

THE CARE ACT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, in a cruel display of corporate greed, the Pabst Brewing Company last year announced its intention to renege on its promise to provide health and death benefits to its retirees. Following a court battle, Pabst appears to have succeeded: retirees and their families have lost benefits that were promised them in exchange for many years of loyal service to the company.

This outrage demonstrates a lack of corporate responsibility to dedicated former employees. This is not an isolated incident, but part of a disturbing nationwide trend. Over the past several years, thousands of workers and retirees across this country have faced similar cancellations and reductions of their health coverage. John Morel, Hormel, and General Motors are just a few of the corporations who have tried to leave their former workers stranded without health care—health care they were promised, and health care their long years of service earned. From meatpackers to clerical staff, this is a threat to the retirement security of all American workers.

We must act now. Last Congress, I introduced a bill which I am reintroducing today, the Health Care Assurance for Retired Employees Act—or the CARE Act—which would protect retiree health benefits and help retirees to obtain health insurance if their coverage is canceled.

The CARE Act would require employers to give 6 months notice to retirees and require the Labor Department to certify that the changes meet the requirements of the collective bargaining agreement.

It would also expand retirees' access to health care under COBRA for those aged 55 to 65 until they are eligible for Medicare.

Lastly, it would allow retirees who did not sign up for Medicare or Medigap to apply for the programs without late-enrollment penalties.

This type of atrocity must not be tolerated. We must ensure retiree security and prevent loyal former workers from being left out in the cold. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to show their support for retired workers and their families by cosponsoring this bill.

BALANCED BUDGET REQUIREMENT
ACT OF 1997

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, today, along with our colleague Representative KAY GRANGER of Texas, I have introduced the Balanced Budget Requirement Act, legislation to require the President to submit to the Congress each year a balanced Federal budget and to forbid the consideration in the Congress of any budget resolution that does not provide for a balanced budget. These changes would take effect immediately, and are essential in implementing any Constitutional amendment to balance the Federal budget.

Specifically, the legislation provides that:

Beginning in fiscal year 1998, the President is required to submit a plan for achieving a balanced budget by 2002. Thereafter, the President must submit budgets to maintain a balanced budget for the current fiscal year and the 4 fiscal years following, unless there is a declared war or national security or economic emergency.

Upon submission of the President's budget, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) determines whether the plan achieves a balanced budget and certifies to the Chairman of the House and Senate Committees on the Budget such. If the budget is certified as not being in balance, the Chairmen of the Budget Committees notify the President in writing within 7 calendar days. Within 15 days, the President may submit a revised plan to achieve a balanced budget.

It is not in order in the House or Senate to consider any concurrent resolution on the budget that does not achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002. In 2002 and thereafter, it is not in order to consider any budget resolution that does not maintain a balanced budget. This section cannot be waived unless a joint resolution is enacted that declares war, a national security or national economic emergency.

Finally, the bill makes in order in both the House and Senate the consideration of the President's budget or revision as a substantive amendment to the budget resolution, without substantive amendment.

While essential, enactment of a balanced budget in the Congress and ratification of a balanced budget constitutional amendment is only the beginning, not the end. The Balanced Budget Requirement Act, together with diligence on our part, will keep the Federal budget balanced.

MARKING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
FAITH COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN
REFORMED CHURCH

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, in the days immediately following the adjournment of the 104th Congress, the members of the Faith Community Christian Church of Wyckoff, NJ celebrated the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of their church. I ask my Colleagues to join me in extending their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes.

Formally established on October 1, 1896 in the Riverside neighborhood of Paterson, the congregation was originally known as the Fourth Christian Reformed Church. For nearly eight decades, the church members worshipped in Paterson. On April 5, 1975, the church structure was destroyed by a fire that claimed the life of a Paterson firefighter.

Clearly, a church such as this does not survive on structure alone. The community relocated to its current site in Wyckoff and assumed the name Faith Community Christian Reformed Church in September 1978.

Mr. Speaker, this church has remained steadfast to its Christian mission throughout its distinguished history. Perseverance and courage have been the watchwords of the con-

gregation since its founding, but especially in the trying days following the 1975 tragedy.

