

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

OFFERING MILITARY DEPENDENTS AND NONACTIVE DUTY MILITARY THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, recently, the Civil Service Subcommittee of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee held hearings into the problems with the military health services system. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs described the three biggest problems in military health care as "access, access, access." Those of us who have military installations in our congressional districts are all too familiar with these problems. It is not unusual for our caseworkers to be helping military spouses or dependents receive health care treatment because they could not get a doctor's appointment at the on-base military clinic.

In all fairness to the Defense Department, the Office of Health Affairs has been working to improve access. Last December, DOD announced it was expanding its health care program to provide military dependents and retirees with a triple option health care benefit. The cornerstone of the plan is the Tricare Prime option which affords beneficiaries the option to enroll in a managed care program. Beneficiaries will also be able to choose the current health care coverage provided under the CHAMPUS—now called Tricare Standard—fee-for-service program. The third option—Tricare Extra—will give beneficiaries access to a preferred provider plan.

The Tricare plan leaves many questions unanswered, and many military families are skeptical that Tricare will increase access to the health care.

Today, I am introducing legislation that would offer military beneficiaries the opportunity to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program [FEHBP] on a demonstration basis in States where beneficiaries care covered under the Tricare Program. FEHBP has been held up as a model for containing health care costs and providing access to Federal employees. Certainly, the military families and retired military personnel deserve the same health care access and advantage of the FEHBP's wide range of choices. The current system of providing health care to military beneficiaries on a space-available basis, through a priority system, is no more than rationed health care. Military beneficiaries deserve better, and I am confident that they will obtain better health care benefits through FEHBP.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is not perfect. It serves as a draft to be perfected. This bill will change as I receive comments from the Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, the military coalition, and other inter-

ested parties. It is my hope, however, that this vehicle will raise the issue to a level of debate that will enable us in Congress to seriously study merits of allowing military dependents and military retirees the opportunity to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of October as Italian-American Heritage month and to acknowledge the accomplishments and contributions of Italian-Americans. As an American with Italian roots, I appreciate the significance of this month. My grandfather Michael came here from Italy to begin a new life, seeking opportunity for himself and his posterity. As many older Italian-Americans can attest, life in the States was not necessarily easy. Our people worked hard and labored long hours in some very difficult jobs, seeking only to earn an honest living. Michael Martini actually worked 16 hours a day making hats and selling them out of a little shop in what would become my hometown of Passaic, NJ.

Despite hard work, the road was not always easy. At times ethnic discrimination reared its ugly head to dampen the progress of Italian-Americans; they were often assigned the most menial tasks or passed up for promotions because of their names or their accents. Even as late as the 1970's, prejudice against Italian-Americans was not unknown.

One such example occurred during a 1970 City University of New York enrollment expansion in New York City. As the University enrollment experienced unprecedented expansion, faculty members born of Italian-American heritage were unjustly denied tenure. A small yet strong group of faculty began meeting on a regular basis to discuss the injustice unfolding all around them. After many years of cultivating support from outside agencies and State legislators, Italian-American descendants slowly but surely leveled the playing field. On March 17, 1975, Chancellor Kibbee of the City University of New York addressed the interests of the minority group developing academic, cultural and political programs aimed at the progress of the Italian-American society.

As they should, Italian-Americans have and will fight all forms of discrimination and prejudice head-on with pride and a fiery spirit. This is just one aspect of our culture we should remember as Italian-American Heritage month begins, and I want to urge my colleagues, especially those of Italian descent, to join me in the celebration.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE GEORGE C. STEEH III

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, the March of Dimes is an organization with a noble mission: to fight birth defects and childhood diseases. We all share the March of Dimes dream which is that every child should have the opportunity to live a healthy life.

For the past 12 years, the southeast Michigan chapter of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation has honored several Macomb County residents who are outstanding members of our community and have helped in the campaign for healthier babies. This evening, the chapter will be hosting the 12th annual Alexander Macomb Citizen of the Year award dinner. The award, instituted in 1984, is named after my home county's namesake, Gen. Alexander Macomb, a hero of the War of 1812.

