

This bill would also waive the residency requirement for those who served in order to speed up the process of family reunification. Current law permits aliens or noncitizen nationals who served honorably during World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, and the Vietnam war to be naturalized regardless of age, period of residence, or physical presence in the United States. There is a well-established precedent of modifying naturalization requirement for military service, recently reaffirmed by passage of legislation granting citizenship to those who served in the Filipino Scouts during World War II.

The Hmong stood by the United States at a crucial time, and that service deserves recognition. Today we should stand with the Lao-Hmong in their struggle to become citizens and to live a good life in our Nation.

THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE REFORM INITIATIVE

HON. BILL MCCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 7, 1997

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Presidential Debate Reform Act. The situation surrounding the current Presidential election has highlighted some of the flaws in our current method for selecting a President and Vice President of the United States of America. One critical flaw involves the way Presidential debates are scheduled.

My legislation would create the framework for deciding the participants and structure of Presidential debates. This framework would include a commission of three people nominated by the President. The President would nominate one person from a list submitted by the Republican National Committee, one person from a list submitted by the Democratic National Committee, and one person who is unaffiliated submitted jointly by the RNC and the DNC. These commissioners would then schedule several debates.

One such debate would be optional and include any candidate who is on the ballot in 50 States or polls at 5 percent in popular polls among likely voters. This could include major party candidates, although it would provide a forum for lesser known candidates to express their views.

The commission would also establish debates for the Vice Presidential and Presidential candidates. These would be for the major party candidates as well as anyone polling over 5 percent in polls taken after the optional debate. Participation in these debates would be mandatory. The penalty for not participating in the debate, other than perhaps embarrassment, would be a reduction in the amount of Federal funds that candidate's party will receive to run the next convention. The reduction would be equal to the fraction of mandatory debates missed. I cannot imagine that a party would want to miss out on \$3 million—approximately the amount that would be lost to pay for the 1996 conventions through missing one debate.

This has nothing to do with whether I think certain people should or should not participate in debates. I do think that we need to have an established framework with defined ground rules to ensure the fairness in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good bill and I look forward to hearing feedback from my colleagues. I expect to offer this legislation at the beginning of the next Congress and hope to hear meaningful debate.

INTRODUCTION OF GUN SAFETY ACT OF 1997

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, this bill addresses the problem of the proliferation of cheaply made, easily concealed weapons. This is particularly critical in dealing with our juvenile crime problem. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that most juveniles who purchase guns obtain them from informal sources for less than \$100.

This bill would put an end to the proliferation of these cheap and dangerous guns by requiring States to set up criteria for guns to be sold within that State's borders. The criteria to be considered would include concealability, safety, quality, and utility for legitimate activities. Any State that chooses not to participate in the program would simply lose some of its Byrne grant money for crime problems.

In addition, in an effort to prevent the numerous accidental deaths of children every year, this bill would require gun manufacturers to install magazine safeties in every gun so that adults can be sure that they have not accidentally left a bullet in the chamber of a gun, even when the magazine is not in the gun.

Because cheap and poorly made handguns are dangerous—and even more dangerous in the hands of the serious juvenile offenders who have easy access to them, and because we need to make certain that guns include all possible safety precautions—I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO MURIEL GOLDHAMMER

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the outstanding contributions of Muriel Goldhammer to the community of San Diego and to the entire southern California region.

Muriel Goldhammer, a native San Diegan, is now retired and is planning to reside parttime in Israel, beginning on January 14, 1997. Before she makes this move, it is fitting that she be recognized for her work in Jewish community relations, in health issues, and in political and civic activities in San Diego, CA.

Before her retirement, Muriel served as director of urban affairs at the University of California, San Diego Extension and as faculty at the School of Public Administration at San Diego State University. She is the author of several publications on public policy issues.

She is currently serving on the steering committee of the San Diego Area Resource Center and on the past presidents council of Hadassah of southern California; on the insti-

tutional review board of the Children's Hospital and Health Center; and on the board of directors of the American Jewish Committee.

