

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF EMILIO R. JASO

HON. GREG LAUGHLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. LAUGHLIN. Mr. Speaker, one of the privileges that I have most enjoyed as a Member of the House of Representatives is the opportunity to offer assistance to the hundreds of veterans who reside in the 14th congressional district, and today I would like to recognize and pay tribute to someone who has devoted countless hours to this cause, Emilio R. Jaso, whose exemplary service as the Refugio County veterans service officer has earned him the respect and gratitude of area veterans.

Emilio Jaso was appointed to the veterans post in September 1988. A native of Refugio County, he retired from the U.S. Air Force with 20 years active duty and 10 years reserve duty of honorable service to our country. Mr. Jaso served one tour of duty in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Commendation Medals, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. In addition, he was awarded the Army Good Conduct Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal with one Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation, and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Known for his dedication, professionalism, and long hours of service, Mr. Jaso was presented the Outstanding Veterans Service Officer of the Year for the San Antonio Region in 1992. Furthermore, the past 2 years he has been selected the regional director for San Antonio and is considered to be one of the most respected county veterans service officers in the State.

Veterans service officers routinely provide an array of assistance to veterans, including compensation and pension matters, hospitalization insurance, transportation, education, GI home and farm loans, disability retirement, and military records. Mr. Jaso continues to provide all of these services and many more to area veterans.

Mr. Jaso also finds the time for a number of other causes. He is a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6290 and was selected as the Outstanding Post Service Officer for the Department of Texas. He is a charter member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1651, charter member of the Refugio County Veterans Monument Committee, member of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 210, member at-large of the American Veterans [AMVETS]. Mr. Jaso is frequently called upon by local schools to speak on patriotism.

In recognition of his outstanding service to his country, Mr. Jaso has received certificates of recognition and appreciation from the Department Commander of the American Veterans [AMVETS], the chairman of Veterans Land Board for the State of Texas and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. Speaker, Refugio County is truly fortunate to have a veterans service officer with experience, compassion, and integrity that Mr. Jaso brings to his job. Emilio Jaso embodies the highest ideas of both government service and civic responsibility, and he deserves our profound gratitude and respect. I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to this outstanding American.

GAO REPORT SUPPORTS GOALS OF H.R. 2839

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, last December, I introduced H.R. 2839, a bill to require the Secretary of HHS to implement an on-line prescription drug information management program for Medicare beneficiaries. This system, known as the Medicare Medication Evaluation and Dispensing System [MMEDS], would provide the tools and information to beneficiaries and their health care providers that are needed to reduce instances of adverse drug interactions, over-medication, and other problems related to prescription drug use that harm our Nation's retirees and disabled.

On June 11, 1996, the General Accounting Office issued report B-261530 which discussed the benefits of a similar system in the Medicaid program. The report shows that the Medicaid program has been a clear success and—I would argue—supports the development of such a system for the entire Medicare elderly and disabled population.

Following are portions of the GAO summary—positive findings which I hope will help us pass H.R. 2839 as a way to save money and lives:

It is widely accepted in the health care community that inappropriate use of prescription drugs can cause adverse reactions that can lead to drug-induced illness, hospitalization, even death. Such inappropriate use can also be expensive for the Medicaid program. Concerned about this issue, the Congress mandated that states establish utilization review programs to review Medicaid prescriptions before drugs are dispensed (called prospective reviews) in order to prevent potential adverse medical reactions. The legislation did not require that prospective screening be automated. However, 43 States plus the District of Columbia have implemented or plan to implement automated prospective drug utilization review (PRODUR) systems. In most instances, PRODUR systems are implemented concurrently with an automated screening capability for Medicaid eligibility since both depend on automated systems that offer real-time responses to inquiries. The five States in our review have this feature.

Automated prospective drug utilization review (PRODUR) systems increased patient safety and reduced Medicaid program costs in the five states whose systems we examined; all five states found the systems bene-

ficial and worthwhile. During a 12-month period ending June 30, 1995, these five states' systems alerted pharmacists to over 6.3 million prescriptions that had the potential to cause adverse medical reactions from drug therapy problems including drug-drug interaction, overutilization, and pregnancy conflict.² Over 650,000 (10 percent) of these prescriptions were canceled because of the potential serious risk to patients. According to state officials, pharmacists reviewed and eventually filled the other prescriptions on the basis of the pharmacists' professional judgment and/or consultation with the recipients or their physicians.

