

University of Iowa for an instant diagnosis in a life-or-death situation. A specialist in Mercy Hospital in Des Moines could provide emergency advice and help oversee a difficult surgery taking place in Centerville. And a radiologist at Methodist Hospital in Des Moines could help examine x rays just taken in Jefferson.

My home State of Iowa has developed a world class fiber optic system that holds great potential in the area of telemedicine. Fiber optic cables greatly enhance the potential of telemedicine because they carry much more information than traditional, copper telephone wires.

My President, telemedicine will allow patients to stay close to home for support. For most people, one of the most traumatic times in their life is when they are sick or injured. And we should be helping them stay with their family and friends, who often provide the support and love they need to get well. This will also reduced costs associated with travel.

One of the obstacles for further expansion of telemedicine is the lack of a payment system in Medicare and Medicaid. To begin to address this problem, my legislation would require the Department of Health and Human Services to issue regulations regarding reimbursement for telemedicine.

This legislation would also authorize the Rural Health Outreach Grant Program. I began this program as chairman of the Health Appropriations Subcommittee several years ago and it has been a great success. Many rural communities suffer critical shortages of health providers. Distance, lack of public transportation, rough terrain, and unpredictable weather, present additional obstacles. This initiative recognizes that existing health and social services agencies do not always cooperate and coordinate to reach needy populations in rural America.

Through the Rural Health Outreach Program rural organizations have been able to come together to collaborate and build networks to deliver much needed health care. For example, communities used funds provided by the Outreach Program to provide basic health care services to isolated seniors, to provide care to pregnant women, to build emergency medical systems, and to bring mental health services to isolated communities with the help of telemedicine.

In my own State of Iowa, outreach funds were used to help get a new hospice program in rural Grundy County up and running. The local hospital joined with the local health department and volunteer organizations to develop a program to help families coping with terminal illness. The program helps families that are struggling to survive under the weight of nursing chores, daily responsibilities and grief.

Mr. President, the Rural Health Care Protection and Improvement Act would also extend the Medicare Department, Small, Rural Hospital Program.

Between 1980 and 1990, 330 rural hospitals were forced to close their doors, in large part because of inequities in Medicare reimbursement. In OBRA 1989, Congress wisely acted to redress these inequities by establishing the Medicare Dependent Small Rural Hospital [MDH] Program. The MDH Program allows rural hospitals under 100 beds to qualify for somewhat higher reimbursement if over 60 percent of their patient days went to caring for Medicare patients. But, Mr. President this program expired in October 1994.

Iowa has 45 Medicare department, small, rural, hospitals. These hospitals mean access to health care services and retention of local health care providers. They also provide economic stability and are a strong draw for businesses and residents into the area. If the hospital or clinic closes it means that the local economy goes, and the nursing home goes, and so does the local economy. It is a domino effect.

The MDH Program is helping many Iowa hospitals survive and this program should be extended to ensure that these small rural hospitals continue to provide health care services.

So, Mr. President, the Rural Health Care Protection and Improvement Act will help improve access and enhance the quality of health care in rural areas. It will help shore up the fragile health care infrastructure in our rural communities and towns. I am pleased that Senator KASSEBAUM has included the Rural Outreach Grant Program and a Telemedicine Grant Program in her Health Centers Consolidation Act of 1995 that will soon be voted on in the Labor and Human Resources Committee. And, I am hopeful that as we consider steps to improve our Nation's health care system, the Medicare Department, Small, Rural Hospital Program will be extended. But not even my bill will be enough to save rural health care if the unprecedented level of cuts to Medicare being proposed become a reality. We must defeat those proposals and work toward a more sound, a more reasonable effort to reform Medicare. ●

By Mr. EXON:

S. 981. A bill entitled "Truck Safety and Congressional Partnership Act"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

THE TRUCK SAFETY AND CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT ACT

● Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I introduce legislation which the Senate was expected to consider as an amendment to the National Highway System. Last minute negotiations between the chairman of the Commerce Committee and myself produced an understanding that this legislation would be considered by the full committee at the next scheduled markup.

This legislation is a very simple and very narrow measure. It preserves congressional involvement in critical truck safety issues currently before a trinationl committee authorized

under the North American Free-Trade Agreement. This legislation simply states that if the executive branch moves to set a standard for single trailer lengths pursuant to the NAFTA negotiations and that standards exceeds 53 feet, the executive branch must come to the Congress for such authority.

This legislation only applies to Federal regulations on truck trailer length issue pursuant to the North American Free-Trade Agreement.

Last year, I chaired a hearing on this issue of truck lengths and safety. Needless to say there are serious concerns about the safety of longer and heavier trucks.

Pursuant to the NAFTA agreement, the Governments of Mexico, Canada, and the United States of America are negotiating the harmonization of traffic safety laws. The Senate has been very concerned about these negotiations and following the approval of NAFTA, approved a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that these negotiations should bring Canadian and Mexican traffic safety up to United States levels, rather than lower United States standards. I am pleased to report that the Clinton administration expressed their desire to involve Congress in the adoption of any new safety rules arising out of these negotiations. this legislation simply locks in that commitment.