This year, the March of Dimes has chosen my good friend, Judge George Steeh III, as a recipient of the award. Serving as a justice is not simply a job for Judge Steeh, it is an avocation. As he recently said, "I feel there's never a day that goes by where I don't have the opportunity to improve the human condition in my work." In his work and his private life, whether it be with at the Macomb County Circuit Court, the March of Dimes, Catholic Social Services, or the Comprehensive Youth Services, where he serves as an officer and member of the board of directors, George's involvement within the community exemplifies his commitment to improving the human condition.

Dr. Jonas Salk's polio vaccine is just one of the more famous breakthroughs that would not have been possible without March of Dimes research funding. And, without people like Judge Steeh the job of protecting babies would be that much more difficult.

I applaud the southeast Michigan chapter of the March of Dimes and Judges George Steeh for their leadership, advocacy, and community service. I know that Judge Steeh is honored by the recognition and I urge my colleagues to join me in saluting him as a 1995 recipient of the Alexander Macomb Citizen of the Year Award.

"GINGRICH AND THE COPPERHEADS"

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this important article by Mr. Stuart Sweet into the RECORD. I urge my colleagues to review it and heed its message.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

We must fight for a balanced budget at all costs, yet we must look ahead. The article clearly shows that even if we pass a reconciliation bill and lower cost appropriation bills which put us on a glide path for a balanced budget, we still have great challenges ahead. This country's unfunded liabilities are out of control:

[From the Investor's Business Daily]
GINGRICH AND THE COPPERHEADS
(By Stuart Sweet)

Newt Gingrich, a former history professor, risks being a footnote in history. Even if he leads Congress to victory over President Clinton in the coming battle of the budget, he will accomplish little relative to the size of the country's long-term fiscal problems.

Gingrich defines the political space in America. All the other major players position themselves a calibrated distance to his left. Sen. Phil Gramm is trying to occupy the same space. Sen. Bob Dole is slightly to their left. Clinton is some distance farther away, and congressional Democrats farther still.

Unfortunately, Gingrich has flinched from confronting the true crisis in Medicare and the government's other unfunded liabilities.

According to Medicare's actuaries—career civil servants—the hospital portion of Medicare has an unfunded liability of 3.37% of taxable payroll. That is, if every worker in the nation paid another 3.37% of his or her gross pay to the government for the next 75 years, America could honor its promises to pay hospitals what it will owe them for treating senior citizens.

On a net present value basis, this unfunded liability equals \$5.4 trillion in 1995 dollars.

Social Security is in somewhat better shape. It has an unfunded liability of 2.17% of payroll and a negative net worth of \$3.5 trillion in 1995 dollars.

The two add up to \$8.9 trillion. And the amount climbs higher every year we delay tackling the problem.

By my calculations, the GOP budget plan reduces Medicare's unfunded hospital bill liabilities by perhaps \$1.5 trillion. That's about one-sixth of what is needed to restore Medicare and Social Security to actuarial balance.

By comparison, the amount of federal debt held by the public is less than \$4 trillion. If Gingrich forces Clinton's surrender on the budget this fall, the debt held by the public will total just under \$5 trillion in 2002, when the budget is "balanced."

The GOP is silent about what would come next. But the numbers on Medicare and Social Security tell the story. The budget could stay balanced for another decade. Then, in 2012 and beyond, fiscal disaster strikes.

In other words, the GOP's plan to "save" Medicare only postpones fiscal Armageddon, giving Medicare's hospital trust fund five years of breathing room. It will go broke in 2007 instead of 2002.

Then, about 2012, the retirement of the baby boom will hit the government's finances with an impact equivalent to the moon smashing into the earth.

Our politics only rarely produce major chances for fiscal reform. The last time was 1983, when Social Security's unfunded liability, then 1.82% of taxable payroll, was "solved." Twelve years later, the stakes are more than three times higher.

To be sure, Gingrich is bolder than Clinton and Democrats in Congress. Clinton's 10-year balanced budget plan would trim Medicare's unfunded liability by a trivial amount. Congressional Democrats pounced on him for even that. And they've launched a million-dollar ad campaign to denounce the plan to "slash Medicare."

