

up to 10 sites around the country to test Medicare reimbursements to the VA. While a pilot project for Department of Defense Medicare Subvention was enacted into law in 1997, the VA's Pilot Project was not.

This legislation is budget neutral. It caps Medicare payments to the VA at \$50 million annually. HHS and VA will monitor this project from beginning to end in order to study its effectiveness in giving more veterans access to VA health care. Last month, this legislation passed in the Senate. Now is the time for the House to act on this issue.

The second part of this bill would take steps to ensure that the Department of Defense health care coverage, Tricare, is accessible and patient-friendly through improved business practices and by meeting industry standards. In 1993, the Department of Defense restructured its health care program in order to maintain beneficiary access to high quality care while containing cost. Implementation of this program has been difficult as force reduction and base closures have resulted in fewer military treatment facilities and medical personnel. There is still much to be done to ensure access to Tricare's 8 million beneficiaries made up of active service members, their families, and retirees.

This legislation directs the Department of Defense to take several steps to ensure that Tricare is similar to the health care coverage available to all other federal employees; that it ensure portability of benefits from region to region; and that it improve patient management. Changes in this bill will improve Tricare for beneficiaries, providers, and contractors. Identical legislation was passed last month in the Senate and it is time the House did the same. Those who have served in our military deserve accessible health care without the red tape.

This bill also encourages the Veterans Benefits Administration to review its policies and procedures in reviewing claims; initiate necessary actions to process claims in a consistent and timely manner; and report to the Congress on measures taken to improve processing time. Processing claims through the VBA, including veterans disability ratings, has grown increasingly slower over the last few years. A veteran's access to VA health care often depends on these decisions. We should not put a veteran's health care needs on hold because of paperwork delays.

I commend our veterans for their courage in defending our nation's values and freedoms. They have served their country to the fullest extent, and it is time to serve our veterans.

INTRODUCTION OF CORPORATE
RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 1999

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Corporate Responsibility Act of 1999 which will save an estimated \$33 billion in corporate welfare over the next five years. This bill eliminates or reforms twelve federal programs that currently use billions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize corporate America. Three years ago, Congress reduced welfare for individuals and families. Now it is time to do the same for corporations.

This legislation is necessary to eliminate the system of tax breaks, subsidies and other policies given to wealthy special interests by the federal government. Time magazine estimates that corporate welfare costs American taxpayer \$625 billion every five years. Foreign Sales Corporations (FSCs), which give tax breaks to corporations who transport American jobs overseas, alone account for \$1.7 billion each year.

My bill, similar to one introduced in the 105th Congress, takes aim at the worst examples of corporate welfare in the federal budget, including FSCs, special tax treatment of alcohol fuels, the Market Access Program, the Export Enhancement Program, and federal funding of forest roads for logging. The bill also includes a lock-box mechanism to ensure that all savings and revenue go directly toward reducing the public debt.

This bill would save more than \$33 billion over five years by ending corporate welfare programs and reforming others. Because this legislation is limited to the most egregious examples, my bill is a litmus test for anyone who is serious about ending corporate welfare. In short, this bill puts the best interest of our citizens—a balanced budget, jobs, education, and a clean environment—ahead of handouts to huge corporations and wealthy special interests.

Consequently, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor and support the Corporate Responsibility Act of 1999.

HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION
AND KOSOVO

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, my remarks today come at a time of great significance to the Jewish community and the international community. This week we observed the days of remembrance, a commemoration of the Holocaust and a tribute to those who lost their lives.

The Holocaust was a time of such incredible horror that it is often not taught to the young and some, because of how disturbing it can be, choose not to speak of it. I accept it as my duty to educate others about the atrocities of the past so that they may never again occur. The Holocaust was a disgraceful chapter in the history of humankind. The fact that the world stood by and watched, is something that I will never understand. What I will do, what the world must do, is to promise that these crimes against humanity will never again be tolerated.

Today, our responsibility is again subject to a test. With the crisis in Kosovo, and the all too familiar images of families being packed into boxcars, bodies being discovered, and orphaned children crying, the Jewish community is painfully reminded of the suffering we have sworn to prevent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the people of Israel for realizing the relationship between the suffering in Kosovo and the suffering in the history of the Jews. In the first ten days of Operation Allied Forces, Israeli citizens donated over one million dollars toward refugee relief efforts in the Balkans.

Field hospitals set up by Israel have already helped to successfully deliver 7 babies born to Kosovar refugees. In Israel on Monday, 17 families of Kosovar refugees—the first of hundreds yet to come—arrived to a warm welcome led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara.

