

get HCFA to change its rules mostly on account of HCFA knowing that if it changes a rule, for example, in Nebraska, it is going to be changing rules for all other 49 States as well and could add significant costs to the program. So HCFA ends up being very inflexible, I argue not through any fault of its own but through the fault of the way the law is written.

The second objective of this legislation is that we provide comprehensive choice in a new legal environment, where the citizens will have more opportunity to make their case to a public board and the public board will have much greater expertise in making decisions about how to create a competitive environment that will enable HCFA to compete as well as private sector companies to come on line and offer more choice at lower cost to beneficiaries.

The third thing is we say that a prescription benefit should and must be considered in a comprehensive solution with Medicare reform. We cannot separate it. You cannot take a prescription benefit for a Medicare beneficiary and separate it and create an entirely new program without considering the need for comprehensive change in the program. It is much more likely that we will satisfy concerns of taxpayers that we not end up with a program that has an open-ended cost to it and much more likely, especially with the structural change of the board, that the rules will be written so the marketplace cannot only develop affordable products, but develop creative products that we are apt to see increasingly being asked for by our health care delivery system.

I am very pleased to be a cosponsor of this legislation. I hope we are able to get a markup in the Senate Finance Committee next year. I hope this becomes the basis for bipartisan reform. All too often this is a subject matter that lends itself to demagoging on both sides. Medicare has become a verb and a form of political art. Hopefully, as a consequence of it beginning in a bipartisan fashion, it will end up in a bipartisan fashion, and the rhetoric will be much more tame and much more honest as well.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I would also like to take a minute to talk about a companion program to Medicare, and that is Social Security.

A Social Security beneficiary will say Social Security and Medicare are in the same program, indeed, in the same act, in the same law. As far as the beneficiary is concerned, one program serves the needs of the other.

The General Accounting Office today released a public report which evaluates five plans that have been presented to the people, five plans that the people should look to and evaluate to answer the question: Is this a plan I support?

Let me list what those plans are. The first plan is the status quo, what I call in a nonpejorative fashion the do-nothing plan; the do-nothing plan calls for maintaining current law, waiting until manana, and fixing the program 10 years, 20 years from now. GAO evaluates the do-nothing plan, which, by the way, has 500 cosponsors at the moment in the House and the Senate. The GAO evaluated the plan that Senator GREGG, myself, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator BREAU, and three others in the Senate have introduced. The bill number is S. 1383. The House companion bill to S. 1383 is H.R. 1793, a companion bill which has nine cosponsors. The GAO evaluated that bill as well.

The GAO also evaluated S. 1831. That is the President's reform plan. It has been introduced in the Senate. The GAO also evaluated the Archer-Shaw proposal, though Chairman ARCHER and Representative SHAW have yet to introduce their reform plan in the form of a bill. They evaluated the details of the Archer-Shaw proposal that were provided to them. And finally, GAO evaluated Representative KASICH's proposal. I do not know what its number is or how many people are on it, but it is a specific piece of legislation that has been introduced.

The GAO has done a very useful service, in my view, for a couple of reasons.

Reason No. 1 is that GAO finally identifies the status quo as a plan. In other words, you cannot not be for something. If you are not on a bill, you are supporting the status quo, you are supporting existing law. There are serious consequences to supporting existing law.

The GAO evaluated all five of these plans.

Secondly, GAO outlined for the first time the eight financial and budgetary criteria by which these five proposals ought to be judged by the American public. In the report, they ask:

First, does it reduce pressure of Social Security spending on the budget?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. KERREY. How much time did I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator had 5 minutes under a unanimous consent agreement to proceed.

Mr. KERREY. I ask unanimous consent that I be given 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, there were eight other questions on the financial side.

Question No. 2: Does it reduce the national debt?

Question No. 3: Does it reduce the cost of Social Security as a percent of GDP?

Question No. 4: Does it increase national savings?

Question 5: Does it solve the 75-year actuarial solvency problem? In other words, can it keep the promise to all

270 million beneficiaries both eligible today and out into the future?

