

beneficiaries in smaller communities of America.

What we are seeing, again, is the bottom line winning out over the rights, the interests, and the health of patients. We are watching as Medicare patients are dumped on the street. Is that the HMO industry's idea of reform? It is my idea of a travesty, and it is one that we need to bring to the attention of America. And we, as the Senate, need to expunge from this dark page, page 252, and its companion, page 253, from our records. I hope we will, at the first opportunity, do so.

I thank the Chair.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, July 16, 1999]

HMOs WILL DROP 327,000 MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES NEXT YEAR

(By David S. Hilzenrath)

About 327,000 of the 6.2 million Medicare beneficiaries nationwide who belong to HMOs will be abandoned by their health plans next year, the government said yesterday.

Of those, 79,000 will be unable to enroll in another health maintenance organization as 41 health plans withdraw from the federal health insurance program for the elderly and disabled and another 58 stop serving Medicare beneficiaries in particular areas, according to the agency that runs Medicare.

Medicare beneficiaries who lose their HMO coverage have two or three alternatives: They can choose another HMO, if one is available; they can revert to standard fee-for-service Medicare coverage; and they can buy "Medigap" policies to supplement the standard benefits.

But there is no guarantee that they can find a Medigap policy with prescription drug coverage, which is one of the main reasons some Medicare beneficiaries choose HMOs.

In Maryland and Virginia, 33,000 beneficiaries—26.9 percent of those with HMO coverage—will lose their current coverage, and 27,000 will be unable to replace it with another HMO.

An HMO industry group recently predicted that more than 250,000 beneficiaries would be affected by the changes, but the Department of Health and Human Services released the final tally based on notices HMOs were required to submit by July 1.

This year, a larger number of beneficiaries—407,000—were abandoned by their HMOs, but a smaller number—51,000—were left without an HMO option.

The managed-care industry says HMOs are pulling out of Medicare because the government isn't paying them enough, but the government says the HMOs' actions reflect broader industry trends.

MANAGED HEALTH CARE REFORM—HMO LIABILITY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, over the past few days, my Democratic colleagues and I presented a number of arguments which clearly laid out the need for managed health care reform.

The ability to hold insurance companies accountable for their decisions is a critical element in ensuring the overall quality of patient protections.

While we will continue to present our case in a variety of ways, I would like to take this opportunity to relate a story that was shared with me just a few weeks ago about a young girl from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Anna, 6 years old at the time, was a very active and energetic young girl and excited about entering first grade that year. One evening, Anna went with her parents and her brothers and sisters to a softball game. She and other children went off to play in an area near the softball field. Suddenly, some of the children came running towards the adults, screaming for help. Anna had caught her foot in a gate. Her foot was bleeding profusely and she was in agonizing pain. She was immediately rushed to the local emergency room.

After Anna was examined by her doctor and after a conversation with her family's HMO, it was determined that Anna would not be admitted to the hospital that night.

Anna's family reluctantly took her home that night where she was in pain throughout the evening. Her family was forced to watch their small, frail daughter lay in bed in agony.

The next morning, her mother was worried because Anna's foot was purple, swollen, and cold. Anna was in tremendous pain and had a fever. Her parents did not hesitate any longer and Anna was rushed back to the emergency room.

This time she was admitted immediately and treated on an emergency basis, but it was too late and her family's worst fears were realized. Anna had a raging infection that had already destroyed half of her foot which had to be amputated.

Anna had two surgeries and spent 6 weeks in the hospital. She will live with this deformity forever.

Unbelievably, her family's HMO has delayed paying for the 6 weeks she was in the hospital to have her foot amputated and grated at a cost of \$23,000.00.

Anna's family paid for the protection of health insurance. What they received in return was a possible delay of critical medical service which has left Anna disfigured and has ruined her family's credit.

To the amazement of anyone who hears this story, under current law, Anna's HMO will not be held accountable for their decisions.

