

existed. However, the Committee, upon a thorough review of the scientific literature and internal documents from government and industry, did find evidence that thimerosal did pose a risk.

Thimerosal used as a preservative in vaccines in likely related to the autism epidemic. This epidemic in all probability may have been prevented or curtailed had the FDA not been asleep at the switch regarding the lack of safety data regarding injected thimerosal and the sharp rise of infant exposure to this known neurotoxin. Our public health agencies' failure to act is indicative of institutional malfeasance for self-protection and misplaced protectionism of the pharmaceutical industry.

NATIONAL WAR PERMANENT TRIBUTE HISTORICAL DATABASE ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation titled the "National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act," that will help the Department of Interior and the Department of Veterans' Affairs keep track of the many important war memorials on public lands throughout our country. It would also provide a report to Congress to determine if there should be a permanent fund within the Treasury for the upkeep of these memorials.

The freedom we enjoy in the United States has not just been given to us. Men and women have made great sacrifices, some with their lives, to protect our way of life. We have erected memorials to honor these soldiers, sailors, and aviators and their valiant deeds. Unfortunately many of these memorials don't receive the care they deserve and have fallen into disrepair. These memorials may not be as large as those on the National Mall or Arlington National Cemetery but they are just as important and should be taken care of.

In 2000, Congress agreed to a resolution expressing the need for cataloging and maintaining public memorials. The National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act would follow through with this sense of Congress and take a first step by cataloging our public war memorials.

Mr. Speaker, as we honor America's men and women in uniform this Memorial Day, many of us will be thinking these soldiers who have recently been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the other conflicts America's service men and women have fought in should not be forgotten. These memorials remind people what their local men and women did to protect our country. By cataloging and reporting to Congress on the condition of all of our war memorials on public lands and by considering how to maintain them we make sure that our veterans are not forgotten. Passage of this bill would be a step toward renewing our commitment to honor our nation's veterans.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE OUT-OF-POCKET SPENDING LIMIT ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act of 2003. This legislation protects Medicare beneficiaries from potentially ruinous medical bills by ensuring they will never have to pay more than \$2,000 out-of-pocket for Medicare services. It does so without limiting seniors' choice of physician and without forcing seniors to leave Medicare and join a private plan. In short, it is real Medicare reform, the kind of reform that seniors and people with disabilities want and need.

President Bush and many of my Republican colleagues portray Medicare as a disastrous program that is broken, bankrupt, and dumb. They think private insurers—the same ones who refused to cover seniors back in 1965 when Medicare was created—can do a better job than Medicare has done for the last 38 years.

More than 40 million seniors and individuals with disabilities know that President Bush and Congressional Republicans are wrong. They know that Medicare is a vitally important program that successfully protects some of the most vulnerable among us. They want us to strengthen Medicare, not undermine it. That is why I am introducing the Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act.

The bill I am introducing today provides an essential Medicare improvement for all Medicare beneficiaries. Today Medicare covers about 52% of seniors' health costs, leaving many to pay significant medical bills out of their own pockets. Medicare beneficiaries with chronic conditions or catastrophic illnesses face the greatest risk of potentially unlimited health costs. Most Medicare beneficiaries have incomes below \$20,000 per year and cannot afford to spend a large share of their income on health care.

The Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act will offer seniors the security of knowing that they will never have to pay more than \$2,000 out-of-pocket on Medicare services per year. Current and future Medicare beneficiaries will have the option of enrolling in this new, voluntary benefit at an affordable premium. Beneficiaries with incomes below 175 percent of the federal poverty level would pay reduced or zero premiums.

The benefits provided by the Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act are long overdue. In testimony before the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee this month, the Chairman of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission identified the lack of a spending limit as a "serious limitation of the Medicare benefit package." In January 2003, the National Academy of Social Insurance's Study Panel on Medicare and Chronic Care in the 21st Century recommended that Congress "limit cost-sharing requirements by adding an annual cap on out-of-pocket expenditures for covered services." The Medicare Out-of-Pock-

et Spending Limit Act follows through on these expert recommendations.

Importantly, the Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act provides these improvements in traditional Medicare. Unlike the President's and the Congressional Republicans' plan to "reform" Medicare by ending it as a defined benefit for all beneficiaries, my bill will guarantee that elderly and disabled Americans will never be forced to give up traditional Medicare in order to get crucial benefits. Beneficiaries will be free to choose between the traditional Medicare program and private plans. But it will be a real choice, not coerced through the lure of more generous coverage. Seniors should never have to choose between the doctors they know and trust and the coverage they need.

