

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair redesignates the time for the resumption of the proceedings on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) until Tuesday, October 19.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2260, PAIN RELIEF PROMOTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, today a "dear colleague" letter was sent to all Members informing them that the Committee on Rules is planning to meet later this week to grant a rule which may limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 2260, the Pain Relief Promotion Act of 1999. Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies and a brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee on Rules up in H-312 of the Capitol by 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 20. Amendments should be drafted to the bill as ordered reported by the Committee on Commerce on October 13. Copies of the bill may be obtained from the committee. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments to both bills are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the Rules of the House.

I would like to inform members of the Committee on Rules that we are going to be meeting in 10 minutes upstairs for the consideration of two measures.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2670, DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION ACT, 2000

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 7(c) of rule XXII, I hereby announce my intention to offer a motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2670 tomorrow.

The form of the motion is as follows:

Mr. UPTON moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2670 be instructed to agree to the provisions contained in section 102 of the Senate amendment (relating to repeal of automated entry-exit control system).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, October 14, I missed five votes because I was in Texas on official House business. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall 500;

yes on 501; no on 502; no on 503; and no on 504.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO COMMISSION ON ONLINE CHILD PROTECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to section 1405(b) of the Child Online Protection Act (47 U.S.C. 231), the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following members on the part of the House to the Commission on Online Child Protection:

Mr. John Bastian, Illinois, engaged in the business of providing Internet filtering or blocking services or software; Mr. William L. Schrader, Virginia, engaged in the business of providing Internet access services;

Mr. Stephen Blakam, Washington, D.C., engaged in the business of providing labeling or ratings services;

Mr. J. Robert Flores, Virginia, an academic expert in the field of technology;

Mr. William Parker, Virginia, engaged in the business of making content available over the Internet.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, many of us in this institution have been highly critical of the American pharmaceutical industry. Maybe, maybe we have been a bit too harsh. From a market perspective, drug companies are doing everything they should be doing. We cannot blame drug companies for maximizing their profits. That is their job. Nor can we blame the Federal Government for taking steps to protect seniors and the uninsured and to address the ramifications of what drug companies are doing to the disadvantaged. That is our job.

To address this issue, I have introduced H.R. 2927 to bring down prices without taking away the industry's incentive to act like an industry. My bill promotes good, old-fashioned American competition. The Affordable Prescription Drug Act does not use price controls, does not use regulations to bring down prescription drug prices. What my bill does is reduce drug industry power and increase consumer power by subjecting the drug industry to the same competitive forces that other industries bear. It is a means of moderating prices that are too high without inadvertently setting prices that are too low.

Drawing from intellectual property laws already in place for the U.S. for other products in which access is an issue, pollution control devices come to mind, the legislation would establish product licenses for essential prescription drugs. If, based on criteria published by the Department of Commerce, a drug price is so outrageously high that it bears no semblance to pricing norms for other industries, the Federal Government could require drug manufacturers to license their patent to generic drug companies. The generic drug companies could then sell competing products before the brand name patent expires, paying the patent holder royalties for that right.

The patent holder would still be amply rewarded for being the first on the market, and Americans would benefit from competitively driven prices.

Alternatively, a drug company could voluntarily lower its prices, which would preclude the Federal Government from being involved, from finding cause for product licensing. Either way, prescription drug prices come down.

The bill requires drug companies to provide audited, detailed information on drug company expenses. Given that these companies are repeatedly asking us to accept a status quo that is bankrupting seniors and fueling health care inflation, they have kept us guessing about their true costs for far too long. We can continue to buy into drug industry threats that research and development will dry up unless we continue to shelter them from competition. The argument, however, Mr. Speaker, falls apart when we actually look at how R&D is funded today.

Long story short, it is mostly funded by American taxpayers. Fifty percent of research and development for new drugs in this country is done by the Federal Government, by local governments and by foundations. The other 50 percent that the drug company spends, the Federal Government, Congress, has bestowed tax breaks on those companies for those dollars they do spend. The drug companies turn around and thank U.S. consumers by charging us two times, three times, four times what consumers in other countries pay.

We pay for half the research. We give tax breaks on the dollars they do spend. They turn around and charge American consumers twice or three times what consumers of prescription drugs pay in every other country in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we can do nothing or we can dare to challenge the drug industry on behalf of seniors and every health care consumer in this country. We should take a serious look at the Allen bill, the Berry-Sanders bill, the Brown bill. There is no excuse for inaction.

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I urge my colleagues to support lowering the cost of prescription medicine. Let us act responsibly before it is too late.

KAZAKHSTAN MAKING PROGRESS IN DEMOCRACY, FREE MARKETS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I return this week from monitoring an election in Kazakhstan. The election to the lower house of Kazakhstan's parliament, the Majilis, has been described by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a "tentative step in the country's transition to democracy."

While the election was not perfect, the Kasakhs acknowledged this, it was an important step toward true representative self-government.