Faith Community Christian Reformed Church has been a pillar of the northwest Bergen County community and is widely respected. The ministry that the church provides to the community is clear evidence of the "faith of our fathers living still." Indeed, the church is following the traditions of the Christian faith of the founding fathers of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this nation's history, faithful communities such as this church have formed the backbone of our society. At a time when many Americans are deeply concerned about the cultural and moral erosion of civil society, this church provides a center of worship and a solid foundation of faith for our families, our children and our communities. Just as this nation is a better place because of these churches, the dedicated service of the Faith Community Christian Reformed Church has enriched quality of life in Bergen and Passaic counties. Its contributions are adding to the rich tapestry of American life in northern New Jersey every day and deserve to be recognized as a part of the permanent historical record of our Nation through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

My Colleagues, I invite you to join me in honoring the members of the Faith Community Christian Reformed Church on one hundred years of faithful service and extending best wishes for another century of service.

MEDICARE DIABETES EDUCATION
AND SUPPLIES AMENDMENTS OF
1997

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add my name as an original cosponsor of the Medicare Diabetes Education and Supplies Amendments of 1997, introduced today by my colleague from Oregon, Representative FURSE. This long-overdue legislation will assist millions of diabetics, by ensuring that the relatively small costs of diabetes self-management training and glucose test strips will be covered by Medicare. The cost-effectiveness of managing diabetes has been well documented. Management significantly reduces and delays the onset of disabling or fatal consequences of this disease. Thus, the small investment Medicare makes "up front" pays off several times in savings over the long term. But most importantly, these simple, cost-effective techniques notably improve the quality of life for people with diabetes.

Many of my colleagues will recall Representative FURSE's valiant attempts to enact this legislation in the 104th Congress. Throughout that Congress, in the context of Medicare legislation and budget reconciliation, even to the last night of the second session, she worked to achieve that goal. I was glad to work with her in that effort. However, despite tremendous support from people with diabetes and their families, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, and the White House, the elusive prize was not to be won in that most rancorous of seasons. I hope that as we begin this quest again, we can place health policy ahead of partisan wrangling, and people

with diabetes ahead of politics. Let us enact this fine legislation as one of the first examples that we can and will work together to serve the American people. Let us take as our example the outstanding commitment of Representative FURSE to accomplish this objective not for personal or political gain, but because it is the right thing to do.

I am happy to be part of this effort, and look forward to speedy enactment of this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE PROTECTIONS OF THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY
OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to expand the protections afforded by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). The legislation I am introducing is substantially similar to legislation introduced in the last Congress by our distinguished former colleague, Patricia Schroeder.

The FMLA grants employees the right to unpaid leave in the event of a family or medical emergency without jeopardizing their jobs. As former chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, I was privileged to work closely with pat Schroeder, the Hon. MARGE ROUKEMA, Senator CHRIS DODD, our former colleague the Hon. William D. Ford, and others to bring about the enactment of this important law. Necessarily, many compromises were made to bring about this precedent setting legislation.

Among the most important of those compromises was one that limited the applicability of the law to employers of 50 or more employees. My original intention had been to extend the law to employers of 25 or more employees. However, because of uncertainty regarding the impact of the law on employers and in order to increase support for the legislation, I agreed to accept the 50 employee threshold.

The effect of this compromise was to leave approximately 15 million employees outside of the protections afforded by the FMLA. The fact that an employee may work for an employer of 40 rather than 50 people does not immunize that employee from the vicissitudes of life, nor diminish that employee's need for the protections afforded by the FMLA.

The FMLA was signed into law on February 5, 1993. Experience has shown that the law does not unduly disrupt employer operations. Not only are the costs to employers of complying with the law negligible, but in many instances the FMLA has led to improvements in employer operations by improving employee morale and productivity, and by reducing employee turnover. Experiences has also shown that the protections afforded by the law are not only beneficial, but are essential in enabling workers to balance the demands of work and home when faced with a family or medical emergency. In short, we have now had sufficient experience under the law to justify extending the law to employers of 25 or more employees.

