid-off worker in your late 50s. What we do in our legislation is help those people as well.

I will be talking more about what it is like in this country to be in your late 50s, years away from being able to get Medicare, and going out into the broken individual insurance market. I would have talked a bit longer, but colleagues have been waiting. I thought it was particularly appropriate to bring this up tonight because Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO have joined Senator BENNETT and me in this group of 16 whom I believe tonight, when Americans have read those articles about the GM retirees getting clobbered and losing their coverage, they ought to know there is a bipartisan group of us here in the Senate that is committed to giving those people a fair shake and committed to giving them new hope. They would have, under our legislation, under what Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO and I are working on, a legal guarantee to high quality, affordable coverage, unlike some of those retirees from GM. They would have a safety net.

This has been an important night in health care. First because Senator REED's legislation to help youngsters afflicted with cancer has passed, and it honors the memory of one of my constituents from Oregon and, second, I thought it was particularly appropriate with Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO here tonight, with millions of Americans who are in their late 50s worried that they are going to lose their health coverage, to know a group of us on a bipartisan basis have legislation that would provide real relief, a legal guarantee to high quality, affordable coverage when they lose their job through no fault of their own.

I thank my colleagues, Senators LANDRIEU and CRAPO, with particular thanks to Senator REED, for passage of his legislation to help youngsters afflicted with cancer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator LANDRIEU be recognized.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his kind remarks. More than that, I thank him for his leadership. Health care, as all Americans know, is one of the most significant issues we face today. Senator WYDEN has been outstanding and relentless in his efforts to build bipar-

tisan support for comprehensive reform of our health care system. We have a lot of different ideas in the Senate about how to reform health care. Frankly, one of the reasons we have such a sort of a patchwork system of health care is because each side in this debate wins a battle here and there and gets a piece of their idea into the solution. When we are done, the patchwork system we have probably is not as good as any one of the pure systems that many people advocate for. But we have to work together in a collaborative fashion and build consensus for true health care reform. I thank the Senator for his leadership in that regard.

ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I want to speak on an issue which is as important to Americans as health care. In fact, it may be, today, more on their minds and may be a more critical issue. That is our national energy policy, particularly the increasingly high price of gasoline and petroleum.

About 2 weeks ago I asked my constituents in Idaho to contact me by e-mail and to tell me what the high price of gas meant in their lives. What was it doing? Was it another inconvenience or what was happening in their individual lives because of these high prices; secondly, to tell me what they thought Congress ought to do about it, what the solutions should be. Overnight I had almost 600 responses. The total now has risen to over 1,200 responses. The people in Idaho tell a story I am sure could be told by millions of people across this country about what the high price of gas means. It is not just an inconvenience; it is not just fewer trips to the restaurant or to the movies; it is impacting people's lives across the board in monumental ways that could, if we don't fix it, change the quality of life and the American dream. I am reading every one of these e-mails. I read stories from my constituents about those who end up at the end of the week with just about \$40 or \$50 left in their budget, and they haven't yet bought their food. They need to buy another tankful of gas so they can get to work and keep their job. That is the decision they have to make. They buy the gas because they have to keep their job. They try to figure out how to do with less food.

I have stories coming in from individuals who cannot any longer purchase their medicine. Their choice is food, medicine, or fuel. Now they are going without the medicines they need.

I read one this morning from a lady who needs to travel to a certain medical facility for medical treatment. She no longer has the ability to make these trips because she does not have enough money to pay for the gas. So she has had to try to make arrangements with her doctor to make some educated guesses about her health care, because she cannot get to the medical facility for the treatments she needs and the