

address a financial crisis threatening the United States and Congress does not pass a joint resolution disapproving the loan or credit.

Mr. Speaker, these provisions all passed Congress as "riders" on appropriations bills in the 1990s. However, they have not been included in the appropriations bills for the past several years. It is long past time for Congress to make these provisions permanent. Over the past several years there has been great controversy over the use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund. This fund was created in the 1930s to help stabilize the exchange value of the dollar, yet it has mutated into a "slush fund" used by the executive branch to funnel money to foreign governments and even foreign companies free of congressional oversight.

In particular, there was great controversy over the Clinton administration's use of the ESF to finance the Mexican bailout without Congressional approval in 1995. Today, there is a similar controversy over the use of the ESF in the Iraq rebuilding process. Ensuring the fund is only used for narrow purposes will help end the controversy by bringing greater transparency to the disbursement of foreign aid. Even supporters of a vigorous foreign aid program should support restoring Congress' rightful role as appropriator and overseer of foreign aid funds.

Mr. Speaker, it long past time for Congress to begin reasserting its constitutional role in the appropriation of funds for foreign aid programs. For too long, the Exchange Stabilization Fund has allowed the executive branch to commit the American taxpayer to supporting foreign governments without even consulting with Congress. I hope all my colleagues will join my efforts to end this practice by cosponsoring my Foreign Aid Limitation Act.

SMALL BUSINESS TELEWORK ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleagues, Representatives FROST, ABERCROMBIE, ISSA, RUSH, ROSS, WYNN, BLUMENAUER, MILLENDER-MCDONALD, FILNER, UDALL (NM), and JO ANN DAVIS (VA), in introducing the Small Business Telework Act to assist our nation's small businesses in establishing successful telework programs for their employees.

Across America, numerous employers are responding to the needs of their employees and establishing telework programs. In 2000, there were an estimated 16.5 million teleworkers. By the end of 2004, there will be an estimated 30 million teleworkers, representing an increase of almost 100 percent. Unfortunately, the majority of growth in new teleworkers comes from organizations employing over 1,500 people, while just a few years ago, most teleworkers worked for small to medium-sized organizations.

By not taking advantage of modern technology and establishing successful telework programs, small businesses are losing out on a host of benefits that will save them money, and make them more competitive. The reported productivity improvement of home-based teleworkers averages 15 percent trans-

lating to an average bottom-line impact of \$9,712 per teleworker. Additionally, most experienced teleworkers are determined to continue teleworking, meaning a successful telework program can be an important tool in the recruitment and retention of qualified and skilled employees. By establishing successful telework programs, small business owners would be able to retain these valuable employees by allowing them to work from a remote location, such as their home or a telework center.

In addition to the cost savings realized by businesses that employ teleworkers, there are a number of related benefits to society and the employee. For example, telecommuters help reduce traffic and cut down on air pollution by staying off the roads during rush hour. Fully 80 percent of home-only teleworkers commute to work on days they are not teleworking. Their one-way commute distance averages 19.7 miles, versus 13.3 miles for non-teleworkers, meaning employees that take advantage of telework programs are, more often than not, those with the longest commutes. Teleworking also gives employees more time to spend with their families and reduces stress levels by eliminating the pressure of a long commute.

Mr. Speaker, our legislation seeks to extend the benefits of successful telework programs to more of our nation's small businesses. Specifically, it establishes a pilot program in the Small Business Administration (SBA) to raise awareness about telework among small business employers and to encourage those small businesses to establish telework programs for their employees.

Additionally, an important provision in our bill directs the SBA Administrator to undertake special efforts for businesses owned by, or employing, persons with disabilities and disabled America veterans. At the end of the day, telework can provide more than just environmental benefits and improved quality of life. It can open the door to people who have been precluded from working in a traditional office setting due to physical disabilities.

Our legislation is also limited in cost and scope. It establishes the pilot program in a maximum of five SBA regions and caps the total cost to five million dollars over two years. It also restricts the SBA to activities specifically proscribed in the legislation: developing educational materials; conducting outreach to small business; and acquiring equipment for demonstration purposes. Finally, it requires the SBA to prepare and submit a report to Congress evaluating the pilot program.

