

to cosponsor H.R. 7 so we can give current and future generations of schoolchildren the tools to be the brightest in the 21st century.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. ROUKEMA addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE HANDLING OF THE MANAGED CARE ISSUE IN THE 106TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the managed care issue was left unfinished in the 105th Congress. On the House side, the Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights was defeated by just five votes when it came to the Floor for a vote. It was considered on the Floor as a substitute to the Republican leadership's managed care bill, which did pass and which, in my opinion, was worse than having no reform at all.

The Republican bill was a thinly-veiled attempt to protect the insurance industry from managed care reform, and not a single Democrat voted for it. It was a show of solidarity on the Democratic side unlike any in the last Congress, and for a very good reason. The Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights is the best, most comprehensive managed care reform bill in Congress today. It was reintroduced in February by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) with over 170 cosponsors and the support of over 170 patient, physician, medical, and consumer groups.

We are hoping to have this bill moved through the regular committee process at some point this year. Unfortunately, in the last Congress the Republican leadership, fearful of what might happen if it allowed the regular committee procedures to take their course, bypassed the committee process.

Mr. Speaker, the big question in this Congress, once again, centers on how the Republican leadership is going to proceed with the managed care issue. If the preview we got last week in the Senate is any indication, the American people are once again going to be sold out by the Republican Party in an act of appeasement to the insurance industry.

Last Thursday the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee repeated the same charade we witnessed last year and approved a managed care bill designed to protect the insurance industry and not the patients. During consideration of that bill, Democrats offered 22 amendments, and 20 of them were rejected.

Included among the rejected amendments were measures to increase access to emergency care, to increase ac-

cess to specialists, to establish a minimum hospital stay for women who have had mastectomies, and to provide people who have life-threatening illnesses with access to clinical trials.

Every single one of these provisions is in the Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights, and every single one of them is opposed by the insurance industry.

The insurance industry-GOP alliance was also successful in protecting the two most important impediments to managed care reform. That is, one, the prohibition on the right to sue your health plan if you are denied needed care and your health suffers as a result; and two, the insurance companies' present ability to define "medical necessity".

Democrats on the Senate committee offered amendments that would have given patients the right to sue health plans, but not one Republican voted for it, nor did any Republicans vote for the Democratic amendment to allow doctors and patients and not the insurance companies to determine what is medically necessary. In other words, Mr. Speaker, under the plans approved by the Republicans in the Senate, insurance companies will have no incentive whatsoever to stop denying needed care because they would be able to do so with impunity.

Following up on the momentum to quash meaningful managed care reform started by the Senate Republicans, yesterday two anti-managed care coalitions announced that they are launching a massive ad campaign to quash managed care reform. We have seen this before. Yesterday's Congress Daily reported that the Business Roundtable is planning to spend more than \$1 million on radio advertisements. The Health Benefits Coalition, the other group mentioned in yesterday's Congress Daily, intends to follow the lead and spend \$1 million on anti-managed care television ads over the coming congressional recesses.

Let there be no doubt, Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership and big business are working hand-in-hand to prevent patients from getting the protections from abuse that they clearly need. The unfortunate thing, Mr. Speaker, is that this is what the American people want. They want the Patients' Bill of Rights, they wanted managed care reform.

This is the issue that more of my constituents talk to me about on a regular basis on the street, writing me letters, calling the District offices. They realize that right now they do not have the protections that they need as patients to have good care, to have good quality care.

The easy thing and really the best thing for us to do here for the patients, for the consumers, for the American people, is to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights in its entirety and without delay. The Republicans may have the money and they have big business on their side, but the Democrats have what counts: that is, the support of the

American people. The Republicans, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, would be wise to listen to what the people are saying.

IMMIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

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

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to talk about an issue that I think has enormous impact on the future of our Nation.

Unlike many issues that we deal with, such as crime or taxes, which are likewise dealt with by our colleagues at the State and local level, this issue is one which is exclusively the responsibility of the Federal Government. That issue is immigration.

As a Nation of immigrants, many of us are reluctant to deal with this matter because we are concerned that we will be accused of being prejudiced or having an ethnic bias. However, the overriding issue is not that we are a Nation of immigrants, but that we are primarily a Nation of laws. We have immigration laws which define who will be allowed into our country.

The increasingly evident truth is that our immigration laws are being flaunted, and the Federal agency charged with enforcing these laws, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the INS, is failing to fulfill the obligations to our citizens. It is appropriate to ask why. Is it because this administration has made the enforcement of our immigration laws a very low priority, and if so, why is that so?

The facts are very clear. There are an estimated 5.5 million illegal immigrants currently living in the United States. An additional 275,000 to 300,000 illegal aliens are coming to our country every year. Even though the INS removed a record 169,000 illegals last year, it was not as many as entered the country illegally during the same time period.

What are the consequences of this invasion by illegals? While it is true that many of these individuals are hard-working people who keep certain industries and enterprises supplied with needed labor, the costs to local school systems, health care agencies, and law enforcement groups are tremendous.

About 221,000 foreign-born criminals are in Federal, State, and local jails. About two-thirds of them are illegal immigrants. Another 142,000 are on parole or probation, and are subject to being deported under the provisions of the 1996 Immigration Reform Act. An additional 161,000 have disappeared after receiving deportation orders. That means that there are approximately a half a million aliens who have committed crimes for which they are either in our prisons or are being subject to being deported, and that, Mr. Speaker, is almost the amount of people who constitute an entire congressional district.