She was formerly president of the California Southwest Region of Hadassah and a member of their national board. She was the founder and former president of the San Diego chapter of Parents of North American Israelis, as well as executive vice president of their international board of directors and international convention chair. Muriel was founder and chair of the San Diego Zionist Council, which from 1948 to 1958 set up a speakers' bureau on issues of concern to Israel and sent several non-Jewish civic leaders on study tours to Israel.

She has also been deeply involved in health issues, serving on the Coordinating Council for Education in the Health Sciences; as president of the Comprehensive Health Planning Association for San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside Counties; and the board of directors of the San Diego Mental Health Association; and on the Governor's advisory board of the San Diego Treatment Center for the Mentally Ill.

As a member of the political and civic community of San Diego, Muriel served as president and on the board of directors of the League of Women Voters in San Diego and California; on the civil rights committee of the National League of Women Voters; on the boards of directors of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the San Diego Urban League; on the United Way allocations committee; on the Mayor's committee on uniform hearing procedures; and on the blue ribbon committee on restructuring the San Diego Convention and Visitors' Bureau.

Mr. Speaker, these worthy contributions by such an intelligent, dedicated, and motivated woman were recognized by the celebration of "Muriel Goldhammer Day" on January 5, 1997, an event sponsored by the Point Loma Hadassah and Hadassah Southern California.

It is truly fitting that the House of Representatives join in this recognition, and I appreciate the opportunity to call attention to the life-long work of Muriel Goldhammer toward making this world a better place.

LIMIT CONGRESSIONAL TERMS

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, as one who has consistently maintained that term limits are an integral part of congressional reform, I am pleased to reintroduce a resolution to limit Representatives to three 4-year terms.

The current system of unlimited 2-year terms hinders the advancement of legislation that is in the Nation's best interest. Members are distracted by reelection concerns and often sacrifice what is best for the country in favor of parochial interests. Under a system of limited terms, the Congress would be a citizen legislative body as the Framers of the Constitution intended. Moreover, congressional term limits promote government efficiency and are conducive to a smaller Federal Government, as Members would be less compelled to support unnecessary port-barrel spending.

Although the 104th Congress was not successful in advancing a term limits amendment,

I am encouraged that the House leadership has not abandoned this worthy cause. We will have an opportunity in the opening days of this Congress to vote on a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution to limit our terms and send a message to the public that we are dedicated to building upon last Congress' reforms.

Mr. Speaker, support for term limits remains strong among voters. I encourage my colleagues to favorably respond to their call and vote to limit congressional terms.

INTRODUCTION OF LIVABLE WAGE ACT

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation intended to take a major step forward toward a livable wage for working men and women in our country. Too often American workers are forced to take jobs that pay substandard wages and have few or no health benefits. At a time when U.S. corporations are making record profits and the economy is strong and stable, it seems unreasonable that working families must struggle and cannot make ends meet. It is unconscionable for corporations to sacrifice fair wages for their workers in pursuit of inflated profit margins, and it is doubly so when these businesses are performing work on behalf of the Federal Government—when the workers' taxes which pay for Federal services and products perpetuate such depressed compensation.

My legislation is straightforward, simple and just; if you are a Federal contractor or subcontractor you will be required to pay wages to your employees that exceed the official poverty line for a family of four. This would be fair and equitable compensation achieved by law. When a business contracts for services or materials with the Federal Government and benefits from working families' taxpayer dollars, at the very least it should be required to pay its employees a livable wage.

As of March 4, 1996, the official poverty line for a family of four is \$15,600. This is obviously not an exorbitant wage. Imagine a family of four trying to live on this amount or less. It may not seem possible, but it is done every day in this country. There are serious disparities in our society when hard-working men and women, holding down full-time jobs, cannot earn enough to bring their families out of the poverty cycle, while company executives earn an average of 70 times that of their average employee.

My bill does not attempt to alleviate this disparity throughout the business sector, but it does require those corporate entities receiving taxpayer dollars to be accountable to their workers. This is a reasonable and practical bill. It allows companies to count any benefits, such as health care, which they provide for employees as part of their wage determination, and it provides an exemption for small businesses and bona fide job training or apprenticeship programs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to help ensure the American worker receives a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID ACT OF 1997

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Inspector General For Medicare and Medicaid Act of 1997.