This legislation is supported by beneficiary advocacy groups including: Families USA, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, the Alliance for Retired Americans, and the Medicare Rights Center. I urge my colleagues to join us in support of strengthening Medicare for all seniors and disabled Americans by cosponsoring the Medicare Out-of-Pocket Spending Limit Act.

Below is a more detailed summary of the legislation:

MEDICARE OUT-OF-POCKET SPENDING LIMIT ACT OF 2003—SUMMARY

This bill would improve Medicare for all beneficiaries by adding a new voluntary benefit to the traditional Medicare program. Seniors and disabled Americans electing this coverage would be protected from extraordinary out-of-pocket costs when they need medical care. The additional benefit—created under a new Medicare Part D—would have the following features:

Out-of-pocket limit. Beneficiaries enrolled in the new benefit would never pay more than \$2,000 out-of-pocket per year for services covered under the traditional Medicare program. The out-of-pocket spending limit would be adjusted each year by the growth in average per capita spending under this new benefit.

Eligibility and enrollment. Beneficiaries entitled to Medicare Part A and enrolled in Part B would be eligible for the new benefit. Current Medicare beneficiaries would have a one-time six-month open enrollment period to elect this coverage. Otherwise, normal Medicare enrollment rules would apply.

Premiums. Premiums for the new benefit would be calculated in the same manner as Medicare Part B premiums (25 percent of estimated program costs), with a late enrollment penalty for beneficiaries who choose not to enroll during the open enrollment period.

Low-income beneficiaries. Beneficiaries with incomes up to 150 percent of poverty would be eligible for the new benefit with no additional premiums. Beneficiaries with incomes between 150 percent and 175 percent of poverty would be eligible for the new benefit with a sliding scale premium. No assets test would be used in determining eligibility for these additional low-income protections. These low-income benefits would be administered by the States but 100 percent federally funded.

Medicare+Choice. All Medicare+Choice plans would have to provide the out-of-pocket spending limit benefit. Plans would be

paid a geographic- and risk-adjusted rate, based on projected national per capita costs of the out-of-pocket spending limit benefit in traditional Medicare.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR AND SUPPORTING AN INTERNATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL YEAR-2 IN 2007-08

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce legislation calling for a worldwide program of activities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the most successful global scientific endeavor in human history—the International Geophysical Year of 1957–58. I am pleased that my colleague Representative EHLERS—the Chairman of the Environment, Technology, and Standards Subcommittee of the Science Committee—is joining me as an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine not commemorating the historic global undertaking that was the International Geophysical Year, popularly known and remembered as the IGY. Yet such may occur unless steps proposed in this resolution for an “IGY-2” in 2007–2008 are not taken soon.

The 60 nations and 60,000 scientists who participated in the IGY left an ongoing legacy that is beyond measure. Satellite communications, modern weather forecasting, modern natural disaster prediction and management, from volcanic eruptions to El Niño—they are all legacies of IGY scientific activities that girdled the globe and breached the space frontier.

The space age itself is a child of the IGY. The program of events included the launching of the first artificial satellites, Sputnik and Vanguard. The IGY also produced the path-breaking decision to set aside an entire continent—Antarctica—for cooperative study. This IGY program alone—which was permanently institutionalized by the Antarctica Treaty—made the year a scientific triumph. Six of my colleagues on the Science Committee recently returned from Antarctica and have testified to the ongoing organizational effectiveness and scientific payoff of this remarkable IGY legacy.

In a still broader context, the IGY marked the coming of age of international science. Globally coordinated activities that save millions of lives today—such as the campaigns to contain and find cures for SARS and AIDS—owe their inspiration and working model to the unprecedented number of scientists from throughout the world who banded together to implement the IGY. Scientific findings from thousands of locations, ranging from world research centers to remote field stations, were collected and organized by this global team. The result was an unprecedented range of discoveries for human benefit. The great British geophysicist Sydney Chapman, who helped conceive the IGY, called it “the greatest example of world-wide scientific cooperation in the history of our race.”

My resolution calls for an “IGY-2” that would be even more extensive in its global reach and more comprehensive in its research

and applications. After all, science never stands still. Its frontiers are continually expanding. The biological sciences, genetics, computer sciences, and the neurosciences, among others, have made tremendous advances worldwide during the half century since the IGY. At the same time, new integrative linkages are being established among mathematics, physics, the geosciences, the life sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities as well.