In many parts of this country, my congressional district included, no criminal court can be held without the availability of an interpreter. Drive-by shootings by gangs made up of illegal immigrants has become commonplace.

What is the Federal Government doing about this problem? Since 1995, the budget for the INS has been substantially increased so that it is almost \$4 billion for the current fiscal year. Congress has mandated that the INS add at least 1,000 new border agents every year until the year 2001, but has this been done? Is the INS using its \$4 billion to enforce the letter and spirit of the 1996 Immigration Reform Act? The answer is a resounding no.

In his latest budget, President Clinton has decided to cut off funding to hire the new 1,000 agents. It seems that the Clinton administration has decided not only to undermine Congress' get-tough immigration laws, but to completely ignore them altogether.

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The Border Patrol is only the most obvious component of a system of law enforcement that should cover both the border and interior enforcement. Even though it continues to receive most of the attention, about 40 percent of all illegal aliens in this country came here legally and simply overstayed their visas. Therefore, interior enforcement is an integral part of protecting the integrity of our borders.

Yet the INS field offices were recently told that their interior enforcement budgets would be cut by as much as 90 percent from last year's level. The INS's eastern region, covering States east of the Mississippi River, was told that its enforcement budget for fiscal year 1999 has been cut from more than \$10 million down to \$1 million.

The INS has begun a policy of releasing illegal aliens that they feel they cannot afford to detain. The INS plans to release at least 2,000 illegal immigrants, including people who have been convicted of arson, armed robbery, manslaughter, drug trafficking, alien smuggling and firearms violations. A spokesman for the INS acknowledges that detainees who get released probably will not ever be deported, since 9 out of 10 are never found again.

Agents in field offices are being told, "If you need money to do a case," then simply "do not send it up." A senior investigating official said that without more detention space, there is little point in arresting people because "they get home before you do."

The administration's refusal to allocate the appropriate funding for interior enforcement is not even the biggest hindrance to the enforcement of our laws. In what is called a major shift in strategy, the INS has decided to discontinue such practices as traditional workplace raids and instead emphasize only operations against foreign criminals, alien smugglers, and document fraud.

What should be done about this situation? Mr. Speaker, I call on you and my other colleagues to let officials at the INS and in the administration know that ignoring or undermining our Nation's laws will not be tolerated. I call on each of us to throw a spotlight on the INS's operations, to call them to task on laws that are being flouted and policies that have seemingly been forgotten.

I would ask us all, if we wish to maintain our Nation of immigrants, of letting those who wait in line and bide their time and abide by the laws that we have in place so that they can come legally in this country, then we must not ignore the fact that our immigration lawyers are being ignored and the policies are not being enforced.

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

(Mr. GREEN of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous to take the time previously allotted to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, March is Women's History Month, and I come to the floor of the House this evening to salute the mothers of Women's History Month, the National Women's History Project, known as "The Project." The Project is from the 6th Congressional District in California, the district that I am proud to represent.

About a year ago I traveled to Seneca Falls, New York to celebrate with my colleagues and our Nation's women the 150th anniversary of the women's rights movement. This was truly a special occasion because Sonoma County, which is my home district, is the birthplace of the National Women's History Project, the organization responsible for the establishment of women's history month and a leader in the 150th anniversary of the women's rights celebration.

The Project, the Women's History Project, is a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1980, committed to providing education and resources to recognize and celebrate women's diverse lives and historic contributions to society. Today they are repeatedly

cited by educators, publishers, and journalists as the national resource for information on U.S. women's history.

Thanks to the Project's effort, every March boys and girls across the country recognize and learn about women's struggles and contributions in science, literature, business, politics, and every other field of endeavor.

As recently as 1970, women's history was virtually unknown, left out of school books, left out of classroom curriculum. In 1978, I was the chairwoman of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women. At that time, I was astounded by the lack of focus on women.

Under the leadership of Mary Ruthsdotter and through the hard work of these women, the celebration of International Women's Day was expanded and declared by Congress to be National Women's History Week. Together, the women of my district and the Project succeeded in nationalizing awareness of women's history.

As word of the celebration's success spread across the country, State Departments of Education honored Women's History Week; and, within a few years, thousands of schools and communities nationwide were celebrating National Women's History Week every March.

In 1987, The Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Due to their efforts, Congress issued a resolution declaring the month of March to be Women's History Month. Each year since then, nationwide programs and activities on women's history in schools, workplaces, and communities have been developed and shared.

In honor of Women's History Month, I want to praise Mary Ruthsdotter, Molly MacGregor, and Bonnie Eisenberg, who are the birth mothers for this very notion, which makes me, by the way, the midwife. I want to acknowledge Lisl Christy, Cindy Burnham, Jennifer Josephine Moser, Suanne Otteman, Donna Kuhn, Sunny Bristol, Denise Dawe, Kathryn Rankin, and Sheree Fisk Williams. These are the women now working at the Project. All of these women serve as leaders in the effort to educate Americans of all ages. They educate them about the contributions of women in our society.

Under strong and thoughtful leadership by Molly MacGregor, the National Women's History Project educated America about the 150th anniversary of the women's rights movement.

The Project was repeatedly called upon by the National Park Service, in particular the Women's Rights National Historical Park, to help them integrate women's history into their exhibits. Their "Living the Legacy of Women's Rights" theme also made it possible for thousands of communities, local schools, employers, and businesses to support and celebrate the 150th anniversary. The Project also launched a media campaign which educated the press about the proud history of the women's movement.