

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

WORKING FAMILIES NEED HEALTH PLANS THAT WORK

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, at long last, the House of Representatives has passed legislation to inject some accountability into the managed care industry. Serious debate to reform health care in this country was long overdue. We could no longer wait for another person to die from lack of care or another doctor to be reprimanded by an HMO for discussing all available treatment options with a patient before taking steps towards change.

Right now, we have a system where HMOs make more money when they deliver less care. To stop the abuses that HMOs inflict on their patients and to make health care more affordable, we have to ensure that patients and their doctors, not accountants, have control of the health care system. That is why it was so important to pass the Patient's Bill of Rights. This bipartisan legislation, which I supported, remedies a number of the problems with an HMO system that currently values profits over patient care.

Access to medically needed care, including access to emergency rooms and specialists, is a fundamental element of the Patient's Bill of Rights. This legislation will also ban gag rules on physicians and end some HMOs' practice of offering financial incentives to withhold necessary treatment. This bill will guarantee timely internal appeals, as well as an independent external appeals process, when plans deny care. Finally, the Patient's Bill of Rights holds plans legally accountable when their profit-drive decisions result in serious injury or death. People need real ways to hold HMOs responsible.

Unlike the Patient's Bill of Rights, the Republican substitutes prohibit patients from suing HMOs when care is improperly denied. In too many instances, courts are the only advocate that consumers have in their battles with multi-billion dollar companies. The health insurance industry, which makes \$952 billion a year, does not need protection from lawsuits. When one of your family members dies because an HMO denies access to proper care, the Republican substitutes' only recourse is an external appeal—that's too little, too late. No other industry enjoys such a powerful, Congressionally-mandated shield from liability for their negligence. By rejecting the Republican substitutes, Congress demonstrated that it's time to remove protections for health plans and focus on providing more protections for patients.

We must create a better system for everyone who gives or receives health care in this country. The people who make America work deserve health plans that work for them and their families. By passing the Patient's Bill of Rights, we have taken our first step towards real reform.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK E. FIORILLI UPON RETIREMENT FROM CECOM, FORT MONMOUTH

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the achievements and contributions of Mr. Frank E. Fiorilli, Deputy for Business and Strategic Planning for the Army's Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) at Fort Monmouth, NJ.

Mr. Fiorilli is retiring after 34 years and a luncheon in his honor will be held on October 27. This will be a special occasion for a very special individual—one of those talented civil service managers in whom we invest our faith and trust to successfully carry out an important national security responsibility.

Mr. Fiorilli began his distinguished career as a presidential intern in 1965. Born in Newark, NJ, he received a bachelor's degree cum laude from Rutgers in 1965. He has been serving his country ever since.

The principal function of CECOM at Fort Monmouth is to ensure that our soldiers in the field have advanced communications equipment that will protect them and contribute to the success of their battlefield mission. We have been fortunate over the years to have, at Fort Monmouth, highly skilled engineers and other professionals who develop and procure this equipment—a critical component of our military's worldwide success.

Frank Fiorilli has established the foundation for the Army to adequately and properly provide advanced communications equipment for the "Army After Next." He has done this with a combination of creativity and organizational skill that we should honor and encourage in all our senior Federal managers. I congratulate Mr. Fiorilli and wish him a well-deserved and fulfilling retirement.

TRIBUTE TO DR. D. JAMES KENNEDY, A TRUE CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is clear when reading both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, that our Founding Fathers recognized the important role that God and the Bible would play in guiding our Nation's leaders who governed the world. Today, it is becoming clear that the Judeo-Christian principles this nation was founded upon are as critical to the future progress and stability of this nation as they have been in the past. In fact, the 18th President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant, emphasized the important

relationship between the Bible and the freedom that you and I enjoy today. He said, (and I quote) "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties; write its precepts on your heart and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for the progress made, and to this we must look as our guide in the future."