Under the Democratic plan, Anna and her family would have legal recourse like any other American has in this country when they are wronged by a business.

The Democratic plan simply states that if a patient is injured or killed as a result of an insurance company's decision, the insurance company can be held liable under state law.

Let me be clear. This will not open the flood gates to more litigation and raise the cost of health insurance.

It does not override states' rights. It simply says that whatever rights a given state chooses to grant shall not be blocked by federal legislation.

Without adoption of the Democratic plan, stories like Anna's will continue to be told. I understand Anna is quite a young girl and she will go on. But she and her family will struggle with this nightmare.

The Democratic plan is not about lawyers—it is about people like Anna and protecting their rights.

Anna, her family and millions like them in this country are waiting for us to do just that.

THE ILLEGAL PURCHASE OF FIREARMS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, we've all heard the saying, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try, again." It's a lesson we've been taught since childhood. It's a lesson used to teach children to be persistent and work hard if they want to achieve their goals. It is also a lesson that applies to the purchase of firearms, and it is one that Benjamin Smith knew all too well.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, the majority of Americans were celebrating the birth of our nation. But the long holiday weekend produced yet another tragedy, made possible by the free flow of deadly firearms. A single man, Benjamin Smith, with a hatred for life, allegedly used a .22 caliber handgun and a .380 caliber semi-automatic handgun to murder two people and wound nine before ending his own life.

The alleged gunman had a history of violence, a protection order filed against him, and belonged to an organization that espouses hatred toward minorities, yet, he was still able to purchase deadly firearms, all because he was persistent. Approximately one week before his killing spree, he had applied to purchase firearms from a licensed firearms dealer in Illinois. He obtained an owner identification card, filled out an application, and expected to retrieve his weapons shortly thereafter. A few days later, however, he returned to buy the weapons and was rejected by the licensed dealer after failing to pass the Illinois state background check. Unfortunately, Benjamin Smith knew his lesson, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Benjamin Smith knew of other means to obtain firearms. He knew that although he was not permitted to purchase a gun from a licensed dealer, he would have few problems buying a gun on the street, from an unlicensed dealer. He knew that federal law requires that background checks be conducted by licensed dealers, but he also knew of a large secondary market in the United States that permits the free flow of weapons in to the hands of those who can not pass background checks. And, because he knew how easy it is to obtain a gun in the United States, Benjamin Smith was able to try, again, to purchase firearms for his killing spree.

Smith's second attempt to purchase guns was successful and as a result, this dangerous young man was equipped with the two handguns believed to be used in the several Independence Day shootings. Because of this secondary market that allows easy accessibility of firearms, the nation is

again mourning the loss of innocent lives lost to gunfire. And although the American public expresses continual outrage that federal firearms laws are not strong enough to prevent persons like Benjamin Smith from purchasing guns, Congress has not yet responded. We need to try, try again to pass meaningful legislation that will put an end to this senseless slaughter.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 15, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,625,473,322,843.46 (Five trillion, six hundred twenty-five billion, four hundred seventy-three million, three hundred twenty-two thousand, eight hundred forty-three dollars and forty-six cents).

One year ago, July 15, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,529,723,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-nine billion, seven hundred twenty-three million).

Five years ago, July 15, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,624,152,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred twenty-four billion, one hundred fifty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 15, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$473,130,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-three billion, one hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,152,343,322,843.46 (Five trillion, one hundred fifty-two billion, three hundred forty-three million, three hundred twenty-two thousand, eight hundred forty-three dollars and forty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

VETERANS' SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the "Veterans' Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act."

By establishing the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, this bill will provide significant assistance to entrepreneurial veterans. Additionally, this legislation works to aid veterans through networking, supervision, microloans and loans, disaster assistance, and data collection programs. This bill provides assistance to many veterans who have the skills, talent and motivation to successfully own and operate small businesses but may not have the right connections or the ability to hire consultants. This bill is a means by which the federal government can help veterans help themselves.

