

the injection of private-sector competition in managing benefits. My sense is, whatever additional reforms we pursue in Congress need to incorporate this kind of private-sector approach. By allowing the private sector to compete for the business of Medicare beneficiaries, both the Medicare system and the beneficiaries under it would stand to benefit from greater choice and greater flexibility when it comes to meeting their health care needs.

In fact, Senators BREAUX and Senator FRIST have recently drafted a new proposal: Breaux-Frist 2000, the Incremental Bipartisan Medicare Reform and Prescription Drug Proposal. The proposal calls for a new Medicare agency outside of the Health Care Financing Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services, which would administer the competitive relationship between traditional Medicare Fee for Service plans and private plans, and would include a prescription drug benefit.

Is this ultimately the approach we should take? I do not know. However, I am committed to exploring efforts like these that place a premium on reform or modernization, while attempting to improve benefit levels for beneficiaries through private-sector competition.

One of the important improvements that has received a lot of attention lately is the provision of a prescription drug benefit. I think most of us would agree that were Medicare to be developed today, it would include a benefit of this type. Now, I am not a pharmacologist, nor am I a medical doctor, so when I first introduced my own prescription drug plan for Medicare over a year ago, I was amazed at the discoveries that have taken place in this area. The most remarkable thing to me is that not only do many of these new, innovative products slow the rates of disease progression, but they often create measurable differences in the number of emergency room visits, expensive and invasive procedures, and even deaths. Prescription drugs today have an enormous financial impact in terms of reducing overall health care costs over the long term and should be incorporated into the Medicare system.

To that end, I introduced the Medicare Ensuring Prescription Drugs for Seniors Act, or MEDS. My bill was an early attempt to heighten the debate surrounding prescription drugs, and at the same time provide a plan that would address the needs of the nearly one third of senior citizens in this country who currently lack any form of prescription coverage. We have all heard the frightening stories of the choices that many seniors are forced to make when it comes to paying for prescription drugs. Unfortunately, many of these stories have been used to stir the political cauldron over the past several months. But the reality is that making choices between food, shelter, and medicine is all too common among our neediest seniors. MEDS was introduced to help these people.

My plan would add a prescription benefit under the already existing Part B of Medicare, without creating or adding any new overly bureaucratic component to the Medicare program. It works like this: The Part B beneficiary would have the opportunity to access the benefit as long as they were Medicare eligible. Those with incomes below 135 percent of the nation's poverty level would be provided the benefit without a deductible and would only be responsible for a 25 percent co-payment for all approved medications. I think the neediest American seniors who are Medicare eligible should be able to access the benefits of medical technology like everyone else, and while they will be responsible for 25 percent of the costs, I believe the benefit will reduce the necessity for tough decisions between food and medicine. Most important, MEDS has no benefit cap. This allows seniors to access the care they need when they need it, for as long as they need it.

My bill also provides relief for seniors above the 135 percent threshold who may be facing overwhelming prescription drug costs because of the number of medications they take, or the relative expense of them, by paying for 75 percent of the costs after a \$150 monthly deductible is met. A provision of this type, in addition to the fact that there is no cap on the benefit, is necessary for those who confront high monthly prescription costs.

An important part of my plan is that it is not universal and will not displace anyone from the private insurance coverage that they currently have and probably prefer. Rather, it is offered to provide prescription coverage to those who really need it.

Is MEDS perfect? Will it appeal to everyone? Maybe not. But it includes principles that I believe must be included in order for any prescription drug bill to hit its mark.

In closing, Mr. President, let me say that the challenge before us today is to enable Medicare to shape and adapt itself to reflect the realities of an ever-changing health care system. After 35 years of endless tinkering, we have a real opportunity to make it more responsive, more helpful, and more attuned to the needs of current and future retirees and disabled persons in this country. I can think of no better birthday gift for a program that has served so many—and for the aging, baby-boom generation—than a reinvigorating shot in the arm to Medicare that will deliver it into the twenty-first century and keep it healthy for years to come. This is something to which I am wholly committed.●

TRIBUTE TO REBECCA RYAN

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Rebecca Ryan, who recently retired after more than twenty years of teaching in the South San Francisco Unified School District. Ms. Ryan is a shining

example of what a dedicated teacher can do.