Along with increasing patient safety, these systems also reduced program costs by over \$30 million, according to state and contractor reports. Over \$5 million of this total was attributable to rejecting efforts to refill prescriptions before a large portion of the earlier prescription would have been consumed, potentially causing harm to the patient; the remaining \$25 million resulted from prescriptions that were denied due to patient ineligibility. While these direct benefits are significant, the major dollar savings, in all likelihood—though more difficult to document—are achieved through avoided hospitalization due to inappropriate drug therapy. On the basis of its review of studies related to drug-induced illnesses, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) indicated that 6.4 percent of hospital admissions nationwide can be traced to inappropriate drug therapy; some studies cite even higher rates for the elderly. Accordingly, avoided hospitalization could potentially save hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Savings could also accrue because PRODUR systems can help identify potential fraud, waste, and abuse.

The five states in our sample screened for different conditions and handled prescription cancellations differently. Consequently, reported numbers and types of patient safety alerts, prescription cancellations, and rates of savings varied. One state, for example, did not screen for pregnancy conflict. Three states automatically deny prescriptions with overutilization alerts, while the other two states place the responsibility with pharmacists to either deny or fill the prescriptions following such alerts. At present, states have no systematic way to share experiences and best practices. One approach toward accomplishing this would entail establishing a central clearinghouse at the state or federal level to collect and disseminate information. This would allow all states to make more informed decisions, offering citizens the best protection and states the most savings.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 120 SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE OF UKRAINE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge passage of House Concurrent Resolution 120, a measure which I am pleased to have cosponsored, supporting the

• 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.

independence and sovereignty of Ukraine and progress of its political and economic reforms. I commend Chairman GILMAN for his introduction of this important resolution and efforts to ensure its passage.

On August 24, Ukraine celebrated its fifth anniversary of independence. In doing so, Ukraine confounded the predictions of some Western analysts—made only a few years ago—that it would break up or soon return to Russia's orbit. Despite the considerable challenges Ukraine continues to face, this strategically important country has emerged as a stable state where political differences, while at times intense, are resolved peacefully and democratically. The most recent evidence of this is the Ukrainian parliament's adoption of a new constitution in June.

During the last 5 years, Ukraine has made significant progress both at home and abroad. On the international scene, Ukraine has exhibited stability in a volatile region. United States-Ukrainian relations are now on a solid footing and are stronger than ever. The United States is committed to helping Ukraine consolidate its independence through economic and political reform.

In 1994, Ukraine signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] at the OSCE Summit in Budapest and ratified START-I, and just a few months ago, on May 31, the last former Soviet nuclear weapons were removed from Ukrainian soil. While strengthening its ties with the West, Ukraine is also attempting to forge a constructive relationship with all its neighbors, especially Russia, while emphasizing its independence and resisting Russian attempts at greater CIS military and political integration. In fact, just last month, Ukraine's defense minister refused to sign a CIS statement on NATO expansion. In so doing, he underscored Ukraine's belief that every independent state has the right to make its own decision on entry into NATO consistent with OSCE principles. While outstanding problems with Russia remain, including the contentious issue of basing for the Black Sea Fleet, efforts are continuing toward their resolution.

The consolidation of Ukraine's statehood is also evident in the domestic arena. In June, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a constitution after years of wrangling, further stabilizing the political situation and paving the way to more vigorous reform efforts, particularly in the economic sphere. Also, tensions in Crimea have diminished in the last year and the new Crimean authorities appear to be more cooperative with the Ukrainian Government. Moreover, human rights, including minority rights, continue to be generally respected in Ukraine and the interethnic conflicts so common in many other countries of the region have not appeared in Ukraine.

In the past year, Ukraine has also witnessed the beginnings of an economic overhaul: Prices for many goods have been freed; the budget deficit has been reduced; and inflation has gone down. Just a few days ago, Ukraine's long-awaited new currency, the hryvna, was introduced.

