

# INTRODUCING THE HEALTH CARE ACCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 4, 1997*

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to proudly introduce the Health Care Access Improvement Act, legislation that will provide a \$1,000 per month tax credit over 5 years for primary health care providers who are located or will establish practices in health professional shortage areas. These urban and rural underserved areas are designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration [HRSA]. In our Nation, there are 2,686 primary medical care, 960 dental and 518 mental health areas that are underserved, according to the latest list of designated sites issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. This list was published in the Friday, May 30, 1997 edition of the Federal Register at page 29396. This information is also available via the Internet at <http://www.bphc.hrsa.dhhs.gov>. While we do not have a shortage of doctors in our country, Mr. Speaker, we do have a shortage of doctors who are either willing or can afford to locate in certain areas. I want to thank my colleagues, Representatives DANNY DAVIS of Illinois, DARLENE HOOLEY, JESSE L. JACKSON, JR., MIKE MCINTYRE, JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, RON PAUL, MAX SANDLIN, and EDOLPHUS TOWNS, who are original cosponsors of this bill and who recognize the need for Congress to provide an incentive for doctors to locate in these underserved areas.

In short, this bill will:

Provide current and future health care providers with a tax credit.—Those few doctors who are currently established in underserved areas, as well as those who relocate to these areas, would receive a tax credit of \$1,000 per month over 5 years. The Health Care Access Improvement Act would help current and future primary health care providers.

Help doctors establish long-term relationships with the community.—This tax credit provides a long-term solution by enabling doctors to establish health care practices in poor areas. Unlike Public Health Service doctors, who rotate through community facilities, private doctors invest their own time, energy and money to open a practice in a community. Such an investment means that these doctors become an integral part of the community, and highly unlikely to leave. The Health Care Access Improvement Act gives primary health care providers an incentive to stay in the community.

Expand access to health care to more people.—This tax credit would be the most cost-effective way to establish health care practitioners in those areas where people do not have access to health care. More people would be able to go to their neighborhood doctors or dentist. The Health Care Access Improvement Act gives more urban and rural people choice in health care.

Preventive health care has been proven to save lives and money. The very first bill that I cosponsored as a Member of Congress related to improving health care, and I have sponsored several health care seminars and forums in the 15th Congressional District of Michigan. Access to more doctors will go a

long way toward ensuring that all of our constituents have high quality health care. The Health Care Access Improvement Act is but a small step in the direction of health care equality and improved access for all. While no cost has been determined for this bill as of today's date, I will ensure that it will meet the requirements of offsetting cuts to provide for its implementation.

A TRIBUTE TO HER HONOR  
DEBORAH STEVENS MODICA

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 4, 1997*

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Deborah Stevens Modica, who was sworn in as a judge on October 17, 1997. Mrs. Stevens Modica has represented the people as a prosecutor in the offices of the district attorney in New York for nearly 20 years, and, in light of the recent implementation of the death penalty in my State, has become the expert in New York and one of the top experts across the country on this issue.

A graduate of Fordham University and Fordham Law School, Mrs. Stevens Modica was admitted to the bar in 1978 and has since worked diligently to rise through the ranks in the district attorney's office. Starting in Queens, she moved from a researcher in appeals bureau to trial lawyer on the supreme court, major offense and homicide bureaus to chief of the appeals bureau from 1978 to 1989.

In 1990, she moved on to the district attorney's office of Kings County, where she started as the chief of the supreme court bureau. Her work there earned her a promotion to executive assistant district attorney in 1991. In 1995, she was promoted yet again to deputy district attorney. Her extensive knowledge of the justice legal system continued to grow, gradually catching the eye and gaining the respect of experts in the law profession across the country.

In addition to her mastery of law, she is a generous woman, devoting hours of time each month to the Adopt-A-School program which teaches fifth grade students how the legal system works. She was instrumental in successfully implementing this program in the schools in Brooklyn after a study proved that children 10 years old are at the most impressionable age in making decisions about the law.

Most amazingly, Mrs. Stevens Modica raised five daughters ranging in age 5 to 27. Her perseverance in work, the community, and family has undoubtedly paid off, as evidenced by her appointment as judge to the criminal court in the city of New York. My warmest regards to Her Honor, Judge Deborah Stevens Modica.

CONCERN OVER THE FUTURE OF  
COLORADO FORESTS

**HON. BOB SCHAFFER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 4, 1997*

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my col-

leagues some thoughts expressed by Mr. Rob Nanfelt of Colorado. There is a growing concern over the future of our forests in Colorado. These are the views expressed by Mr. Nanfelt:

Our Colorado forests are in dismal shape. Scientists predict that a series of catastrophic wildfires will sweep through the state if something is not done. Dangerously high volumes of dead and decaying timber fuels have accumulated over the past 80 years and continued lack of action to deplete these fuels puts our families and homes at risk. As well as constituting a major threat to standing structures, these fires will have a significantly adverse impact on air quality for many towns, especially those in eastern Colorado.

It has been reported in recent months that the U.S. Forest Service will be taking a more active role in attempting to prevent these fires by setting fires of their own. This process of setting controlled fires is known as "prescribed burning" and is used to eliminate the overstocking of forest fuels. Earlier this year, in an address at Boise State University, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said that he would endorse an increase in the frequency of these planned burns. "Fight fire with fire," he said. In fact, the Forest Service wants up to \$50 million for the burning program in fiscal year 1998. The program would allow the Forest Service to set fire to nearly 1.5 million acres.

Prescribed burns are not an exact science. While there are certain benefits of a well-executed controlled burn, there are numerous risks. If not carried out precisely to plan, these fires can very easily spread out of control and cause property damage, less than desirable air quality, and in the most extreme cases, death.

Instead of focusing on such risky methods, the Forest Service should consider other forest restoration options such as mechanical removal. While those in the environmental community may cringe at such a thought, mechanical removal is a more precise tool than prescribed burns. And in many cases, it can be every bit as environmentally friendly.

Sometimes the forest fuels have little or no commercial value. In these instances prescribed burns are probably prudent. However, the Forest Service should coordinate any of these planned burns with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This will ensure that local communities are protected against any punitive measures handed down by the EPA. The risk of non-attainment in these communities as a result of these fires is a real concern. State and local officials should also be included in the process.

Local economies, the Forest Service, and the forests would all benefit if the Forest Service focused on using mechanical removal as its primary option for forest restoration. Local timber companies would have more work to do and as a result more jobs would be available. The Forest Service could concentrate on other management goals and have a little extra money to achieve these goals. The forests would be healthier and the threat of catastrophic wildfire greatly reduced. The Forest Service should not once again bow to the wishes of the extremists in the environmental community, and should instead base its decision on the elements of sound science and economic benefit.

It is up to each of us to pay attention to the issues that face us and make the right decisions for our future