

SMALL BUSINESS COMPETITION
PRESERVATION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4945) to amend the Small Business Act to strengthen existing protections for small business participation in the Federal procurement contracting process, and for other purposes.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4945 which will amend the Small Business Act to strengthen existing protections for small business participation in the Federal procurement contracting process, and for other purposes. My support for this bill is based on my concern that larger businesses may be influencing activities to group or bundle requirements so that they exceed \$100K. Clearly, one of the original intents of the Small Business Act was to assist small businesses in competing for smaller Federal Government contracts. Ideally requirements under \$100K should be awarded to small businesses. However, loose interpretations of the statute and a tendency toward bundling have caused small businesses to be cut out of the procurement process.

The strength of this nation's economy is based on the contributions of small businesses. When these small businesses demonstrate that they have the ability to meet the requirements established in the contract, they should not be unfairly shut out of the process because of their size or lack of access. This legislation goes a long way toward eliminating the unfair practice of bundling a number of small contracts into one and awarding the contract to a larger business. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING HOLY NAME PARISH
ON THEIR 140TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in the years from the founding of Holy Name Parish in 1859 to this testimonial dinner in the new millennium, the community has witnessed many changes. One constant in the sea of change is the service and dedication of Holy Name Parish. The church established itself as a beacon of hope from its humble beginnings in the home of a local farmer to opening the first coeducational school in Cleveland.

Reverend Thomas V. O'Donnell unselfishly serves in the footsteps of the visionaries who came before him to shepherd the flock known as Holy Name Parish. As her spiritual leader he will guide the parish in continuing to accept her role as not only a monument of bricks and mortar but as a center of community life to the Harvard and Broadway area.

Be it resolved that I, STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, do hereby welcome the featured speaker Bishop Anthony Pilla. May you be proud of the achievements of the last 140

years and may you prosper into the next millennium.

"Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for His Name . . . And there rejoice before the Lord you God." Dt. 12:12

MEDICARE PATIENT ACCESS TO
TECHNOLOGY ACT

HON. JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4395, the Medicare Patient Access to Technology Act which has been introduced by my colleagues JIM RAMSTAD of Minnesota and KAREN THURMAN of Florida.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4395 has one simple objective: to speed the delivery of new medical technologies to patients covered under the Medicare program. Unfortunately, under our current system, it now takes up to five years before Medicare beneficiaries have access to new medical technologies thanks to an outdated and inefficient system now in place at the Health Care Financing Administration—HCFA. This system, which is nearly 35 years old, cannot effectively deal with the rapid pace of Medical innovation and has been responsible for denying needy patients the products and technologies that improve and save lives.

In my district, Mr. Speaker, some of the most advanced medical research in the world is currently underway. Doctors and researchers at Mass. General Hospital, Children's Hospital, Boston University Medical Center and Tufts University School of Medicine are devoting their lives and careers to the development of new medical technologies that will help us live longer and more effectively treat a wide range of diseases.

Once these technologies are fully developed and approved by the FDA as "safe and effective" their availability in the health care setting is delayed by a major roadblock—HCFA, where the new medical product must wait years for bureaucrats to decide whether Medicare will cover and pay for this technology. According to a report released this summer, HCFA can take up to five years to come to these decisions. Five years of bureaucratic consideration, while our seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries wait and wait.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Medicare recipients are not the only ones to suffer because of HCFA's flawed reimbursement system. Third party payers—insurers such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield and health maintenance organizations—take their cue from Medicare when it comes to reimbursing new medical products. So, this ineffective reimbursement system can and does have a much larger, negative impact on all of us.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, the House of Representatives will consider legislation aimed at addressing the shortcomings of the Medicare reforms contained in the Balanced Budget Refinement Act passed in the first session of this Congress. When we review this legislation, it is likely that we will be asked to consider inclusion of the Medicare reimbursement reforms contained in H.R. 4395.

I urge my colleagues to support this effort and take advantage of this unique opportunity

to modernize and streamline HCFA's reimbursement system for new medical technologies.

H.R. 4395 will require HCFA to: Provide Congress with an annual report on its national coverage actions; annually update the payment levels for new medical products to reflect changes in medical technologies and practice; establish new procedures for reimbursement of new diagnostic tests; and improve the coding process, expediting the processing of reimbursement decisions.

Mr. Speaker these changes will establish order and predictability to HCFA's Medicare reimbursement process and, more importantly, could reduce the amount of time it takes for new medical products to reach Medicare beneficiaries by one-half.

Before we conclude our work in the 106th Congress, let's take action to ensure that Medicare recipients can count on the many benefits of new medical technologies. Let's include the provisions of H.R. 4395 in the amendments to the Balanced Budget Refinement Act.

ONE YEAR AFTER TAIWAN'S
DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following article to my colleagues:

Many of us still remember the horrific earthquake that hit Taiwan on September 21, 1999. More than 2400 people were killed, hundreds were seriously injured and missing and 100,000 people were left homeless. About 1,000 homes and businesses were destroyed. Property damage amounted to billions of U.S. dollars.

The Republic of China government was swift and efficient in its rescue efforts. Rescue and relief operations were carried out by local and international specialized teams from 21 countries. Now a year later, the Republic of China has fully recovered from its economic losses, and the government has done everything possible to help its quake victims. For those families with quake-related deceased members, they have received cash grants and for families with collapsed or half-collapsed houses, they have received special loans to help them rebuild their homes. The government, with the help of the private sector, has also set up shelters for affected families.

In addition, Republic of China President Chen Shui-bian on June 1 this year set up a cabinet-level commission to oversee all reconstruction efforts. This commission will have members from all government agencies and ministries, and the commission's goal is to ensure that all affected families will have the chance to resume the lives they led before the quake.

In short, the Republic of China government has spared no effort in helping its quake-affected families. Its financial outlay in reconstruction has amounted to nearly US\$ 5 billion. Indeed, the quake brought out the best in the Taiwan people. It has accentuated their ability to overcome adversity. They have learned to deal with the trouble and get on with their lives.