Question No. 6: Does it create new, undisclosed contingent liabilities?

Question No. 7: Does it increase payroll taxes or place an obligation on general revenues?

And question No. 8: Are there safety valves to accommodate future growth in the program?

These are the key financial questions. The GAO has laid out an evaluation of the five dominant plans that have been offered by Members of Congress to the public.

In addition, GAO attempts to do an analysis of the administration and implementation issues in each plan.

Finally, GAO attempts to evaluate whether or not equity—generational equity—and progressivity have been taken into account in each plan. Equity and progressivity are always important. Social Security is a very progressive program to beneficiaries.

I hope that this GAO report gets a little bit of air time and a little bit of consideration by Members. I hope that particular attention will be paid to the do-nothing, status quo plan.

There are consequences to the do-nothing plan. The current status quo plan dramatically increases debt and interest costs in the future. This large debt will have a major impact on the tax burdens and interest rates of future workers. GAO comments very unfavorably when it measures the status quo approach against its eight financial criteria. There are very negative consequences for both current beneficiaries and future beneficiaries and the American taxpayers for doing nothing.

I urge my colleagues to take a closer look at this GAO report—and to really understand the cost tradeoffs between different approaches to Social Security reform. The battle cry all year long has been to save Social Security first. We created an elaborate lockbox mechanism so we could do it. My hope is that next year, with the assistance of GAO and this report, we will see an increasing number of Members who are enthusiastic about putting their names on specific legislation to reform Social Security.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, following the vote in relation to the drug amendment to the bankruptcy bill, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of calendar Nos. 399 to 400, the nomination of Carol Moseley-Braun to be ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate then immediately proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination and, following the vote, the President then immediately be notified of the Senate's

action, and the Senate then proceed to the nomination of Linda Morgan and, following that confirmation vote, the President be immediately notified and the Senate then resume executive session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I announce for the leader that in light of this agreement, there will be three rollcall votes between noon and 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1999—Continued

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we can proceed, then, to our adoption of some amendments on which we have agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1722, AS MODIFIED; 2530, AS MODIFIED; 2546; 2749; 2750; 2758, AS MODIFIED; 2768; 2772, AS MODIFIED; 2528; 2664; AND 2665, EN BLOC

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be considered en bloc, and modifications be considered agreed to, where noted, that the amendments be agreed to, en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate.

I will give you the amendment Nos.: Amendment No. 1722 by Mr. ROBB, as modified; amendment No. 2530 by Mr. BYRD, as modified; amendment No. 2546 by Mr. BENNETT; amendment No. 2749 by Mr. FEINGOLD dealing with PACs; amendment No. 2750 by Mr. FEINGOLD dealing with FEC fine; amendment No. 2758 by Mr. ROTH and Mr. MOYNIHAN, as modified—I will send that modification to the desk—amendment No. 2768 by Mr. LEVIN; amendment No. 2772 by Mr. LEVIN, as modified—that modification will be sent to the desk—amendment No. 2528 by Mr. LEAHY; amendment No. 2664 by Mr. KOHL; and amendment No. 2665 by Mr. KOHL. I send the modifications to the desk.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the last two are by the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL; is that right?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Yes.

Mr. LEAHY. Of course, I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (Nos. 1722, as modified; 2530, as modified; 2546; 2749; 2750; 2758, as modified; 2768; 2772, as modified; 2528; 2664; and 2665) were agreed to as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1722, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide that duties of a trustee shall include providing certain information relating to case administration, and for other purposes)

On page 51, strike line 24 and insert the following:

“(7) provide information relating to the administration of cases that is practical to any

not-for-profit entity which shall provide information to parties in interest in a timely and convenient manner, including telephonic and Internet access, at no cost or a nominal cost.

