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function like electrical cables. Signals are sent from the brain and spinal cord to muscles with instructions, and sensory information returns to the brain and spinal cord from sensory organs such as the eyes, ears, skin to provide information about the environment around us. Myelin insulation around nerve fibers is essential for the proper conduction of these signals. When myelin is inflamed or destroyed in MS, nerve fiber conduction is impaired or stopped completely. Nervous systems don't sent their signals properly without the important myelin wrapping around our nerve fibers. The symptoms of MS are very unpleasant. They consist of tingling, numbing, painful sensations, slurred speech, and blurred or double vision. Some people experience muscle weakness, poor balance, poor coordination, muscle tightness and even a spasticity or paralysis which may be temporary or it may be permanent. Problems with bladder, bowel or sexual function are common, as is fatigue. MS can cause cognitive changes such as forgetfulness or difficulty concentrating. It can also cause mood swings. Symptoms may come and go, appear in any combination and be mild, moderate or severe. More than 330,000 Americans have MS.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: One minute.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Most are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40, and two-thirds of them are women. MS is not always easy to detect or to diagnose because it's so unpredictable. Symptoms vary greatly from person to person and may also vary over time in the same person. In addition, other diseases of the central nervous system have some of the same symptoms. No single neurological or laboratory test can confirm or rule out MS. A conclusive or definitive diagnosis requires evidence of many patches of scar tissue in different parts of the central nervous system, and at least two separate attacks of the disease. Needless to say, there...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR SUTTLE: ...is no cure. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Schmitt.