

during its deliberations on other Medicare reform initiatives. Between 1995 and 1996, large numbers of seniors received double-digit increases in their MediGap premiums. These increases were far in excess of Social Security cost-of-living increases and varied dramatically across States. In my own State of West Virginia, MediGap policies sold by the Prudential Insurance Co. increased by 17 percent between 1995 and 1996. In Ohio, premiums increased by 30 percent and in California by 37 percent.

Congress has considerable history in trying to guarantee at least a minimal level of value across all MediGap policies. Under the current law, individual and group MediGap policies must spend at least 65 and 75 percent, respectively, of all premium dollars collected, on benefits. If a MediGap plan fails to meet these minimum loss ratios, they must issue refunds or credits to their customers.

Mr. President, while Federal loss ratio standards help assure a minimum level of value, they do not prevent insurance companies from annually upping premiums as a senior ages. This practice, known as attained age-rating, results in the frailest and the lowest income seniors facing large, annual premium hikes as they age. I would hope that more States would follow the lead of the 10 States that have already banned attained age-rating. This would vastly improve the affordability of MediGap for the oldest and frailest of our seniors.

Mr. President, to repeat what I said last year, our bill is a targeted, modest, proposal. But it would provide very real and very significant help to millions of Medicare beneficiaries who, year in and year out, pay out billions of dollars in premiums to have peace of mind when it comes to the cost of their health care. It is wrong and unfair when senior and disabled citizens in West Virginia and across the country are suddenly dropped by insurers or denied a MediGap policy just because they move to another State, or their employer cuts back on promised retiree health benefits, or because they're disabled.

Mr. President, it is always a pleasure to be working on legislation with the Senator from Rhode Island. Senator CHAFEE has a long, impressive, and, more important, successful record in enacting legislation that has helped millions of seniors, children, and disabled. I urge my colleagues to join Senators JEFFORDS, FRIST, and COLLINS in cosponsoring this bill, and to help us extend more of the health care peace of mind that older and disabled Americans ask for and deserve.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 303. A bill to waive temporarily the Medicare enrollment composition rules for the Wellness Plan; to the Committee on Finance.

MEDICARE WAIVER FOR THE WELLNESS PLAN OF DETROIT, MI

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, at the end of the last Congress I expressed my disappointment at the unwillingness of this body and the other Chamber to move legislation that I believe is important to the health care of the people of Michigan. Today I rise along with my colleague from Michigan, Senator LEVIN, to reintroduce our legislation providing a Medicare 50/50 enrollment composition rule waiver for the Wellness Plan of Detroit, MI.

The Wellness Plan is a federally certified Medicaid health maintenance organization located in Detroit, MI. It has approximately 150,000 enrollees—roughly 140,000 of whom are Medicaid, while only about 2,000 are Medicare beneficiaries. Since 1993, the Wellness Plan has had a health care prepayment plan contract with Medicare. However, technical changes enacted by Congress effective January 1, 1996, unintentionally prevent the Wellness Plan from enrolling additional Medicare beneficiaries under the HCPP contract. So the Wellness Plan is positioned to become a full Medicare risk contractor, it currently is precluded from doing so due to the 50/50 Medicare enrollment composition rule.

Mr. President, it is important to note that even the Health Care Financing Administration has supported the Wellness Plan receiving this plan-specific 50/50 waiver. We also expect a companion bill to be introduced in the other Chamber shortly, and we expect it to be cosponsored by the entire Michigan delegation.

Because this legislation is essentially noncontroversial, affects only the State of Michigan, and is supported by the entire State delegation, it is our earnest hope that the Senate will act on this measure as expeditiously as possible. There is no rational justification for preventing the Wellness Plan from enrolling new Medicare beneficiaries into its health plan. If our goal is to allow a wider variety of options and choices of health care plans for our seniors, a good place to start is to allow those Michigan residents who wish to join this particular health maintenance organization to be able to do so.

Mr. President, I wish to thank my friend and colleague from Michigan, Senator CARL LEVIN, for once again supporting and helping me with this effort. I look forward to working with him to see that this measure which has such broad support in Michigan becomes enacted in the very near future.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 203

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. WAIVER OF MEDICARE ENROLLMENT COMPOSITION RULES FOR THE WELLNESS PLAN.

The requirements of section 1876(f)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395mm(f)(1)) are waived with respect to Comprehensive Health Services, Inc. (doing business as The Wellness Plan) for contract periods through December 31, 2000.

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, today I am joining with my colleague Senator ABRAHAM in introducing legislation that would provide the Wellness Plan of Michigan with a Medicare 50/50 enrollment composition rule waiver. I was disappointed that Congress did not enact this waiver last session as the Wellness Plan is the prototype for the type of health maintenance organization into which many Medicare beneficiaries will want to enroll. It is my hope that the Senate will act expeditiously on this legislation so that Michigan Medicare beneficiaries may have the opportunity to enroll in this well-established, quality plan. •

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 206

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Louisiana [Mr. BREAU] was added as a cosponsor of S. 206, a bill to prohibit the application of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, or any amendment made by such act, to an individual who is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local correctional, detention, or penal facility, and for other purposes.

S. 251

At the request of Mr. SHELBY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska [Mr. HAGEL] was added as a cosponsor of S. 251, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow farmers to income average over 2 years.

S. 277

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina [Mr. FAIRCLOTH] was added as a cosponsor of S. 277, a bill to amend the Agricultural Adjustment Act to restore the effectiveness of certain provisions regulating Federal milk marketing orders.