I have heard many negative comments towards the Kasakh government recently. Certainly the attempted transfer of MIG 21s to North Korea was a major security concern for the United States. However, the Kasakh government dealt with this matter swiftly, fired those responsible, and put in place mechanisms to prevent this from occurring again.

More importantly, we are not hearing the positive steps occurring in Kazakhstan. The Kasakh government is privatizing state assets, encouraging small business, and taking seriously the business of doing, of building real democratic institutions. Do not forget, voluntarily, Kazakhstan unilaterally disarmed its nuclear arsenal.

The United States needs to recognize that this secular nation, bordered by Russia on the north, China to the east, and several nations to the south and west that may export Islamic fundamentalism, really wants an economic and strategic relationship with us.

They understand that we want to see evolving liberal democratic institutions, free markets, and a real respect for human rights. We need to understand that Kazakhstan has only 7 years under its belt as an independent nation, and that they are taking important steps in these matters.

Let us look at Kazakhstan as an evolving partner, and let us reward their important steps in the fields of democracy, free markets, human rights with a stronger diplomatic and economic relationship. I invite my colleagues to visit this beautiful country and see for themselves the progress that is being made.

MEDICARE PAYMENTS AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today we kicked off Voices Against Violence, a congressional teen conference with a goal of involving young people

in a nationwide debate on ways for legislators and others to prevent youth violence, both nationally and in local schools and communities. More than 400 students from across the country will participate in the teen conference. I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) for his leadership in making this conference possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss an issue that is very important to the citizens of my State of Florida. The cuts in the Medicare and Medicaid payments to the health providers in my State are causing a crisis.

With Florida's large senior population, no other single payer impacts health care providers in the State more than Medicare. With almost 3 million Medicare beneficiaries, Florida has the second largest Medicare population in the United States. Almost one in every five Floridians qualify for Medicare, the highest percent of any State in the country. Unfortunately for those hard-working people, the cuts in Medicare funding in the Balanced Budget Act are preventing them from getting the care that they need and deserve.

Florida's home health agencies, skilled nursing facilities, medical equipment providers, Teaching and Disproportionate Share Hospitals are in a state of crisis. Especially in the rural areas, these organizations are being forced to bear an extreme financial burdens, causing them to stretch their budgets dangerously thin and forcing them to provide substandard care to their patients.

Every single day in my office I receive calls and letters from patients and their providers who tell me horror stories of people being sent home early from the hospital, having therapy cut off before they are properly healed, and being denied care altogether. This is not right.

I hear from my colleagues that we have a huge surplus that we need to give back to the people. This Congress can start giving it back to the people by providing adequate funding for the health care for our seniors who have already paid for it and so desperately need it.

I am glad to hear that my colleagues on the Committee on Ways and Means are moving forward on this issue, and I am looking forward to working with them to restore these dangerous cuts. Let us do the right thing and restore these massive cuts in Medicare reimbursement.

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BE AWARDED TO PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, just a short time ago, we passed a resolution allowing the use of the rotunda for a ceremony to grant a Congressional

Gold Medal to President and Mrs. Ford. I would like to give some background information on that award. I was very pleased to sponsor the bill that would grant them this medal because they have served this country so well for so many years.

What is unique about this medal, this particular medal, and what is different than any previous medal in history, is that it will be awarded to both President and Mrs. Ford. I believe it very important to recognize the part that both of them played in the history of our country.

Mrs. Ford contributed a great deal to the health of the women of this Nation by discussing very frankly and openly the fact that she had breast cancer. Now, that may seem rather mundane today, but at the time she developed breast cancer, she was the First Lady in the White House. Breast cancer was not discussed in polite society. It was whispered about. As a result, many women did not know what caused breast cancer. They did not know about self-examination. They did not know what treatments were available.

Mrs. Ford announced that she had this terrible disease. She described the symptoms to this Nation. She worked with the media to publicize the nature of breast cancer. She was very effective in alerting the women of this Nation to the need for breast examination and treatment.

In addition to that, later on in life, due to a number of pain medications that she was taking and the use of alcohol, Mrs. Ford recognized the need for treatment for alcoholism and drug dependency and started the Betty Ford Clinic. This has been a life-saving institution for many, many people. She still takes a personal interest in it, still visits with new patients as they come in, and has been very effective in helping many people recover from substance abuse or alcohol abuse.

President Ford, of course, is well known as the President who healed our Nation after the resignation from office of President Nixon. However, since we have almost a generation elapsed since President Ford held office, I find many people simply are not aware of what was happening at that time and the incredible turmoil that this Nation felt at the time that President Nixon was undergoing examination by the Congress, facing impeachment, and eventually resigning from office.

When President Ford took that office, he, in a very calm and deliberate manner, proceeded to heal this Nation. He restored order. He restored financial stability. He reduced interest rates. He improved the economy and showed that our government could survive a crisis like that and function well. For this, he deserves our thanks and our commendation.

Because of this and because of the actions of both President and Mrs. Ford, I thought it very deserving that they receive the Congressional Gold Medal. This will be presented to them next