Among those that arrived on Monday were Lamia Jaka, the daughter of righteous gentiles Dervish and Servet Kurkut of Kosovo, and her husband Vlaznim. Lamia's parents saved both Jews and religious texts during the Holocaust. David Berkowitz of Neveh Ilan, whose mother was saved by Lamia's parents who hid her at their home, was on hand for a tearful reunion.

These acts are very important to me. They say that the lessons of the Holocaust need to be taught forever. I am thankful for the opportunity I have to commemorate the lives lost in the Holocaust and for the opportunity I have in facing the crisis in Kosovo to honor human life by acting to preserve it.

I was touched by the remarks Eli Wiesel delivered this week at the White House which are included below. I would urge my colleagues to take the time to read them because they serve as testimony to our necessary involvement in the NATO operation taking place in Kosovo.

Mr. WIESEL. Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, members of Congress, Ambassador Holbrooke, Excellencies, friends: Fifty-four years ago to the day, a young Jewish boy from a small town in the Carpathian Mountains woke up, not far from Goethe's beloved Weimar, in a place of eternal infamy called Buchenwald. He was finally free, but there was no joy in his heart. He thought there never would be again.

Liberated a day earlier by American soldiers, he remembers their rage at what they saw. And even if he lives to be a very old man, he will always be grateful to them for that rage, and also for their compassion. Though he did not understand their language, their eyes told him what he needed to know—that they, too, would remember, and bear witness.

And now, I stand before you, Mr. President—Commander-in-Chief of the army that freed me, and tens of thousands of others—and I am filled with a profound and abiding gratitude to the American people.

Gratitude is a word that I cherish. Gratitude is what defines the humanity of the human being. And I am grateful to you, Hillary—or Mrs. Clinton—for what you said, and for what you are doing for children in the world, for the homeless, for the victims of injustice, the victims of destiny and society. And I thank all of you for being here.

We are on the threshold of a new century, a new millennium. What will the legacy of this vanishing century be? How will it be remembered in the new millennium? Surely it will be judged, and judged severely, in both moral and metaphysical terms. These failures have cast a dark shadow over humanity: two World Wars, countless civil wars, the senseless chain of assassinations—Gandhi, the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Sadat, Rabin—bloodbaths in Cambodia and Nigeria, India and Pakistan, Ireland and Rwanda, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sarajevo and Kosovo; the inhumanity in the gulag and the tragedy of Hiroshima. And, on a different level, of course, Auschwitz and Treblinka. So much violence, so much indifference.

What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means "no difference." A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and punishment, cruelty and compassion, good and evil.

What are its courses and inescapable consequences? Is it a philosophy? Is there a philosophy of indifference conceivable? Can one possibly view indifference as a virtue? Is it necessary at times to practice it simply to keep one's sanity, live normally, enjoy a fine meal and a glass of wine, as the world around us experiences harrowing upheavals?

Of course, indifference can be tempting—more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person's pain and despair. Yet, for the person who is indifferent, his or her neighbors are of no consequence. And, therefore, their lives are meaningless. Their hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the other to an abstraction.

Over there, behind the black gates of Auschwitz, the most tragic of all prisoners were the "Muselmänner," as they were called. Wrapped in their torn blankets, they would sit or lie on the ground, staring vacantly into space, unaware of who or where they were, strangers to their surroundings. They no longer felt pain, hunger, thirst. They feared nothing. They felt nothing. They were dead and did not know it.

Rooted in our tradition, some of us felt that to be abandoned by humanity then was not the ultimate. We felt that to be abandoned by God was worse than to be punished by Him. Better an unjust God than an indifferent one. For us to be ignored by God was harsher punishment than to be a victim of His anger. Man can live far from God—not outside God. God is wherever we are. Even in suffering? Even in suffering.

In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony, have done something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it. Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response.

Indifference is not a beginning, it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for its benefits the aggressor—never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees—not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity we betray our own.

Indifference, then, is not only a sin, it is a punishment. And this is one of the most important lessons of this outgoing century's wide-ranging experiments in good and evil.

In the place that I come from society was composed of three simple categories: the killers, the victims, and the bystanders. During the darkest of times, inside the ghettos and death camps—and I'm glad that Mrs. Clinton mentioned that we are now commemorating that event, that period, that we are now in the Days of Remembrance—but then, we felt abandoned, forgotten. All of us did.

And our only miserable consolation was that we believed that Auschwitz and Treblinka were closely guarded secrets; that the leaders of the free world did not know what was going on behind those black gates and barbed wire; that they had no knowledge of the war against the Jews that Hitler's armies and their accomplices waged as part of the war against the Allies.

If they knew, we thought, surely those leaders would have moved heaven and earth

to intervene. They would have spoken out with great outrage and conviction. They would have bombed the railways leading to Birkenau, just the railways, just once.

