

that I had to spend \$1 million plus \$100,000 a year in expenses, and my competitor only had to spend \$50,000 a year.

I heard talk earlier about the difficulty of competing with China and imports. Well, I compete with on a regular basis with Taiwan, Korea and Mexico, and I would be willing to bet that none of these countries have even the slightest idea about trying to stop pollution. Yet in our country we have forced people to spend that kind of money.

I do wish the government would stop and think of what they are doing. They do not know what they are doing, and they ought to forget it.

RIGHT TO GO HOME ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, last year I introduced modest legislation that would allow seniors in managed care plans to return after a hospitalization to the retirement community they know, instead of a network HMO nursing home somewhere else. I offered the Right to Go Home Act on behalf of seniors who had been needlessly separated because of HMO rules from their loved ones and from their usual source of care.

It is difficult to believe a health plan would treat a hospitalized senior this way, until you speak to Medicare+Choice enrollees, privatized Medicare, if you will, who experienced it firsthand.

Take, for example, a couple in New Hampshire, separated after the husband's hospitalization because the HMO required him to be discharged to a nursing home in Maine, a 40 minute drive from the community where he and his wife had lived. Or a couple in Florida separated when their HMO required the wife to recuperate from a hospital stay in a nursing home 20 miles away from the retirement community. The husband had difficulty visiting her, and she died later at the HMO member facility.

A retirement community, a nursing facility, is more than just a health care provider; it is a home. Forced relocation means moving vulnerable patients, taking them away from providers experienced in these individual's chronic care needs. It places them in new, strange surroundings during that fragile period of recovery. It separates them from emotionally supportive family and friends.

Under our legislation, HMOs would not be required to pay a dime more for care provided at the beneficiary's retirement facility than in a network facility. What my bill would do is what HMOs should not need our prompting to do; that is, it allows hospitalized nursing home patients to recuperate near their loved ones.

Yet the HMO industry opposes this legislation. They lobbied for changes in the bill that effectively would exclude all but a small subset of seniors. Fortunately, the Committee on Ways and Means did not buckle under the pressure of the HMO industry. They included their legislation in their Balanced Budget Act Restoration proposal.

If the HMO lobby does not kill it, this legislation may make it into law. But the fact that Congress has to take action to ensure the well-being of hospitalized seniors in Plus Choice plans and the fact that the HMO industry would lobby against this bill should tell us something.

Those are facts Congress and the public should keep in mind as George W. Bush promotes commercial health insurance, as he promotes commercial health maintenance organizations, as a replacement, as a replacement, for Medicare.

George W. Bush believes Medicare should be turned over to private insurers. That is not conjecture, that is fact. Visit his web site. His plan is to establish a 4 year commission to restructure Medicare so that it is no longer a "one-size-fits-all big government plan."

Translate that into English. It means simply turning Medicare over to the private insurance industry. HMO's do some things well, but putting Medicare beneficiaries first is not one of them. How many times do we have to intervene with a managed care plan or other insurer on behalf of our constituents before the industry's loyalties become clear to us? Their loyalty is to their stockholders. No surprise there. It is verified every time managed care plans make decisions that fly in the face of good medicine.

Unshakeable loyalty to the bottom line results in decisions often not in the best interests of Medicare enrollees. Unconditional loyalty to the bottom line is what creates the need for a Patients' Bill of Rights. Unwavering loyalty to the bottom line explains why health insurers market to the healthiest individuals, the most profitable, and do everything in their power to avoid the rest; let government do that.

It explains how private managed care plans contracting with Medicare can enroll seniors one year, make money from them, and then cavalierly drop them the next when they are not quite as profitable. They promise supplemental benefits they cannot deliver; they blame the government then for problems that they, the insurance company-HMOs, create.

It explains how the managed care industry has the nerve, the outright arrogance, to lobby against legislation that costs them nothing and means the world to seniors in nursing homes. It is a disgrace.

The traditional Medicare program is different. It is universal, it is reliable, it is accountable to the public. Medicare's loyalty is to beneficiaries and to

taxpayers. It is an undiluted commitment. Medicare offers choices in ways that actually make a difference in terms of health care quality in patient satisfaction.

Medicare does not tell beneficiaries which providers they can see; HMOs do. Medicare does not dictate which hospitals and nursing homes are permissible; HMOs do. Medicare does not discriminate between beneficiaries based on their health status; HMOs do. Medicare offers reliable coverage that does not come and go with the stock market.

So before voting for George W. Bush, I urge every American to think carefully about the wholesale changes he has in mind for Medicare.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m. today.

1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord God,

The seasons change. Across this Nation the days grow shorter. Time passes quickly, and when death strikes any house, all human flesh seems vulnerable. Grant eternal peace to the Honorable BRUCE VENTO. Be now strength for his family, his staff and all who suffer at this moment.

Help all Your people to use the gift of time prudently, for You alone are the judge of the living and the dead.

During the time given to us on this Earth, may we choose to live as You would have us live, so that in the end we may have accomplished Your holy will and come to live in Your presence now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCING THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE BRUCE VENTO

(Mr. OBERSTAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, with great sadness, a sense of personal loss and loss to this House, I take the well to announce that at 11:20 this morning, our colleague, Congressman BRUCE VENTO, succumbed to mesothelioma, asbestos-induced cancer of the lung and peritoneal cavity.