An entity described in paragraph (7) shall provide parties in interest with reasonable information about each case on behalf of the trustee of that case, including the status of the debtor's payments to the plan, the unpaid balance payable to each creditor treated by the plan, and the amount and date of payments made under the plan. The trustee shall have no duty to provide information under paragraph (7) if no such entity has been established.”; and

AMENDMENT 2530, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To make an amendment with respect to credit card applications and solicitations that are electronically provided to consumers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. PROVISION OF ELECTRONIC FTC PAMPHLET WITH ELECTRONIC CREDIT CARD APPLICATIONS AND SOLICITATIONS.

Section 127(c) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1637(c)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) INCLUSION OF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION PAMPHLET.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Any application to open a credit card account for any person under an open end consumer credit plan, or a solicitation or an advertisement to open such an account without requiring an application, that is electronically transmitted to or accessed by a consumer shall be accompanied by an electronic version (or an electronic link thereto) of the pamphlet published by the Federal Trade Commission relating to choosing and using credit cards.

“(B) COSTS.—The card issuer with respect to an account described in subparagraph (A) shall be responsible for all costs associated with compliance with that subparagraph.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2546

(Purpose: To amend certain banking and securities laws with respect to financial contracts)

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under “Amendments Submitted.”)

AMENDMENT NO. 2749

(Purpose: To clarify the bankruptcy jurisdiction over insolvent political committees)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. NO BANKRUPTCY FOR INSOLVENT POLITICAL COMMITTEES.

Section 105 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“(e) A political committee subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Election Commission under Federal election laws may not file for bankruptcy under this title.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2750

(Purpose: To make fines and penalties imposed under Federal election law nondischargeable)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. FEDERAL ELECTION LAW FINES AND PENALTIES AS NONDISCHARGEABLE DEBT.

Section 523(a) of title 11, United States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (14A) the following:

“(14B) fines or penalties imposed under Federal election law;”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2758, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide for tax-related bankruptcy provisions)

Beginning on page 181, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 203, line 17, and insert the following:

TITLE VII—BANKRUPTCY TAX PROVISIONS

SEC. 701. TREATMENT OF CERTAIN LIENS.

(a) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN LIENS.—Section 724 of title 11, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “(other than to the extent that there is a properly perfected unavoidable tax lien arising in connection with an ad valorem tax on real or personal property of the estate)” after “under this title”;

(2) in subsection (b)(2), by inserting “(except that such expenses, other than claims for wages, salaries, or commissions which arise after the filing of a petition, shall be limited to expenses incurred under chapter 7 of this title and shall not include expenses incurred under chapter 11 of this title)” after “507(a)(1)”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(e) Before subordinating a tax lien on real or personal property of the estate, the trustee shall—

“(1) exhaust the unencumbered assets of the estate; and

“(2) in a manner consistent with section 506(c), recover from property securing an allowed secured claim the reasonable, necessary costs and expenses of preserving or disposing of that property.

“(f) Notwithstanding the exclusion of ad valorem tax liens under this section and subject to the requirements of subsection (e), the following may be paid from property of the estate which secures a tax lien, or the proceeds of such property:

“(1) Claims for wages, salaries, and commissions that are entitled to priority under section 507(a)(4).

“(2) Claims for contributions to an employee benefit plan entitled to priority under section 507(a)(5).”.

(b) DETERMINATION OF TAX LIABILITY.—Section 505(a)(2) of title 11, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “or” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) the amount or legality of any amount arising in connection with an ad valorem tax on real or personal property of the estate, if the applicable period for contesting or redetermining that amount under any law (other than a bankruptcy law) has expired.”.

SEC. 702. TREATMENT OF FUEL TAX CLAIMS.

Section 501 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) A claim arising from the liability of a debtor for fuel use tax assessed consistent with the requirements of section 31705 of title 49 may be filed by the base jurisdiction designated pursuant to the International Fuel Tax Agreement and, if so filed, shall be allowed as a single claim.”.

SEC. 703. NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR A DETERMINATION OF TAXES.

Section 505(b) of title 11, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting “at the address and in the manner designated in paragraph (1)” after “determination of such tax”;