Several hurdles to establishing successful telework programs could be cleared by enacting our legislation. In fact, the number one reported obstacle to implementing a telework program is a lack of know-how. Our bill will go a long way towards educating small business owners on how they can draft guidelines to make a telework program an affordable, manageable reality.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support today for this modest bipartisan amendment offered by Reps. SLAUGHTER, SHAYS, DICKS, and LEACH to increase funds for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

As a Member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, and a longtime supporter of the arts at the state level in California, I value the tremendous role arts funding and arts education programs play in the lives of our children and friends.

Several academic studies demonstrate the connection between music, dance, visual arts, and the development of the human brain. It is well known among researchers that arts education cultivates critical thinking skills that are so important in our information-age economy.

My congressional district was fortunate to receive NEA and NEH grants this year. Some of the recipients include:

Performing arts educational outreach programs at schools in my district combined with the assistance with one of the region's most respected theaters; A program to support the Chinese Community Initiative in arts education; Artist-in-residence programs in elementary schools to encourage student and teacher involvement; A program in my district that incorporates traditional music and dance from diverse cultures to improve student relations, coordination and memory; and an amateur chamber orchestra, and a symphony association program to bolster musical knowledge and skills for ethnically diverse student population.

As a parent of two young children, I am particularly interested in the most recent research. Children who learn to read music or play an instrument show improved proficiency in math and science. To further proficiency in history, I was proud to join a letter of support to House Appropriators last month that would increase funding to the NEH budget for its We the People Initiative, which is designed to boost American knowledge and appreciation for our history, culture and civic traditions.

This increase of \$15 million under the Interior Appropriations for the NEA and NEH will go to fund so many rich programs offered and so many opportunities for us all.

Last year, an economic study conducted by Americans for the Arts found that America's nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion in annual economic activity. This number includes full time jobs, household income and local, state and federal tax revenue. This study includes more than \$80 billion in event-related spending by audiences. This is additional clear evidence that opportunities funded through NEA and NEH continue to bring us to new levels in our economy, culture, language, music, art and life.

I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment and commend our bipartisan colleagues who are leading the fight on this critical issue.

By supporting the arts and the humanities, the Federal Government has the ability to partner with state and local efforts to bolster the arts and educational opportunities in our communities.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FAIRVIEW AUXILIARY BOARD TO FAIRVIEW GENERAL HOSPITAL

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Fairview Auxiliary Board to Fairview General Hospital, whose selfless efforts exemplify a model of benevolence and altruism.

Over fifty years ago this organization was founded under the auspices of providing essential resources to the hospital for equipment, building funds, and scholarships. Today, this organization has blossomed to staff over 140 volunteers dedicated to this proposition. Their hours of volunteered time have resulted in astounding success. Volunteers have contributed over 30,000 hours and raised more than \$600,000 in the past ten years alone.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in commending the members of the Fairview Auxiliary Board. We must encourage organizations such as theirs to continue to volunteer their time and effort in the interest of the betterment of the world.

THE SENIOR CITIZENS FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2003

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Senior Citizens Freedom of Choice of Act. This act ensures that participation in the Medicare program is completely voluntary. I also ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter sent to my office from a citizen who is trying to receive Social Security benefits without being forced to enroll in Medicare Part A, along with a letter from the Social Security Administration admitting that seniors who do not enroll in Medicare Part A are denied Social Security benefits.

When Medicare was first established, seniors were promised that the program would be voluntary. In fact, the original Medicare legislation explicitly protected a senior's right to seek out other forms of medical insurance. However, today, the Social Security Administration refuses to give seniors Social Security benefits unless they enroll in Medicare Part A.

This not only distorts the intent of the creators of the Medicare system, it also violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are

told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join another government program!

At a time when the fiscal solvency of Medicare is questionable, to say the least, it seems foolish to waste scarce Medicare funds on those who would prefer to do without Medicare. Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the program to refrain from doing so will also strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to participate in it. Of course, my bill does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits.