Beyond expanding the number of workplaces that are protected by the FMLA, the bill

I am introducing also allows workers to take up to 24 hours of FMLA leave for the purpose of participating in school activities, to accompany children to routine dental or medical appointments, or to accompany an elderly relative to routine medical appointments or other professional services. The 24-hour provision was also originally a part of Mrs. Schroeder's legislation. However, I have modified those provisions to reflect a similar proposal that has been put forward by President Clinton. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF FIRE LEGISLATION

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY
OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that would create three additional enterprise zones targeted toward the financial institution, banking, and real estate or FIRE industries. I have consistently supported enterprise zones and think the intense competition for both the zone and community designation provides ample evidence of the broad support for these efforts.

My city of Hartford, CT applied for designation as an enterprise community but was denied. But when I started looking at the details, it was clear to me that while empowerment zones/enterprise communities are excellent economic development tools, they just don't quite fit all areas.

The tax incentives in empowerment zones include a wage credit, expensing of up to \$75,000 and a loosening of restrictions on tax-exempt bonds—all incentives seemingly geared to manufacturing. Hartford and a number of other cities around the Nation, however, are different—our base is services and we would frankly benefit from a different mixture of tax incentives.

Let me talk about Hartford for a moment. Hartford has long been known as the insurance capital of the world. We have also traditionally been a center for financial services. However, any reader of the Wall Street Journal knows of the consolidation in the banking industry and that real estate in many parts of New England is still in a severe slump. On top of this, we are in the midst of unprecedented change in the insurance industry. In the past 3 years every major insurer in Hartford has either been a merger participant and/or acquired or jettisoned a major line of business.

But because this proposal isn't just about Hartford. In the past decade, we have seen unprecedented change in our financial services industries. We have had banking and S&L problems, face increasing competition in the global marketplace, and again this year will debate allowing banking, and other service industries including securities and insurance to affiliate. In addition, we have seen Bermuda attract over \$4 billion in insurance capital in the past few years. It is certainly a beautiful place, but most important, it's also a tax haven.

And while change can be good, it does create a tremendous amount of uncertainty. With each and every merger or spinoff, every mayor and every city council, not to mention the thousands of affected employees who ask

the same two questions: What does this mean for jobs; and what impact does this have on the property tax base and real estate values?

This legislation would create three additional zones with tax incentives targeted to services. Specifically, these FIRE zones would be patterned after existing enterprise zones, but could encompass an entire city or municipality, and more important, could include central business districts. Eligibility would be the same as for existing enterprise zones, with an additional requirement that an eligible city would have to have experienced the loss of at least 12 percent of FIRE industry employment, or alternatively, 5,000 jobs.

In lieu of traditional enterprise zone tax incentives, new or existing businesses in FIRE zones would receive a range of tax incentives.

First, to deal with jobs, there would be a wage credit for the creation of new jobs within the zone. This would encourage businesses to hire displaced and underemployed insurance, real estate, and banking workers as well as to create entry level jobs for clerks and janitors.

Second, to deal with the high commercial vacancy rate problem that plagues many cities, there would be unlimited expensing on FIRE buildouts and computer equipment. The proposal would also remove the passive loss restrictions on historic rehabilitation.

Next, to provide an incentive for investors, the proposal would provide for a reduction in the individual capital gains rate for zone property held for 5 years to 10 percent. In addition, capital gains on zone property would not be considered a preference item for individual alternative minimum tax purposes. The corporate capital gains tax rate would also be reduced, to 17 percent.

Finally, many big cities aren't always as safe as we would like. Therefore, the proposal would provide for a double deduction for security expense within the zone. This should give employers an added stake in the safety of our cities.

I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

NORTH MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR, KEVIN KENNISON

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the North Miami Police Department's 1996 Officer of the Year, Officer Kevin Kennison. Chosen from a committee of his peers, his outstanding record in law enforcement makes him a fitting choice.

Officer Kennison joined the North Miami police force in June 1992. Quickly, he earned the respect of his peers and superiors through tenacity and dedication. In July 1993, he shared with several other officers the honor of Officer of the Month. Continuing his fine work, he again earned that title in August 1994 and October 1996.

Because of his unbridled enthusiasm, Officer Kennison was among the first chosen to participate in North Miami's Crime Suppression Unit, a specialized group of officers selected to target problem areas.