

Army nominations beginning John R. Hinson and ending Joseph M. Scaturro, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Army nominations beginning Cathi A. Kiger and ending Timothy R. Warrick which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Army nominations beginning Jay F. Daley and ending Donna S. Woodby, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Army nominations beginning Paul M. Amalfitano and ending James S. Hoggard, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Army nomination of Stephen M. Bloomer. Army nomination of Theodore A. Mickevicius.

Army nomination of Hugo E. Salazar. Marine Corps nomination of David A. Suggs.

Marine Corps nomination of Chandler P. Seagraves.

Navy nomination of Arthur R. Stiffel IV. Navy nomination of Jeffrey Ball.

Navy nominations beginning Enein Y H Aboul and ending Kimberly A. Zuzelski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Navy nominations beginning Christopher H Berkers and ending Richard L. Zimmermann, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Navy nominations beginning David R. Brown and ending George B. Younger, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 17, 2002.

Army nominations beginning Jeffrey W. * Abbott and ending XI22, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on September 18, 2002.

Marine Corps nomination of Brent A. Harrison.

Navy nomination of Edward T. Moldenhauer.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 3018. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to enhance beneficiary access to quality health care services under the medicare program, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 3019. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of sites associated with the life of Cesar Estrada Chavez and the farm labor movement; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ENZI:

S. 3020. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the Cheyenne, Wyoming, metropolitan area; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. VOINOVICH (for himself, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. LEVIN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 3021. A bill to establish in the State of Ohio a wildlife refuge complex comprised of land designated as national wildlife refuges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ROBERTS:

S. 3022. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to suspend the requirement that rental payments under the conservation reserve program be reduced by reason of harvesting or grazing conducted in response to a drought or other emergency; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 3023. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program to expand and strengthen cooperative efforts to restore and protect forests in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 3024. A bill to designate Catoctin Mountain Park in the State of Maryland as the "Catoctin Mountain National Recreation Area", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 3025. A bill to reauthorize and improve the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection Program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

S. 3026. A bill to amend chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, to provide for greater fairness in the arbitration process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 710

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 710, a bill to require coverage for colorectal cancer screenings.

S. 1226

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1226, a bill to require the display of the POW/MIA flag at the World War II memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

S. 1394

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1394, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 1655

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1655, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit certain interstate conduct relating to exotic animals.

S. 1739

At the request of Mr. CLELAND, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. MILLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1739, a bill to authorize grants to improve security on over-the-road buses.

S. 2219

At the request of Mr. EDWARDS, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2219, a bill to provide for compassionate payments with regard to individuals who contracted the human immunodeficiency virus due to provision of a contaminated blood transfusion, and for other purposes.

S. 2480

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BURNS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2480, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to exempt qualified current and former law enforcement officers from state laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns.

S. 2566

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2566, a bill to improve early learning opportunities and promote school preparedness, and for other purposes.

S. 2613

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2613, a bill to amend section 507 of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to authorize additional appropriations for historically black colleges and universities, to decrease the cost-sharing requirement relating to the additional appropriations, and for other purposes.

S. 2672

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2672, a bill to provide opportunities for collaborative restoration projects on National Forest System and other public domain lands, and for other purposes.

S. 2821

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2821, a bill to establish grants to provide health services for improved nutrition, increased physical activity, obesity prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 2892

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2892, a bill to provide economic security for America's workers.

S. 2903

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2903, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a guaranteed adequate level of funding for veterans health care.

S. 2922

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CLELAND) was added as a cosponsor of

S. 2922, a bill to facilitate the deployment of wireless telecommunications networks in order to further the availability of the Emergency Alert System, and for other purposes.

S. 2949

At the request of Mr. HOLLINGS, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2949, a bill to provide for enhanced aviation security, and for other purposes.

S. 2965

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2965, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the quality of care for cancer, and for other purposes.

S. 3009

At the request of Mr. WELLSTONE, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 3009, a bill to provide economic security for America's workers.

S. CON. RES. 11

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 11, A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress to fully use the powers of the Federal Government to enhance the science base required to more fully develop the field of health promotion and disease prevention, and to explore how strategies can be developed to integrate lifestyle improvement programs into national policy, our health care system, schools, workplaces, families and communities.

