

York Times on Saturday, April 10, earlier this month, that talked about the differences between the Democrats and the Republicans on the issue of patient rights:

“Just about everyone on Capitol Hill professes interest in producing legislation that protects patients from unfair health insurance practices. But the prospect of actually passing meaningful protections as opposed to talking about it is uncertain. President Clinton tried to whip up support for Democratic proposals but the Republicans are balking at Democratic plans as too burdensome on the managed care industry. Yet it is the Democratic proposals that more fully reflect the recommendations of a presidential advisory commission to improve health plan quality. The Republican Senate bill, S. 326, sponsored by Senator JEFFORDS of Vermont, is too limited to accomplish that purpose. The bill, which was approved by the Senate HELP, or Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on a straight party line vote of 10-8, contains some consumer protections but it is unacceptable because most of the provisions would apply only to 48 million individuals covered by plans in which large employers act as their own insurers, leaving 110 million Americans in other plans unprotected. The Republican bill would grant appeal rights to an additional 75 million privately insured individuals but those rights would be quite restrictive. Appeals to an external reviewer would be allowed only when an insurer refused to pay for a procedure on the grounds that it was not medically necessary or was experimental. Critics say this would give health plans power to limit appeals by simply asserting that a denial is not based on medical necessity. It would exclude appeals where a plan unilaterally decided that the benefit was not covered under the contract, even if medical judgments were involved in that contract interpretation. The Republican bill does not adequately ensure access to specialty care by allowing a patient to see an out-of-network specialist if the plan has an insufficient number of specialists available. Both the Senate Democratic proposal, which has White House support, and a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senators JOHN CHAFEE, JOSEPH LIEBERMAN and others would be substantially stronger in allowing external review of coverage disputes and defining medical necessity and in giving enrollees greater rights to take health plans to court. The insurance lobby has already embarked on a media blitz to defeat any new regulations as too costly but consumer protections under the Democratic plan would increase health plan costs by only 2.8 percent, according to Congressional Budget Office estimates made last year.

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“Health plans should be made to deliver what they promise their enrollees and held accountable when they fail.”

Mr. Speaker, I think that New York Times editorial really sums up what I am trying to say tonight which is the fact of the matter is that if the Patients' Bill of Rights, the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights, would be substantially stronger in almost every aspect of managed care reform over the Republican proposal.

Now I just wanted to briefly mention again the important areas where the Patients' Bill of Rights, a Democratic bill of rights, really provides for a very good protection for patients.

Once again and most importantly, the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights allows doctors and patients rather than insurance company bureaucrats to make medical decisions using the principles of good medicine.

In addition, it would first guarantee access to needed health care specialists. The Democratic bill provides access to emergency room services when and where the need arises. The Democratic bill provides continuity of care protections to assure patient care if a patient's health care provider is dropped. The Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights gives access to a timely, internal and independent external appeals process, and the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights assures that doctors and patients can openly discuss treatment options and not be gagged because the insurance company says that you cannot talk about something that is not covered.

The Patients' Bill of Rights would also assure that women have direct access to OB/GYN, and finally and almost as important really as the medical necessity issue is that the Democrats Patients' Bill of Rights provides an enforcement mechanism that ensures recourse for patients who have been maimed or die as a result of health plan actions.

Mr. Speaker, I sound very partisan this evening, and I do not mean to suggest that there are not Republican Members on the other side of the aisle that are supportive of the Patients' Bill of Rights or the types of protections that I think that are needed in a comprehensive HMO reform bill. I know that there are Members on the other side that would like to see these types of protections provided under the law. But the bottom line is that the Republican leadership, which is in charge of the House, keeps producing legislation or keeps proposing legislation both in the House and in the Senate that does not adequately protect patients, and I think it is very important that we not only move ahead in this session of Congress and quickly on HMO reform, but that we move ahead with an HMO reform that adequately protects patients' rights, that is comprehensive and addresses what I consider the major issue that my constituents and most Americans seem to be concerned about at this time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. YOUNG of Florida (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today from 1:30 until 3:30 on account of a family emergency.

Mr. TAUZIN (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and on April 29 on account of family illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NAPOLITANO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WHITFIELD) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. REGULA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes each day, today and on April 29.