As a consequence, there is a coming together in the study of our planet and its diverse inhabitants whose potential scope and significance is only beginning to be perceived even among those directly involved. In addition to promoting research, IGY-2 would provide a stage for showcasing these new developments and a forum for presentation and discussion of their continually unfolding cultural as well as scientific significance.

Indeed, one of IGY-2’s most important contributions would be to enhance public awareness of global activities that provide hope and example in an era when conflict and strife occupy the foreground of public policy and public attention. George Kistiakowsky, science adviser to President Dwight Eisenhower under whose presidency the IGY occurred, said at the time: “Science is today one of the few common languages of mankind; it can provide a basis for understanding and communication of ideas between people that is independent of political boundaries and ideologies [and] that can contribute in a major way to the reduction of tension between nations.”

Those words spoken more than 40 years ago resonate with special significance today when the web of global ties among scientists is so much more extensive yet still largely unrecognized. We are catching a glimpse of its saving potential in the inspiring worldwide response of scientists and public health professionals to the SARS outbreak—a response inconceivable without the collaborative lines of communication established during the past half century. At a minimum, the work of these unsung heroes deserves greater recognition than it has received—and IGY-2 would do that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is entirely fitting that the United States take the lead in launching an IGY-2 and that Congress provide the impetus. The IGY of 1957–58 was conceived in 1950 only a few miles from here, in Silver Spring, MD, at a dinner hosted by Professor James Van Allen and attended by scientist-friends from Europe, including Sydney Chapman. They discussed the International Polar Years that had been held at 50 year intervals—first in 1882, then in 1932. The next one was scheduled for 1982. Over a barbecue in Van Allen’s backyard, these visionary scientists came up with the idea of accelerating the schedule to a 25-year interval, which would occur in 1957, and expanding its coverage to the entire globe, so as to take full advantage of rapid advances in research and instrumentation. They took their idea to governments and scientific organizations and they made it happen. Fittingly, James Van Allen won the Nobel Prize for discovery during the IGY of the radiation belts that bear his name.

Subsequently, in 1985, Congress passed a resolution calling for a year of globally coordinated space activity in 1992, to mark the simultaneously occurring 35th anniversary of the IGY and 500th anniversary of Columbus’ voy-

age of discovery. The bipartisan resolution for this International Space Year, or ISY, was introduced by Senator Spark Matsunaga and endorsed by President Reagan. At the President’s direction, the United States led a worldwide planning effort that culminated with the implementation of an ISY in 1992 that made major contributions to international scientific cooperation, notably in the field of global environmental monitoring.

So we have both scientific and Congressional precedent for the United States to take the lead internationally in calling for an IGY-2. I urge my colleagues to join me in promoting this initiative in support of modern science and the inspiration to our troubled planet that its global outlook can provide. I have no doubt that the contributions to humanity of an IGY-2 will be remembered with gratitude both in the near future and for generations to come.

HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the House Republicans’ so-called Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

This bill is more about restoring healthy profits for the timber industry, than protecting healthy forests for the American people. Given the devastating impact this bill will have on pristine public lands, a better title would be Leave No Tree Behind. That is exactly what will happen as logging companies are given a backdoor into our national forests and wilderness areas.

Of course, Republicans argue that this bill is about protecting rural communities from dangerous wildfires. Yet, there is nothing in their bill providing any help to small towns or homeowners for fire prevention. The Republicans only increase subsidies to timber companies to log forests well outside the so-called wildland-urban interface—even in wilderness and roadless areas—and not where fires pose the greatest threat.

You won’t find many forestry experts who would tell you that timber companies are able to turn a profit harvesting diseased and insect prone trees. So Republicans have devised it so that the Forest Service will pay timber companies for their service by allowing them to cut down stands of healthy trees. There is nothing in this bill that prevents the harvested trees from being ancient old growth or redwoods for that matter.

The Republicans claim their bill is proenvironment. Yet, their bill cuts out the heart of the landmark National Environmental Protection Act. It exempts the Forest Service from doing a thorough analysis of alternatives to proposed logging projects. It even creates a new Federal program to assist private landowners in getting around the Endangered Species Act that protects fish and wildlife.

Now if after all of this, you thought you had recourse in the matter, think again. This Republican bill severely restricts the right of any citizen to appeal Forest Service decisions and even undermines the power of judges to overrule the agency’s determinations. In fact, this