Mr. Speaker, there is a man of Christian faith, a leader within our society today who is working to remind you and I to keep this same spirit of faith and freedom alive. That man is Dr. D. James Kennedy, a true Christian statesman. Mr. Speaker, when I was elected in 1994 to represent the citizens of Eastern North Carolina, Dr. Kennedy presented every newly elected Member with a copy of the New Geneva study Bible. In the front cover is a note stating his hope that we would read and apply the messages we found in the scripture to our work and our daily lives—just as Ulysses Grant proposed. Mr. Speaker, I begin and end each day on my knees in prayer. I pray for guidance in the decisions I make that affect the American people. In the last 5 years, I have often reached for the Bible that Dr. Kennedy gave to me for inspiration, encouragement, and a sense of hope.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Kennedy embodies the ideal of Christian statesmanship. In fact, he has dedicated his life to celebrate and share God's word. In 1959, he became the founding pastor of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Florida. This year, as the church celebrates its 40th anniversary, Dr. Kennedy is the most widely listened-to Presbyterian minister in the world. His broadcast messages are televised to 35,000 cities and towns across the United States. But Dr. Kennedy's commitment to evangelism and strengthening our nation's communities extends well beyond his role as senior minister to Coral Ridge Church. In 1962, he created a lay-witnessing program called Evangelism Explosion International, which is used in every nation to encourage growth in congregations around the world.

Dr. Kennedy also founded the Westminster Academy in 1971 to provide quality Christian education for the citizens of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In addition, he started Knox Theological Seminary in 1990, which now offers courses in the United States as well as in Seoul, Korea. Mr. Speaker, last fall I had the unique opportunity to participate and see first hand, Dr. Kennedy's efforts to encourage and motivate people of faith. Coral Ridge Ministries is the television and radio outreach of Dr. Kennedy's word, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary. One of the television programs his ministry airs is called "The Power of One." The program recognizes individuals in our Nation's communities who are working to promote Christian values. One such person is Rebecca Mason, a 10-year old girl from the Third District of North Carolina, which I am proud to represent. Rebecca became frustrated with the state of our country after learning some frightening facts about the rate of crime and violence in our Nation's neighborhoods. Rebecca could not understand why

• 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.

more people of faith were not taking action, so she decided to do something about it. She created a petition for Christian values, calling upon all Americans to stand up and take action to promote and preserve the morals and values we learn from the Bible. Rebecca's efforts were featured on Dr. Kennedy's "Power of One" program. As a man of strong religious conviction myself and as Rebecca's Congressman, I was asked to participate in the program. It was an honor for me to be part of a television program that recognizes the citizens who are taking action to make their communities and their nation stronger. In fact, it reminded me of one of my favorite Bible verses from Isaiah book 6, verse 8. It says, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Kennedy, like Rebecca Mason, has answered God's call, and he has devoted his life to serving as a messenger of God's word. Today, I am proud to recognize his efforts during this exciting year of celebration to show my respect for his devotion and his commitment to spread the message of hope to all America. Thank you Dr. Kennedy, for reminding those of us who serve the American people—and all citizens—that faith and freedom go hand in hand. Happy anniversary. May God continue to Bless you and give you the strength to continue sharing His message with the world.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
GHENT BAND

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Ghent Band on their 100th anniversary in entertaining the communities of Columbia County, located in the heart of the 22nd Congressional District, which I proudly represent.

Founded in 1899 by 15 members, the Ghent Band continues to make history while other bands in New York have become history. Inspired by nationally touring bands like John Philip Sousa, the original 15 members gathered old, second hand instruments and began rehearsing weekly at the Old Ghent School House. To this day, the band plays on, serving as Columbia County's only full-fledged village band.

Mr. Speaker, for a full century the Ghent Band's music has filled the hearts of the young and old, creating lasting memories at the many parades and concerts at which they play. The Ghent Band holds a special place in my own heart as they were present at the inauguration celebrating my swearing in to the House of Representatives.

Given the diversity of age and background of the band's members, as well as their strong ties to the local community, I have no doubt that the Ghent Band will continue on for an additional 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Ghent Band is America at its best, representing all that is good in this nation. I wish its members and their families the best as they celebrate 100 years of serving and entertaining the Village of Ghent.

BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS MAN-
AGED CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT
OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2723, the bipartisan consensus Managed Care Improvement Act. This important piece of legislation is long overdue and I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill that will reform the managed care industry. I commend Mr. NORWOOD and Mr. DINGELL for their diligent work and determination in bringing this bill to the floor today and the House leadership for scheduling debate on this bill.

H.R. 2723, will bring about necessary changes to the managed care industry by bringing the attention of HMOs back to the needs of the American public. For too long, these insurance companies have been driven by profits and have lost sight of their true responsibility, to provide a quality service to those Americans who pay for insurance each month. All too often we hear stories from our constituents who have had numerous conflicts with their insurance companies, ranging from denial of coverage for preventative procedures and medically necessary treatments to denial of reimbursement for trips to emergency rooms and specialists. Americans pay their monthly premiums and expect that if the time comes when they need to seek out medical assistance, they should not have to worry about whether or not their HMO is going to oppose the necessity of their visit to a doctor.

Americans should be able to see specialists such as a cardiologist or oncologist without obtaining a referral from their primary physician, a chore which merely takes up time, time that may be better served by immediately seeing a specialist. Moreover, women should have direct access to their obstetrician-gynecologist and parents should have the option to select a pediatrician as their child's primary physician. Under current guidelines, this is not an option. However, these issues would be addressed by the passage of H.R. 2723.

The major concern that has been brought to my attention by my constituents has been the issue of employer liability. I am gratified that this bill contains a self-executing managers amendment that will directly address this concern. With the passage of H.R. 2723, language will be implemented which clearly states that an employer can not be held liable unless they are making medical decisions. An employer can provide health care coverage for their employees and set the parameters of that coverage with the knowledge that they will not be sued by an employee should the HMO make a negligible medical decision that results in injury or death.

The intent of this legislation is to make managed care coverage more user friendly. To provide the necessary information to policyholders up front so that the frequency of injuries and deaths due to negligent decisions by the HMO decreases. However, there will be times when an HMO fails to provide coverage for services that a policy holder is entitled to. It is for these cases, that the individual has the ability to hold the HMO accountable for its

negligent decisions. In cases of personal injury or death, the individual deserves the right to sue the insurance company and hold them financially responsible for their irresponsible decisions. It is for this reason that I strongly support the liability portion of this bill.

I am confident that by requiring health plans to disclose information to policyholders regarding coverage of benefits, doctors, facilities, and claim procedures, the need to proceed to a judicial solution should not occur as often as opponents of this bill insist.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to stand up and fight for the rights of the American public and to support passage of this legislation.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL
CENTER IN GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO HONORED

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honor not one individual but a team who has dedicated their time, effort, and care into making the smallest VA hospital in the Country, the best. The employees of the Grand Junction VA hospital have changed health care in this country as we know it. Their unparalleled care for the patient has won them the Department of Veterans Affairs highest honor.

The Robert W. Carey Quality Award trophy is given to one facility each year to recognize organizational effectiveness and performance through quality management. It was the first time that the hospital submitted the entry form which was fifty pages long and took five months to process. The employees of the Grand Junction VA hospital patiently waited to hear back while a Department of Veteran Affairs panel reviewed applications. Soon after a panel visit to the hospital and a final ranking decision by a panel of outside judges, they were chosen for the award.

The basis for their winning the award are numerous and well founded. Among them, their work in the revolutionary, primary-care approach to health care that began in 1988. They call it a "virtual circle of care" in which patients see the same physician, nurse, clerk, and social worker each time they visit the hospital. This allows for more personalized care which pays off on a large scale. Health care providers become familiar with the patients they see, therefore providing outstanding, personalized service to them. Also recognized was their work on the Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which brings veterans to Crested Butte every weekend.

In addition to these accolades, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few final highlights. The administration's attention to the needs of the employee is another facet that makes this hospital so exceptional. They are constantly looking for ways to improve, including their anonymous e-mail system that allows employees to voice any concerns they might have or suggest any improvements they see necessary. Their volunteer program has also grown tremendously. People are getting involved to make a difference and they have.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I honor this institution, on behalf of the people of Western