BRUCE, in his 12th term, served the people of his district nobly, with dignity, with passion, with purpose. He championed environmental causes. He championed the needs of the homeless, the voiceless, the voteless, those who could not do for themselves. He was an advocate for working people. He voted consistently and worked vigorously and strenuously, to champion the cause of organized labor in this body. He brought a balance to all that he undertook, and with a science teacher-like care for fact and detail, he pursued his causes with only the greatest of dignity and of skill.

My prayers go out to his wife Sue, to his children, to his constituents. I thank the Reverend Chaplain for the prayer for BRUCE and for his family. I ask all of our colleagues to join their prayers with those of the Vento family.

SECURITY FOR OUR SENIORS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, we all have responsibilities in life. Unfortunately, the Clinton-Gore administration is once again irresponsibly blocking the road to prosperity for American people.

Our seniors should not be forced to choose between food and medicine, and under our debt relief plan they will not have to make this tough choice. This Republican-led Congress wants to put 100 percent of Social Security and Medicare surpluses in a lockbox, and create another lockbox strictly for debt reduction to protect all our senior citizens. We want to guarantee that the surplus created by the tax dollars of the hardworking people of America be used for debt reduction and not big government spending.

Our fiscal discipline will ensure that as we continue to pay off the debt, we will have more money to save for Social Security and Medicare. And this means more security and a better quality of life for our seniors.

Let us keep the Washington bureaucrats out of our surpluses, out of our pockets, and out of our medicine cabinets. Let us build true prosperity and

security for every American, young and old alike.

THE CHINA THREAT

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Speaker, China will get \$100 billion from Uncle Sam this year in trade surplus. With our cash, China is buying missiles like they are going out of style. Now, if that is not enough to arm yourself, after being told by the CIA that in fact China has those missiles aimed at America, Janet Reno appointed independent counsels for two love triangles.

Beam me up. Monica may be a threat to fidelity but China happens to be a threat perhaps to our national security. It is time to wise up, Congress, and wake up and smell the treason, and it is time to have a full and thorough investigation into this China mess and Janet Reno.

I yield back the fact that China has more soldiers than America has citizens, men, women and children combined.

TAIWAN

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Taiwan as they celebrate their 89th National Day, which anniversary is today. There is a great deal to celebrate for the people of Taiwan. Taiwan has an even distribution of wealth and its citizens enjoy a high standard of living. Taiwan has been able to prosper in recent times despite its limited resources and relatively large population.

President Chen Shui-bian and the political leaders of Taiwan have done an excellent job of leading their country into the 21st century. Their effort to rejoin the United Nations and to maintain a dialogue with the Chinese mainland are admirable. Taiwan deserves a voice in these and other international organizations. There is no question that President Chen wants a serious dialogue with the mainland. He seeks stability in the Taiwan Strait and wants peace to prevail in the Asia Pacific region.

May God continue to bless our friends in the Republic of China on Taiwan. May Taiwan continue to shine as a beacon of prosperity and freedom in the Far East. And may Taiwan play an active role in international affairs and coexist with the Chinese mainland.

A PRESIDENT SHOULD TELL THE TRUTH

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, should someone who does not believe in facts be our President?

Fiction: AL GORE recently claimed that his mother-in-law pays more than \$100 for arthritis medicine. Fact: The figure came from a Democratic Party study. Newspapers reported AL GORE was not even sure his mother-in-law was taking any medication or had arthritis.

Fiction: AL GORE's sister tragically died of lung cancer and he vowed never to accept tobacco money as campaign contributions. Fact: Just 4 years later he spoke to the tobacco industry, said he was one of them, and raised \$100,000.

Fiction: AL GORE's campaign literature once claimed he was a "brilliant student." Fact: He received C's and D's in college and dropped out of law school and divinity school.

Fiction: AL GORE claimed credit for inventing the Internet in the 1990s. Fact: The Internet has been used by government and educational institutions since the 1970s.

Fiction: AL GORE recently said that if elected President he would penalize producers of Hollywood's graphic sex and violence. Fact: Just 6 days later he attended a fund-raiser by Hollywood producers and raised \$4 million.

Madam Speaker, we need a President who tells the truth.

TRIBUTE TO K. GUNN MCKAY

(Mr. HANSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HANSEN. Madam Speaker, on October 6 last week our former colleague K. Gunn McKay passed away due to complications of cancer.

Gunn served in this House from 1971 to 1981 and was chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Construction of the Committee on Appropriations.

Gunn's family comes from Huntsville, Utah, and as a relatively young man his father passed away. Gunn worked diligently to help his brothers and sisters to gain an education and took over many of the responsibilities of the family.

As a public servant, Gunn admirably served the people of the First Congressional District of Utah, he served in the Utah legislature, and as chief of staff to former Governor Cal Rampton. He also was a very devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and served in many positions of leadership.

Gunn and his wife Donna are the parents of 10 children, and he has a remarkably fine family composed of both his brothers and sisters as well as his own children. I am sure that many of my former colleagues and his former colleagues join with me in expressing condolences to the McKay family at the time of Gunn's passing.

ON SCORE

(Mr. TANCREDO asked and was given permission to address the House