Seniors may wish to refuse Medicare for a variety of reasons. Some seniors may wish to continue making their own health care decisions, rather than have those decisions made for them by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Other seniors may have a favorite physician who is one of the growing number of doctors who have been driven out of the Medicare program by CMS's micromanagement of their practices and below-cost reimbursements.

Forcing seniors into any government program as a precondition of receiving their promised Social Security benefits both violates the promise of Social Security and infringes on the freedom of seniors who do not wish to participate in Medicare. As the author of the submitted letter says, ". . . I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed." I urge my colleagues to protect the rights of seniors to make the medical arrangements that best suit their own needs by co-sponsoring the Senior Citizens Freedom of Choice Act.

Congressman RON PAUL

U.S. Congress, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN PAUL: I am writing to inform you about a structural problem in Medicare of which you may be unaware and that I believe must be remedied, all the more so now that there are rumors that Medicare, Part A, might be combined with Medicare, Part B.

In brief, the problem to which I refer involves the requirement that a Medicare eligible individual enroll in Medicare, Part A as a condition of receiving Social Security benefits to which he or she is entitled. In fact, the Social Security Administration has combined the enrollment forms for the two programs, so that an application for Social Security benefits to which one is entitled automatically entails enrollment in Medicare, Part A.

I discovered this in June 2001 when I went with my husband to apply for my Social Security benefits. I made it quite clear that I would *not* enroll in Medicare, Part A due to my objections to certain aspects of this program. (The objectionable aspects include invasion of privacy and limitation of medical choice.) In response I was told that I then could not receive the Social Security benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

Further communication with CMS by myself and by the office of Senator Kennedy on my behalf confirmed that CMS and the Social Security Administration take the position that "the Medicare program, Part A . . . [is] a benefit completely linked to the monthly social security benefit for those age 65 or older." Indeed I was sent a copy of federal regulation 404.640 (entitled "Withdrawal of an application"), which states that anyone who enrolls in Medicare, Part A and then decides later to withdraw will have to return

all benefits received. (Another document I received states that this includes both medical benefits and social security benefits.)

Upon receipt of a copy of the letter, dated October 12, 2001, sent to Senator Kennedy regarding my complaint. I followed that letter's suggestion that I make an attempt to file "a restricted application for Social Security benefits." This I did in a letter, dated May 15, 2002, to the regional commissioner for Social Security, Manual Vaz.

The response to my letter to Mr. Vaz came from the local (Waltham) Social Security office. In that letter, dated May 29, 2002. I was told that it was impossible to make a restricted application, i.e., an "application for cash social security retirement benefits only."

Thus I was left with no recourse. I could not appeal a denial of my "restricted" application, because I was not even permitted to make the application. Short of an expensive lawsuit or an Act of Congress, there appears to be no remedy.

This is no trivial matter for me. I have now lost two years of Social Security benefits. It is not clear when or if I will ever receive these benefits. All those with whom I have discussed this problem, irrespective of their political persuasion, have been shocked to hear about these regulations.

I believe that I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed. I ask that you take steps to remedy this situation. I shall be happy to supply documentation regarding the facts outlined above, if you request it. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, _____

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

DEAR MS. :

Enclosed please find the regulations which state that there is no application for cash social security retirement benefits only. If you file for cash benefits you MUST file for the Medicare Part A (HI). Therefore this can only be translated, in one way at this time. If you do not wish to file for Medicare Part A (HI) you must forfeit your right to cash benefits.

If I can be of any further assistance please feel free to contact me at the above telephone number extension, 3016.

Sincerely yours,

Technical Expert.

HONORING MAYNARD HOLBROOK JACKSON, JUNIOR, AND EXTENDING CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON HIS DEATH

SPEECH OF

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, JOHN LEWIS, for introducing this resolution. I was honored to cosponsor it, because I think it is very important that people in this legislative body and in this nation know the huge impact Maynard Jackson had on the country and on the African American community in particular.

You could just sense the importance of Maynard Jackson by watching the thousands of mourners who waited in lines stretching several blocks to honor him. Former Presidents joined everyday citizens in honoring the life and service of this great man, who was the