Mr. Speaker, despite the positive developments I have outlined, Ukraine still faces serious challenges—economic ills; a crippling bureaucracy; corruption; the lack of a legal structure which hampers business and foreign investment; the growth of organized crime and

the lack of developed democratic institutions and civil society. House Concurrent Resolution 120 underscores the dependence of Ukraine's economic and social stability on its ability to build a stable market-based economy and a legal system based on the rule of law. This resolution, I am pleased to say, also addresses another major challenge for Ukraine, by urging Kyiv to continue its cooperative efforts with the G-7 to safely and expeditiously shut down the nuclear reactors at Chernobyl. Last May, the House unanimously approved a resolution that I introduced on the Chernobyl disaster which underscored the importance of G-7 efforts to assist Ukraine in closing down Chernobyl, and I am pleased that the international community has recently showed signs of greater willingness to assist Ukraine in this important endeavor.

Indeed, Ukraine's struggle toward political and economic reforms—to overcome the devastating legacy of Soviet rule—will be formidable. But this process, too, must be kept in perspective. Let us keep in mind that, historically, the Ukrainian people have shown a tremendous ability to overcome extremely unfavorable odds. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I have long tracked developments in Ukraine and supported the Ukrainian people in their struggle for freedom—well before Ukraine became independent. I am familiar with the tremendous sacrifices it took to achieve independence. Despite the fact that independence arrived peacefully 5 years ago, in 1991, it was hard won, and there are still some in Russia, including among the political elite, who have not reconciled themselves to an independent Ukraine. Throughout this bloody century, millions of Ukrainians sacrificed their very lives or well-being because of their commitment to freedom and independence. In short, you might say that the Ukrainian people, in achieving independence and maintaining and strengthening it over the last 5 years, have already beat the odds.

Mr. Speaker, I also think of how far Ukraine has already come since independence. Given that 5 years ago Ukraine in many respects had to start from scratch—lacking the necessary institutions and state structures—I am optimistic with respect to Ukraine's future and confident that the people of Ukraine will overcome any challenges that lie ahead. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 120 stresses the importance which this Congress attaches to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and urges continued United States assistance to Ukraine for its political and economic reforms. By providing this support, we will help the Ukrainian people to overcome the challenges that lie ahead and will be acting in a way that comports with both our national interests and our long-standing values.

HONORING IRWIN TOWNSHIP'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. WILLIAM F. CLINGER, JR.

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the community of Irwin Township, PA.

On Saturday, August 17, 1996, and Sunday, August 18, 1996, the citizens of Irwin Township will gather to celebrate their 200th anniversary. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Irwin Township on such a special occasion.

Irwin Township, a small township in the western part of Pennsylvania, extends for over 21,580 acres and has road mileage in excess of 42 miles. A small community, Irwin Township has approximately 1,200 residents.

Once a farming and oil well drilling community, Irwin Township today has many residents who are employed as millworkers in its surrounding communities.

As with many small towns across this Nation, Irwin Township is also a community with strong religious ties. This is so much so that Irwin Township alone has seven churches within its boundaries.

With their 200th anniversary on August 17 and 18, Irwin Township has become an inspiration to all small communities throughout this country, and will continue to be as we enter the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Irwin Township, PA, on their 200th anniversary. Once again, I congratulate the community of Irwin Township and offer my best wishes for continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO EDITH MORRISON

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, today the south Florida community mourns the loss of Edith Morrison—an admired community leader, beloved wife, mother, and grandmother. I join with Edith's family and her many friends to mourn her loss and remember her positive impact on the south Florida community.

Upon moving to south Florida from New York, Edith immediately assumed a top leadership role in our community. Succeeding her husband Julius as president of the Sunrise Democratic Club, Edith was an outspoken public figure known for her honesty and integrity. Edith was known among her friends as a woman who always knew the facts of every important issue. Forever a jealous advocate of equal opportunity for all people, Edith knew when to be out front on an issue and when to exert quiet influence behind the scenes with the utmost dignity. Edith gave generously of her time, having served as president of the Sunrise Lakes Women's Club, active in local labor organizations, and as a lifetime member of B'nai B'rith.

Among her family, Edith is remembered as the loving wife of her late husband Julius, the mother of her two children—Marcie and Ross—and as the grandmother of four grandchildren. In life, she earned the highest respect and admiration of all who knew her. In death, she is remembered as a revered leader who gave unselfishly to her family and community. For all of us whose lives were touched by Edith, we will miss her dearly.