Becky Ryan began her teaching career in 1972 in the South San Francisco Unified School District. After 28 years, she is ending a career that has been filled with many accomplishments.

With over twenty years of experience teaching English as a Second Language Classes, Becky recognized that many immigrant parents, because of their inability to speak English, were reluctant to become involved in their children's education. This lack of parental involvement was detrimental to the children, and led her to found the Spruce Literacy Project at Spruce Elementary School in South San Francisco. This unique program teaches immigrant parents, mostly mothers, how to read, write, and speak English. With a better understanding of the English language, parents are able to more fully participate not only in their children's education, but also in their local communities.

The profound effect the Spruce Literacy Project has had was most evident last year, when the mothers she taught banded together to oppose funding cuts to the program. Becky has been praised for her can do spirit and her encouragement of students.

She has truly made a lasting impact on her students. She has spent her career helping to open doors to those who would have otherwise found them closed. A good teacher affects many lives, and the greatest compliment I can give to Rebecca Ryan is that she helped so many students become productive and successful citizens.

Mr. President, I ask that an article from the Friday, June 9 edition of the San Mateo County Times on Ms. Ryan's retirement be reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my statement.

[From the San Mateo County Times, June 9, 2000]

BREAKING BARRIERS AND FORGING BONDS

(By Laura Linden)

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO—Many teachers upon retirement can look back and know that they had a positive influence on their students. But perhaps few have helped students make such profound life transformations as Rebecca Ryan, founder of the Spruce Literacy Project at Spruce Elementary School.

Through the program, Ryan has taught dozens of immigrant parents, mostly Spanish-speaking mothers, how to speak, read and write English. The idea is the parents will get involved with their kids' educations once the language barrier is knocked down.

But according to several mothers who attended a retirement breakfast for Ryan on Wednesday, her work has radiated outward, affecting every corner of their lives. Ryan, a petite Anglo with energy to burn and a deft command of Spanish, has pumped the women up with praise and encouragement, propelling them into American society with a fearless attitude.

"I'm not afraid of anything now," said 30-year-old Carmen Reyes, whose child attends Spruce Elementary.

Reyes' outlook is a psychological world away from the way she felt when she arrived in this country in 1986 with zero English

skills and a lot of fear about a society she didn't understand. "I was scared for everything, everybody," she recalled.

Other mothers echoed this sentiment.

Before taking the literacy class, rites of parenthood like teacher-parent conferences or PTA meetings were unfathomable, they said. The thought of meeting with a teacher, principal or doctor gripped them with fear. They were worried and frustrated when they could not read a letter sent home from school. Often they were too shy, or even ashamed, to try to find out what it was about.

So assured are these women now that when the district threatened to cut the Spruce Literacy Project last year, the mothers vociferously rallied to save it. They are also in the midst of a fund-raising drive to replace Spruce Elementary's dilapidated and unsafe kindergarten playground.

The women still grapple with English, but they've learned that stumbling through the language is the only way to get better.

"I can go to the doctor and to the dentist and the bank. I don't need much help," said 27-year-old Cristina Rodriguez, who immigrated from Mexico when she was 15 but only recently learned to write. Her newfound skills helped her move up from dishwasher to server at Denny's, she said.

Ryan started teaching English-as-a-second-language classes in the South San Francisco Unified District in 1972 and still wears a ring that students gave to her that year. A few of those students were at the breakfast on Wednesday.

"It's so great to see how well they've done," Ryan said. "One woman's son has graduated from Stanford, another one's child became a doctor."

When asked why she is retiring, Ryan just said "it's time." She said she will keep in touch with her former students through sewing and reading groups.

Teaching ESL for 20 years, Ryan saw that parents were avoiding contact with their kids' schools. She decided that the cultural and language barriers hurt the school as much as the families and founded Spruce Literacy Project in 1992 with a grant from the Peninsula Community Foundation. The program will continue with a new teacher next year, Ryan said.