Veterans have fought and sacrificed to protect the United States and the freedoms Americans cherish. Veterans' programs such as this provide us, in a small way, the capability to repay those veterans for their extraordinary contributions to our nation. These veterans have already given so much to our country and many of them want to contribute even more by starting small

businesses. I believe we owe it to them to do everything we can to help them in these endeavors.

Accordingly, I am proud to join The American Legion, the Disabled Veterans Association, the Reserve Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the many other military and veteran service organizations in support of this bill.

ADOPTION AWARENESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, I introduced the Adoption Awareness Act of 1999. The objective of this legislation is to provide proactive support for adoption as an option for women with unplanned pregnancies, and for couples who are unable to conceive a child due to problems with infertility. The bill would require certain federally-funded health centers to provide adoption counseling by trained adoption counselors.

The Adoption Awareness Act makes grants available to national adoption organizations to provide staff training in adoption counseling to eligible health centers. These health centers include Title X funded clinics, community health centers, migrant health centers, centers for the homeless, school-based clinics, and crisis pregnancy centers. The objective is to ensure that woman and their families are provided professional, compassionate, and understanding counseling about adoption.

This legislation also provides that faith-based charities may receive grants to provide adoption counseling training services on the same basis as any other nongovernmental provider without impairing the religious character of such institutions and without diminishing the religious freedom of those receiving services.

Finally, this legislation authorizes the appropriation of \$7,000,000 for fiscal year 2000 for purposes of providing adoption counseling training.

There are no unwanted babies in this country. Across America there are countless couples who cannot conceive a baby, and struggle, often hopelessly, to adopt a child. All the while, tragically, 1.5 million children are aborted every year. There are parents who desperately want the opportunity to provide these children with a loving home, and the gift of life itself.

The purpose of this legislation is not to incite a debate about abortion. The purpose of this legislation is to stress the value, indeed the sanctity of life, and the importance of adoption as an alternative to abortion. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that a woman struggling with the tragic choice of abortion is provided professional and compassionate counseling on adoption. A mother deserves to know that there are millions of couples out there who are willing, indeed desperate, to provide her child with a loving home. A mother deserves to know

that ending her child's life is not the only choice she has.

I speak from personal experience. I am an adoptive father. I am a staunch supporter of the choice of adoption. Every mother pondering the agony which is abortion deserves the hope this legislation offers. Every unborn child deserves the opportunity for life that this legislation offers.

I believe in the sanctity of human life. I have always fought for the rights of the unborn child, and the preservation of the intrinsic value of all human life. At approximately 1.5 million abortions every year, that is some 35 million children killed since the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Mr. President, regardless of your beliefs, pro-abortion, or pro-life, that is a staggering and tragic statistic. This legislation offers a chance at reducing that number. It is not the answer, but it does provide hope to couples struggling desperately to adopt children. As important, it provides hope to that mother or couple who is standing on the tragic precipice of abortion, ensuring that they know there is another choice.

Every child embodies the hope for our future. It is our children, in their purity and their innocence, that hope is born again in an increasingly cynical world. Abortion is the great tragedy of our time. America is not a country of kings. America is not defined by any single geographic characteristic, by any single race or creed. America is an idea, a collection of high ideals, eloquently articulated, inscribed in our Constitution, and embodied on our institutions.

Abraham Lincoln, in pondering the profound wisdom and our founding fathers, wrote of them: "This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the universe. This was their lofty, and wise, and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to his creatures . . . In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on . . . They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children, and their children, and the countless myriads who would inhabit the Earth in other ages."

Mr. President, confronting the tragic figures on abortion I have previously cited, I cannot help but question whether we can continue on this course and maintain hope that the intrinsic value of every human life, that principle out of which all the rights of man flow, can survive. The Adoption Awareness Act represents one step in the effort toward restoring the sanctity of life as the foundation of our system of human rights.

A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, today is an anniversary that almost no one will