S. CON. RES. 94

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 94, A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that public awareness and education about the importance of health care coverage is of the utmost priority and that a National Importance of Health Care Coverage Month should be established to promote that awareness and education.

S. CON. RES. 138

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 138, A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Health And Human Services should conduct or support research on certain tests to screen for ovarian cancer, and Federal health care programs and group and individual health plans should cover the tests if demonstrated to be effective, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 142

At the request of Mr. SMITH of Oregon, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) and the Senator

from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 142, A concurrent resolution expressing support for the goals and ideas of a day of tribute to all firefighters who have died in the line of duty and recognizing the important mission of the Fallen Firefighters Foundation in assisting family members to overcome the loss of their fallen heroes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 3018. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to enhance beneficiary access to quality health care services under the medicare program, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today, along with Senator GRASSLEY, to introduce the "Beneficiary Access to Care and Medicare Equity Act." This legislation is critical to ensuring access to quality, affordable health care for the 40 million Medicare beneficiaries nationwide.

Medicare is one of America's great success stories. Since its inception 36 years ago, Medicare has provided millions of elderly and disabled Americans with insurance coverage they would not have otherwise had. When Medicare was enacted, about half of America's elderly lacked health insurance. Now nearly all are covered by Medicare.

Over the past three decades, Medicare has undergone significant changes, including changes in the way that health care providers are reimbursed. In response to rising Medicare expenditures, Congress has responded with complex cost-containment mechanisms: diagnosis related groups, or DRGs, for hospital inpatient services in the early 1980s, a fee schedule for physicians' services in 1989. And in 1997, Congress passed the Balanced Budget Act, which mandated prospective payment systems for hospital outpatient departments, home health agencies, and skilled nursing facilities. Gradually, Medicare has changed from a cost-based system to one of prospective, flat-rate payment.

The significant changes in payment policy have resulted in a few bumps along the way, particularly those enacted as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The BBA was a well-intended attempt to get our Nation's fiscal house in order and extend the life of the Medicare trust fund. And in that regard, the goal of the legislation was achieved. Solvency of the Part A Trust Fund was extended by almost 30 years. But in some instances, the BBA cuts went too far.

In such cases, these cuts threatened to reduce Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries' access to quality medical care and services. Congress responded by passing the Balanced Budget Refinement Act, BBRA, of 1999 and the Beneficiary Improvement and Protection

Act, BIPA, of 2000. I was proud to play a role in both of these bills, including help for rural areas, which were disproportionately affected by the BBA.

Despite the policies and payment changes enacted as part of BBRA and BIPA, we still find that in some cases more improvements and adjustments are needed. And that is why Senator GRASSLEY and I are introducing this bill today.

So what does this bill do? Most importantly, this bill would restore payments to physicians, which were cut in 2002 by about five percent. Under the Medicare fee schedule, payment for physician services depends on several factors, including the growth in medical inflation, performance of the American economy, and changes in law and regulation.

Also central to the calculation of payments are estimates by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, which was formerly known as the Health Care Financing Administration, of the numbers of Medicare beneficiaries in traditional fee-for-service Medicare. Largely because of significant estimation errors and a weakened economy, physicians under Medicare experienced an average payment reduction of five percent in 2002. If Congress does not act to fix the system, further large cuts are forecast for the coming years. And the potential consequences of inaction are serious.

According to a 30-State survey by the Medicare Rights Center, Medicare beneficiaries in 15 states and the District of Columbia are already having trouble finding a physician who accepts new Medicare patients. And researchers from the Center for Studying Health System Change have found that the percentage of Medicare beneficiaries who reported delaying or not getting necessary physician care rose from 9.1 percent in 1997 to 11 percent in 2001. The study also showed that of the near-elderly, patients between 50 and 64, 18.4 percent experienced difficulty in seeing a physician in 2001, up from 15.2 percent in 1997.

This bill would provide positive payment updates to the physician fee schedule over the next three years, representing a dramatic turnaround in Medicare physician payments. It would also modify the formula that is used to increase payments each year, the so-called SGR, which most physicians have learned to view with uncertainty and distrust.

While this proposal on physician updates represents progress, I acknowledge that it is imperfect, producing large reductions in Medicare physician payments in 2006 and beyond. I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Congress and the Administration to find a more reasonable solution.

Aside from physician payments, this legislation addresses a number of other important Medicare reimbursement issues, many of which are set to take effect today, October 1. The bill will