On the Spruce Elementary campus, the program is a convenience for the mothers who take their children to class and then head to their own class down the hall.

Gladis Pacheco, 39, said two years of the literacy classes helped her land a good job for Catholic Charities in San Francisco. She came to this country from El Salvador 18 years ago and for most of those years she avoided speaking English. "In my country I was a secretary but here I was a maid," she said.

Now she can help her three young children with their homework. Her daughter, Martha, sent a letter to Ryan thanking her for teaching her mom English.

"It was so cute, I didn't even know that she did that," Pacheco said.

Perhaps the best part is knowing the children are proud of you, Rodriguez said. "My daughter was sad before when I couldn't speak English but now she's happy," she said.

Perhaps the best example of Ryan's 28 years in the district is the Flores family.

Alejandro Flores, 20, and Florisela Flores, 23, took ESL classes from Ryan when they were in elementary school. Now students at San Francisco State University, the siblings say they gained a sense of well-being from Ryan that continues to this day.

"I was a silent kid, very lonely. But (Ryan) was so nice to me. I liked computers and she rewarded me with computer time," said

Alejandro, who along with his studies runs a Web design company with a friend.

Florisela said she wouldn't be studying three majors with the intention of getting a master's degree in computer science if Ryan hadn't shown her the power of persistence 15 years ago.●

INTEL CORPORATION'S TEACHER HOUSING FUND

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, when discussing the profound effect of California's Silicon Valley on our Nation's economy, we too often focus on just the raw numbers: staggering revenues, high profile IPOs and the bottom line.

Today, I want to focus on an outstanding example of good corporate citizenship in Silicon Valley intended to promote home ownership and honor teachers at the same time.

As many of my colleagues know, the Silicon Valley is in the midst of a housing crisis which makes owning a home an impossibility for most teachers. The region's high cost of living makes it extremely difficult to recruit and retain talented teachers.

Today, I am pleased to inform the Senate that Intel Corporation and the Santa Clara Unified School District have joined forces to create an innovative pilot program designed to help public school teachers buy homes in one of the country's most expensive housing markets: the Intel Teacher Housing Fund.

Under this new program, which will be administered by the Santa Clara County Unified School District, Intel will provide the fund with \$1.25 million over the next five years. Eligible teachers will receive \$500 each month from the fund to help with mortgage payments, for up to five years.

I applaud Intel's leadership in forging the much-needed local partnerships that will help lead to solutions to Silicon Valley's affordable housing crunch. It is my hope that other companies will follow Intel's lead, and show the world that America's high-technology firms are the hub and the heart of the 21st century economy.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a treaty which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

REPORT ON THE EXPANDED THREAT REDUCTION INITIATIVE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 118

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying

report; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

To the Congress of the United States:

Enclosed is a report to the Congress on the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative, as required by section 1309 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, June 27, 2000.

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 119

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, June 27, 2000.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 10:45 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 4241. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1818 Milton Avenue in Janesville, Wisconsin, as the "Les Aspin Post Office Building."

H.R. 3903. An act to deem the vessel M/V MIST COVE to be less than 100 gross tons, as measured under chapter 145 of title 46, United States Code.

H.R. 3701. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3118 Washington Boulevard in Arlington, Virginia, as the "Joseph L. Fisher Post Office Building."

H.R. 3699. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8409 Lee Highway in Merrifield, Virginia, as the "Joel T. Broyhill Postal Building."

H.R. 3018. An act to designate certain facilities of the United States Postal Service in South Carolina.

H.R. 2952. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Orchard Park Drive in Greenville, South Carolina, as the "Keith D. Oglesby Station."

H.R. 2591. An act to designate the United States Post Office located at 713 Elm Street in Wakefield, Kansas, as the "William H. Avery Post Office."

H.R. 2460. An act to designate the United States Post Office located at 125 Border Avenue West in Wiggins, Mississippi, as the "Jay Hanna 'Dizzy' Dean Post Office."