I was prompted to introduce this legislation when seniors in western New York continuously approached me at my town meetings last year with concerns about this issue. Many of us in Congress and throughout the country share their concerns that waste, fraud, and abuse within Medicare and Medicaid Programs have reached an excessive level which threatens the financial stability of our most vulnerable populations.

For instance, one of my constituents gave me copies of his personal medical statements which showed that he was billed three times for the same procedure, amounting to \$2,367 in charges. Most people do not scrutinize their medical statements; which helps for fraud to be easily overlooked. In the end, seniors are forced to dip into their life savings.

My bill would establish an exclusive, full-time and independent Office of Inspector General [IG] for the Medicare and Medicaid Programs. This office would be charged with detecting, identifying and preventing waste, fraud and abuse within the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

This IG office would be required to issue semiannual reports to Congress consisting of recommendations on preventing waste, fraud and abuse within the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

The IG office would also be responsible for coordinating any audits, investigations, and other activities which promote efficiency in the administration of the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

The need for this legislation comes down to dollars and cents. According to a 1995 GAO report, unchecked and improper billing alone would cost Medicare in excess of \$3 billion over the next 5 years. Furthermore, health fraud has been estimated to cost between 3 and 10 percent of every \$1 used to meet the health needs of America's seniors and indigent populations. I think you would agree that this funding would be better spent as a reinvestment in providing healthcare to our Nation's elderly, disabled, and poor citizens.

To further compound the problem, GAO also reported that physicians, suppliers, and medical laboratories have about 3 chances out of 1,000 of having Medicare audit their billing practices in any given year.

At the conclusion of the July 1995 GAO report to Congress, one of the main policy recommendations was to "enhance Medicare's antifraud and abuse efforts."

My bill simply responds to this need. I contend that with a separate IG office we can only expand on identifying and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in healthcare. Based on HHS data, within a 4-year time frame, we have saved \$115 for every \$1 spent on inspector general operations.

In 1995, the Office of the IG saved \$9.7 million per employee. This savings was accomplished with employees working on diversified

case loads. It is my understanding that employees in the IG's office do not specialize in Medicare and Medicaid fraud, but must focus on several issues at one time. With a more specialized personnel, other HHS programs such as welfare and head start stand to benefit as well. By magnifying our focus to Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse, I am confident that we will see an increased return of our investment.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK WILDERNESS

HON. DAVID E. SKAGGS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Act of 1997.

This bill, essentially identical to ones that I introduced in the 103d and 104th Congresses, is intended to provide important protection and management direction for some truly remarkable country, adding some 240,700 acres in the park to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Covering 91 percent of the park, the wilderness will include Longs Peaks and other major mountains, glacial cirques and snow fields, broad expanses of alpine tundra and wet meadows, old-growth forests, and hundreds of lakes and streams. Indeed, the proposed wilderness will include examples of all the natural ecosystems present in the park.

The features of these lands and waters that make Rocky Mountain a true gem in our national parks system also make it an outstanding wilderness candidate.

The wilderness boundaries for these areas are carefully located to assure continued access for use of existing roadways, buildings and developed areas, privately owned land, and water supply facilities and conveyances—including the Grand River Ditch, Long Draw Reservoir, and the portals of the Adams Tunnel. All of these are left out of wilderness.

The bill is based on National Park Service recommendations. Since these recommendations were originally made in 1974, the north and south boundaries of Rocky Mountain National Park have been adjusted, bringing into the park additional land that qualifies as wilderness. My bill will include those areas as well. Also, some changes in ownership and management of several areas, including the removal of three high mountain reservoirs, make it possible to include designation of some areas that the Park Service had found inherently suitable for wilderness.

In 1993, we in the Colorado delegation finally were able to successfully complete over a decade's effort to designate additional wilderness in our State's national forests. I anticipate that in the near future, the potentially more complex question of wilderness designations on Federal Bureau of Land Management lands will capture our attention.

Meanwhile, I think we should not further postpone resolution of the status of the lands within Rocky Mountain National Park that have been recommended for wilderness designation. Also, because of the unique nature of its resources, its current restrictive management policies, and its water rights, Rocky Mountain