This is crass politics, not commitment to Medicare. Cabinet officers and nonpartisan actuaries agree that Medicare benefits would have to be more than cut in half for its hospital fund to balance.

You have to go back to 1864, when the Peace Democrats and the Democratic Copperheads undermined President Lincoln in the midst of the Civil War, to find equally irresponsible partisanship.

Lincoln didn't slow the war effort to appease the Copperheads. He did what he thought was right.

Today, only Gingrich can redefine the political geometry by putting forward a comprehensive plan to return Medicare to long-run financial health and to put Social Security back "on the table."

The right place for this move is the budget reconciliation process, which should conclude no later than this Christmas.

Nothing is stopping the GOP from attaching more reforms to the reconciliation bill, to control spending after 2002. These could include raising the eligibility age, increasing copayments and deductibles, or privatizing the Social Security System.

That would be radical and genuinely historic. It might draw support from unlikely sympathizers. The Washington Post, for example, has come out in favor of slowing Social Security spending by raising the retirement age and limiting COLA's.

If Gingrich is playing to the history books and not the next election, he cannot be too bold on entitlements. Lincoln saved the Union by defying the Copperheads. And Republicans dominated Washington for seven decades because of his resolve.

BEST WISHES FOR HEALTHY RECOVERY TO BOB BARRACLOUGH, A FIRE SERVICE FRIEND

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a very dear friend of the American fire service underwent bypass surgery this past week. On behalf of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus and the Congressional Fire Services Institute, I want to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to Bob Barraclough for a speedy recovery.

I have known Bob for many years. A native of Pennsylvania like myself, Bob got his start in the fire service as a youth spending time at the station house with his father who was a firefighter. For the past 15 years, Bob, himself, has served as a volunteer firefighter.

Presently, he divides his time between business, Class 1, public speaking, and involvement with a number of fire-related associations. A strong supporter of CFSI, Bob is a major contributor to the institute's internship program. The program gives future leaders of the fire service invaluable Washington experience that will serve them well in the years ahead.

I look forward to seeing Bob on his feet again soon. Until then, we in Washington send our best wishes to you, Bob, for a full recovery.

A TRIBUTE TO THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF FOOD FOR ALL

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 1995

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention the fine work and outstanding public service of a distinguished nonprofit organization, Food for All, founded in Redlands, CA in 1985 by Linda and Milan Hamilton. In recognition of its years of growth and success, the innovative Food for All Program is making its 10th anniversary this year and will celebrate the occasion at a dinner ceremony on October 12.

In cooperation with local retailers, Food for All offers consumers an easy and convenient way to support local efforts to combat hunger. Food for All's simple concept uses barcoded donor cards available at supermarket checkout stands which shoppers purchase along with their groceries. As the administrator of these funds, Food for All distributes 90 percent of these contributions in the form of grants to community-based organizations and international projects striving for long-term solutions to hunger. These grants are made through a network of volunteer committees and local grant advisory boards.

Since 1985, Food for All has distributed 3,352 grants totaling more than \$4.7 million. Of this amount, \$2.2 million has gone to emergency food suppliers such as food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters; \$1.4 million has been awarded to multiservice agencies which help families and individuals develop the ability to support themselves and others; and \$1.1 million has been granted to projects overseas which develop self-sufficiency for families and communities.

The Food for All Program has grown and increased supermarket participation from two stores at inception to presently 1,713 stores in nine States. Supporting this worthy effort is a network of more than 800 volunteers who participate in solicitation, merchandising, funds distribution, community outreach, and a number of other Food for All activities. In addition, I particularly want to recognize Paul Gerrard of Gerrard's Markets and Jack Brown of Stater Brothers Markets for their leadership in making Food for All the phenomenal success that it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, and the many supporters of Food for All in recognizing this outstanding program for its community- and market-based approach to addressing hunger. As we recognize Food for All for its worthy contributions over the past 10 years, let us not forget its origins in the hearts and minds of Linda and Milan Hamilton. For everything they and so many others have done to make it a success, it is only fitting that the House of Representatives pay tribute to Food for All today.