S. 294

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN], the Senator from Missouri [Mr. ASHCROFT], the Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS], the Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. SMITH], and the Senator from North Carolina [Mr. FAIRCLOTH] were added as cosponsors of S. 294, a bill to amend chapter 51 of title 18, United States Code, to establish Federal penalties for the killing or attempted killing of a law enforcement officer of the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 52—CONCERNING THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT MILK CRISIS

Mr. SPECTER (for himself, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KOHL,

Mr. JEFFORDS, and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution; which was ordered to lie over, under the rule:

S. RES. 52

Whereas, during the last few months farm milk prices have experienced substantial volatility, dropping precipitously from \$15.37 per hundredweight in September, 1996 to \$11.34 per hundredweight in December, 1996, while simultaneously there have been record high costs for cattle feed;

Whereas, there is a strong sense of financial crisis in the dairy industry;

Whereas, many dairy farmers have looked to the Federal government for relief because minimum milk prices under the Milk Marketing Orders are established by the Department of Agriculture;

Whereas, the price of cheese at the National Cheese Exchange in Green Bay, Wisconsin influences milk prices paid to farmers because of its use in the Department of Agriculture's Basic Formula Price under Federal Milk Marketing Orders;

Whereas, less than one percent of the cheese produced in the United States is sold on the National Cheese Exchange and the Exchange acts as a reference price for as much as 95 percent of the commercial bulk cheese sales in the nation;

Whereas, there has been some concern among dairy producers that the prices at the National Cheese Exchange may have been manipulated downward, benefiting processors at the expense of dairy farmers;

Whereas, it is in the national interest to ensure that market prices for milk, cheese, and other dairy products are determined by a fair and competitive marketplace; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the Sense of the Senate of the United States that the Secretary of Agriculture should act immediately pursuant to his legal authority to modify the Basic Formula Price for dairy by replacing the National Cheese Exchange as a factor to be considered in setting the Basic Formula Price and to establish in its place an equivalent pricing mechanism more reflective of the actual market conditions for cheese and other dairy products nationally.

SENATE RESOLUTION 53— RELATIVE TO A DISPUTE

Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Mr. GRAMM, and Mr. D'AMATO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources:

S. RES. 53

Whereas a strike by the Allied Pilots Association, the union of the pilots of American Airlines, could lead to a severe disruption in air service;

Whereas such a strike could result in the loss of employment by tens of thousands of individuals in the United States;

Whereas such a strike would affect approximately 20 percent of the domestic airline traffic in the United States;

Whereas such a strike would cause more than 75,000 American Airlines employees to be idle;

Whereas such a strike would affect—

(1) the livelihood of thousands of other workers employed in airline and airport supply industries; and

(2) commerce relating to tourism, logistics, and business requiring travel;

Whereas such a strike would cause substantial adverse economic effects in communities of the United States;

Whereas such a strike could jeopardize the largest order made in history for the production of civilian aircraft; and

Whereas because $\frac{1}{4}$ of the air traffic of American Airlines is in foreign air commerce (as that term is defined in section 40102 of title 49, United States Code), a strike would have an adverse effect with respect to—

(1) the expansion of the market of United States goods and services in foreign countries; and

(2) the trading partners of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the President should work in conjunction with the National Mediation Board to facilitate a resolution of the labor dispute between the Allied Pilots Association and AMR, the parent company of American Airlines; and

(2) the President should—

(A) encourage—

(i) the settlement of the issues that are the subject of the labor dispute through the use of the services of the National Mediation Board established under section 4 of the Railway Labor Act (45 U.S.C. 154) before midnight on February 15, 1997 (which is the date specified by the Allied Pilots Association as the deadline for averting a strike); or

(ii) the achievement, by the date specified in clause (i), of an agreement by the parties to the dispute to arbitrate the issues that are the subject of the labor dispute through the National Mediation Board; and

(B) if necessary, establish a board under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act (45 U.S.C. 160) to serve as an emergency board to investigate the matter relating to the labor dispute and to make a report to the President in the manner prescribed in that section.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED

THE BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

DODD AMENDMENT NO. 4

Mr. DODD proposed an amendment to the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget; as follows:

On page 3, line 7, strike beginning with "is" through line 11 and insert "faces an imminent and serious military threat to national security as declared by a joint resolution."

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be allowed to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, at 9 a.m. in SR-328A to discuss reform to the Commodity Exchange Act.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, in closed session, to

receive a briefing on the situation in Bosnia and the status of U.S. military forces participating in the stabilization force [SFOR].

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, immediately after the first rollcall vote to hold a business meeting to vote on pending items.

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

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be authorized to meet for a hearing on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs would like to request unanimous consent to hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to receive the legislative presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The hearing will be held on February 11, 1997, at 9:30 a.m., in room 345 of the Cannon House Office Building.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ERICA MICHELLE PITTS

• Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, each fall, Senators and Congressmen turn to the enjoyable task of submitting nominations to the U.S. Service Academies. This year, like every other, my office was flooded with applications from qualified young men and women—students with excellent academic records, students whose extracurricular activities would drive the most patient parent crazy, students who donate endless hours to community service projects. However, rarely do I see a young person possessing all of this and more.

This year I proudly nominated Erica Michelle Pitts, of Louisville, KY, to the U.S. Military Academy, as did Senator WENDELL FORD and then-Congressman Mike Ward. There are many adjectives that can be used to describe Erica—poised, accomplished, brave, athletic, energetic, but even combined they do not adequately portray her. A senior at Saint Francis High School, Erica's headmaster Thomas Pike describes her as "a delightfully different young person." Counselor Kit Llewellyn sees her as a "risk-taker" and admires her integrity.