And now we knew, we learned, we discovered that the Pentagon knew, the State Department knew. And the illustrious occupant of the White House then, who was a great leader—and I say it with some anguish and pain, because, today is exactly 54 years marking his death—Franklin Delano Roosevelt denied on April the 12th, 1945, so he is very much present to me and to us.

No doubt, he was a great leader. He mobilized the American people and the world, going into battle, brining hundreds and thousands of valiant and brave soldiers in America to fight fascism, to fight dictatorship, to fight Hitler. And so many of the young people fell in battle. And, nevertheless, his image in Jewish history—I must say it—his image in Jewish history is flawed.

The depressing tale of the St. Louis is a case in point. Sixty years ago, its human cargo—maybe 1,000 Jews—was turned back to Nazi Germany. And that happened after the Kristallnacht, after the first state sponsored pogrom, with hundreds of Jewish shops destroyed, synagogues burned, thousands of people put in concentration camps. And that ship, which was already on the shores of the United States, was sent back.

I don't understand. Roosevelt was a good man, with a heart. He understood those who needed help. Why didn't he allow these refugees to disembark? A thousand people—in America, a great country, the greatest democracy, the most generous of all new nations in modern history. What happened? I don't understand. Why the indifference, on the highest level, to the suffering of the victims?

But then, there were human beings who were sensitive to our tragedy. Those non-Jews, those Christians, that we called the "Righteous Gentiles," whose selfless acts of heroism saved the honor of their faith. Why were they so few? Why was there a greater effort to save SS murderers after the war than to save their victims during the war?

Why did some of America's largest corporations continue to do business with Hitler's Germany until 1942? It has been suggested, and it was documented, that the Wehrmacht could not have conducted its invasion of France without oil obtained from American sources. How is one to explain their indifference?

And yet, my friends, good things have also happened on this traumatic century: the defeat of Nazism, the collapse of communism, the rebirth of Israel on its ancestral soil, the demise of apartheid, Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, the peace accord in Ireland. And let us remember the meeting, filled with drama and emotion, between Rabin and Arafat that you, Mr. President, convened in this very place. I was here and I will never forget it.

And then, of course, the joint decision of the United States and NATO to intervene in Kosovo and save those victims, those refugees, those who were uprooted by a man whom I believe that because of his crimes, should be charged with crimes against humanity. But this time, the world was not silent. This time, we do respond. This time, we intervene.

Does it mean that we have learned from the past? Does it mean that society has changed? Has the human being become less indifferent and more human? Have we really learned from our experiences? Are we less insensitive to the plight of victims of ethnic cleansing and other forms of injustices in places near and far? Is today's justified intervention in Kosovo, led by you, Mr. President, a lasting warning that never

again will the deportation, the terrorization of children and their parents be allowed anywhere in the world? Will it discourage other dictators in other lands to do the same?

What about the children? Oh, we see them on television, we read about them in the papers, and we do so with a broken heart. Their fate is always the most tragic, inevitably. When adults wage war, children perish. We see their faces, their eyes. Do we hear their pleas? Do we feel their pain, their agony? Every minute one of them dies of disease, violence, famine. Some of them—so many of them—could be saved.

And so, once again, I think of the young Jewish boy from the Carpathian Mountains. He has accompanied the old man I have become throughout these years of quest and struggle. And together we walk towards the new millennium, carried by profound fear and extraordinary hope. (Applause.)

I conclude on that.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, if it isn't broken, don't fix it. If it works, don't break it.

I'm referring to the Social Security debate. Currently, some in Congress are looking at proposals to prevent the program's anticipated bankruptcy 32 years from now. In order to buy the system a couple more years of financial solvency, some of our colleagues are considering levying a new tax on state and local government employees who are currently covered by their own pension plans. They want to force newly-hired state and local government employees who would otherwise enjoy independent pension and disability programs with good returns to participate in Social Security which offers neither security nor a good investment opportunity.

If that isn't bad enough, by mandating new state and local employees into Social Security, they will short-circuit state and local programs by shutting down the capital stream necessary to maintain current benefit levels. Mandating Social Security will, in essence, break what isn't broken while failing to fix what is.

Mr. Speaker, 5 million state and local employees and 2 million retirees are covered by alternative plans. In Ohio, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Maine, Alaska, and Louisiana, over half of all state employees are covered by their own plans. In Texas and Illinois over 1 million employees are covered under state and local plans. Every state is impacted because about 75 percent of all public safety employees are not covered under Social Security. In Colorado there are more than 200,000 state, education, and local government employees who are outside of the federal retirement system.

These state and local disability and pension systems were developed because the original Social Security Act of 1937 excluded state and local governments from Social Security coverage. This was to avoid raising a possible Constitutional question of whether the federal government could tax state and local governments. Congress later amended the law to make state and local government employee participation in Social Security voluntary in 1950. In 1983, those already participating in