Since the Federal Government maintains no single trailer length standards, there is a risk that a future administration could use the NAFTA negotiations to increase lengths beyond the generally accepted 53-foot standard.

This legislation assures that the Congress will remain involved in critical truck safety issues. Again, Mr. President, this bill only applies if the administration sets a single trailer length standards pursuant to NAFTA negotiations exceeding 53 feet. In such a case, congressional action would be necessary to implement the longer Federal standard.

The amendment does not restrict State action.

The amendment does not affect Federal legislative action.

The amendment does not affect Federal regulatory action not related to the North American Free-Trade Agreement.

The amendment is consistent with the intent of the Reigle-Exon NAFTA/truck safety resolution, approved by the Senate following the approval of NAFTA, and in no way disrupts the long combination vehicles freeze Senator LAUTENBERG and I authored as part of the 1990 highway bill.

I ask my colleagues to consider and support this narrow legislation which will preserve congressional discretion over truck safety and the NAFTA. ●

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 12

At the request of Mr. BREAUX, the names of the Senator from Vermont

[Mr. LEAHY] and the Senator from South Dakota [Mr. PRESSLER] were added as cosponsors of S. 12, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage savings and investment through individual retirement accounts, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. ROTH, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE] was added as a cosponsor of S. 12, *supra*.

S. 67

At the request of Mr. INOUE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii [Mr. AKAKA] was added as a cosponsor of S. 67, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize former members of the Armed Forces who are totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

S. 73

At the request of Mr. INOUE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii [Mr. AKAKA] was added as a cosponsor of S. 73, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize certain disabled former prisoners of war to use Department of Defense commissary stores and post and base exchanges.

S. 594

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Vermont [Mr. JEFFORDS] was added as a cosponsor of S. 594, a bill to provide for the administration of certain Presidio properties at minimal cost to the Federal taxpayer.

S. 607

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from North Carolina [Mr. HELMS], the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. HOLLINGS], and the Senator from Connecticut [Mr. LIEBERMAN] were added as cosponsors of S. 607, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to clarify the liability of certain recycling transactions, and for other purposes.

S. 692

At the request of Mr. GREGG, the name of the Senator from Vermont [Mr. JEFFORDS] was added as a cosponsor of S. 692, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to preserve family-held forest lands, and for other purposes.

S. 789

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND] was added as a cosponsor of S. 789, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the section 170(e)(5) rules pertaining to gifts of publicly traded stock to certain private foundations, and for other purposes.

S. 849

At the request of Mr. D'AMATO, the name of the Senator from New York [Mr. MOYNIHAN] was added as a cospon-

sor of S. 849, a bill to amend the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to protect elected judges against discrimination based on age.

S. 851

At the request of Mr. JOHNSTON, the names of the Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS] and the Senator from Idaho [Mr. CRAIG] were added as cosponsors of S. 851, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reform the wetlands regulatory program, and for other purposes.

S. 939

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Michigan [Mr. ABRAHAM] was added as a cosponsor of S. 939, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to ban partial-birth abortions.

S. 942

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] was added as a cosponsor of S. 942, a bill to promote increased understanding of Federal regulations and increased voluntary compliance with such regulations by small entities, to provide for the designation of regional ombudsmen and oversight boards to monitor the enforcement practices of certain Federal agencies with respect to small business concerns, to provide relief from excessive and arbitrary regulatory enforcement actions against small entities, and for other purposes.

S. 950

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut [Mr. LIEBERMAN] was added as a cosponsor of S. 950, a bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to cease mineral leasing activity on submerged land of the Outer Continental Shelf that is adjacent to a coastal State that has declared a moratorium on mineral exploration, development, or production activity in adjacent State waters, and for other purposes.

S. 971

At the request of Mr. COATS, the names of the Senator from Ohio [Mr. DEWINE] and the Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] were added as cosponsors of S. 971, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination in the training and licensing of health professionals on the basis of the refusal to undergo or provide training in the performance of induced abortions, and for other purposes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 103

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. THURMOND] was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 103, a resolution to proclaim the week of October 15 through October 21, 1995, as National Character Counts Week, and for other purposes.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995 at 1 p.m. to mark up the Department of Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be permitted to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, beginning at 10:40 a.m. to mark up S. 883, the Credit Union Reform Enhancement Act of 1995 and consider pending nominations.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, for purposes of conducting a full committee business meeting which is scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to consider pending calendar business.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be permitted to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-215, to conduct a hearing on the perspective of the Governors on Medicaid.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, beginning at 9:45 a.m., in room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building on S. 814, a bill to provide for the reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and for other purposes.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Acquisition and Technology be authorized to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, at 9 a.m. to mark up the Department of Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND FORCES

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Airland Forces be authorized to meet on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, at 11 a.m. to continue mark up of the Department of Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996.