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BEREUTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WHITFIELD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. OBEY, for 5 minutes, today.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee did on this day present to the President, for his approval, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 800. To provide for education flexibility partnerships.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, April 29, 1999, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1761. A letter from the Administrator, Commodity Credit Corporation, Department

of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Recourse Loan Regulations for Honey (RIN: 0560-AF62) received March 16, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1762. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Nectarines and Peaches Grown in California; Revision of Handling Requirements for Fresh Nectarines and Peaches [Docket No. FV99-916-2 FR] received April 22, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1763. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Almonds Grown in California; Revision of Reporting Requirements [Docket No. FV99-981-1 FR] received April 22, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1764. A letter from the the Director, the Office of Management and Budget, transmitting Cumulative report on rescissions and deferrals, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 685(e); (H. Doc. No. 106-52); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

1765. A letter from the Comptroller, Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Navy; to the Committee on Appropriations.

1766. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting the annual certification of the nuclear weapons stockpile by the Secretaries of Defense and Energy and accompanying report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1767. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: Oklahoma [OK-18-1-7415a; FRL-6312-5] received March 16, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

1768. A letter from the Chief, Policy and Program Planning Division, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Computer III Further Remand Proceedings: Bell Operating Company Provision of Enhanced Services [CC Docket No. 95-20] 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review—Review of Computer III and ONA Safeguards and Requirements [CC Docket No. 98-10] received April 26, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Commerce.

1769. A letter from the Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting the Integrity Act reports for each of the Executive Office of the President agencies, as required by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3512(c)(3); to the Committee on Government Reform.

1770. A letter from the Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, transmitting the FY 2000 Annual Performance Plan for the Federal Emergency Management Agency; to the Committee on Government Reform.

1771. A letter from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting the 1998 annual report on the agency's compliance with the Inspector General Act and the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3512(c)(3); to the Committee on Government Reform.

1772. A letter from the Administrator, Panama Canal Commission, transmitting a report of activities under the Freedom of Information Act for the calendar year 1998, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(d); to the Committee on Government Reform.

1773. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Vessels Greater Than 99 feet (30.2 m) LOA Catching Pollock for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Bering Sea [Docket No. 990115017-9017-01; I.D. 022399B] received March 5, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

1774. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Central Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 981222314-8321-02; I.D. 021999A] received March 5, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

1775. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific cod by Catcher Vessels using Trawl Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands [Docket No. 990304063-9063-01; I.D. 040999A] received April 21, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

1776. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries; Adjustments to the 1999 Summer Flounder Commercial Quota [Docket No. 981014259-8312-02; I.D. 040599E] received April 21, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

1777. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule—Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Western Regulatory Area in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No. 990304062-9062-01; I.D. 041299B] received April 21, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

1778. A letter from the Program Analyst, Office of the Chief Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Federal Aviation Administration Policy on Enforcement of the Hazardous Materials Regulations: Penalty Guidelines—received April 22, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1779. A letter from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting the quarterly report on the expenditure and need for worker adjustment assistance training funds under the Trade Act of 1974, pursuant to 19 U.S.C. 2296(a)(2); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BLILEY: Committee on Commerce. H.R. 459. A bill to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for FERC Project No. 9401, the Mt. Hope Waterpower Project (Rept. 106-119). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 154. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1480) to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the United States Army Corps of Engineers to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. 106-120). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. GEJDENSON (for himself, Mr. GEPHARDT, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CLAY, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. FROST, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. VENTO, Mr. BALDACCI, Mr. FILNER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. DIXON, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. OLVER, Mr. STRICKLAND, Ms. LOFGREEN, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. SANDLIN, Mr. FORD, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. HILLIARD, Mr. McNULTY, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. WEINER, Mr. MOORE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. BERKLEY, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. WYNN, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mr. WISE, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. WEXLER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. DINGELL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. STARK, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SABO, Ms. WATERS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. BLAGOJEVICH, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H.R. 1590. A bill to provide retirement security for all Americans; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Government Reform, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PELOSI (for herself, Mr. GEPHARDT, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. BROWN of California, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DIXON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. FARR of California, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FORD, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. FROST, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HORN, Mr. INSLEE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs.