

you are trying to do. I understand that George Voinovich has introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

While I would like to think that the economic and moral case for serious reform is compelling enough to spur action without resort to another commission, I fear that the reality is otherwise. Given the harsh partisan environment you note in your letter, I have come to believe that a new commission could serve a very useful trust-building purpose—so long as it is truly bipartisan and all policy options are on the table.

You clearly agree with these principles, which is one reason I think your bill could help break the political gridlock. It is an added bonus, in my view, that your bill would require the commission to hold public hearings around the country and compel congressional consideration of the commission's recommendations. As one who has sat on many commissions, including the Kerrey-Danforth entitlement and tax reform commission more than 10 years ago, I think all of these special attributes bode well for the success of a commission formed pursuant to your bill.

As you may know, I serve as President of The Concord Coalition. Former Senators Warren Rudman (who I know you have spoken to about this) and Bob Kerrey are co-chairs of The Concord Coalition. We have been urging bipartisan action to bring about a more sustainable and generationally equitable fiscal policy for many years. Our executive director, Bob Bixby, has sent you a letter with our approval on behalf of The Concord Coalition expressing our appreciation and commending you for your leadership in drawing attention to one of the nation's most daunting challenges. To that, let me add my personal thanks and encouragement.

Sincerely,

PETER G. PETERSON.

MANATT JONES,  
GLOBAL STRATEGIES,

Washington, DC, June 26, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,  
*House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: Thank you for your letter and for sending me a copy of your legislation, H.R. 5552. I can't speak highly enough in commending you for leading this much needed effort and for the comprehensiveness of your proposal.

As a former House Budget Committee Chairman who subsequently headed the American Stock Exchange among other business activities since leaving the Congress, I have been appalled and discouraged by the recklessness and disregard of our government's fiscal policy. These unconscious deficits and mounting federal debt load financed primarily by foreigners are an economic time bomb waiting to explode. If I were managing a private company this irresponsibly, the shareholders should demand my resignation.

We hear much talk about our national security and energy security. But to put our economic security so much in the hands of foreign interests is gambling at its worst.

In addition to the economic dangers, this is also a moral issue in that our generation is saddling our children and grandchildren with the responsibility for paying off our profligacy. That can only reduce the standard of living of future generations. How can we justify such immorality?

I am so proud that you are stepping forward to try to pass legislation with teeth to force both the Congress and the Executive Branch to make hard choices to get our fiscal house on a path to responsibility. I hope that you will make this a bipartisan effort. I will be pleased to support you in every way I can and to urge my fellow Democrats to join you in this effort.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES R. JONES.

THE URBAN INSTITUTE,  
Washington, DC, June 22, 2006.

Representative FRANK WOLF,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WOLF: In response to your letter of June 16, I strongly support your bill to establish a national bipartisan commission on entitlement spending and tax policy. Although many are cynical about the prospects for the success of any commission, I think that you are right that the current political climate is not conducive to passing constructive legislation without some prodding from the outside.

I also believe that the American public is not ready to accept the sacrifices necessary to avoid a crisis, because the dire nature of the situation has not been well communicated by policy makers. Therefore, I particularly commend your idea of holding town meetings across the country and I would hope that the commission has a large budget for this purpose, because I believe that we need lots of meetings. Ideally, the commission would first produce a white paper that could be discussed at the meetings. It would outline the problem in the most objective way possible and describe the major options for solving it.

It is interesting to note that Canada had such meetings prior to a significant reform of their social security system and Canadian officials will tell you that they were extremely helpful in finding a solution. Similarly, Britain is in the midst of reforming their public pension system and they used large focus groups to test their options. I would prefer a town meeting to a focus group format, but however one proceeds, the involvement of the public is absolutely crucial.

I wish you success in getting your idea enacted and would be willing to help in any way that I can.

Yours sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER.

WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER FOR SCHOLARS,  
Washington, DC, July 7, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR FRANK: Thank you for sending along your excellent proposal to establish a national bipartisan commission on America's looming fiscal crisis. I agree that we must hastily address the very grave financial challenges before our Nation. You have laid out a thoughtful and effective way forward. In particular, it is important to put everything on the table—entitlement spending, federal programs, and tax policy. Mandating congressional action would also ensure that a prospective commission does not issue a report that gathers dust on a shelf.

On another note, the Iraq Study Group continues to make excellent progress, and I once again thank you for your leadership and support of our efforts.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

LEE H. HAMILTON.

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION,  
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,  
*House of Representatives,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR FRANK: I am writing to express my hope your bill, H.R. 5552, Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Act, will be swiftly enacted. You and I have discussed this bill and the impending fiscal crises it is designed to avoid.

I am not able to detail in a single page all the fiscal difficulties we face, nor to list all the arguments in favor of H.R. 5552, but I believe it offers the Congress an opportunity

for a comprehensive fiscal solution, so the country will not have to face an ongoing series of crises, each demanding a patchwork, probably temporary, and certainly painful, response.

While the BRAC-type Commission necessarily forces Legislation action, H.R. 5552 does provide unusual, extra Legislative discretion by giving the Congress opportunities to enact alternatives not suggested by the Commission.

H.R. 5552 has my enthusiastic endorsement. I hope the House passes it first.

Sincerely,

BILL FRENZEL.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 33, H. Res. 58, "To honor Muhammad Ali, global humanitarian, on the occasion of his 65th birthday and to extend best wishes to him and his family."

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

#### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to vote on H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007 because I had to travel back to California due to a death in the family. I would like the record to reflect that had I been here, I would have voted "no" on H.R. 4 and "aye" on the Motion to Commit. H.R. 4 will not, as some claim, save Medicare beneficiaries money on their prescription drugs. All that this ill-conceived bill will do is to restrict beneficiary access to necessary drugs, stifle medical advancements, and limit the pharmacies that seniors can utilize.

In the last year, seniors have been able to enjoy outpatient prescription drug coverage under Medicare for the first time in the program's history. Every Medicare-eligible senior now has access to a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit, with extra help available for low income seniors. Consumers in my state of California can choose from over fifty national, state and regional plans, which cover brand name and generic drugs. The hallmark of this program is choice. Under the current system, covered seniors can continue to visit their neighborhood pharmacies and have access to the medications that have been prescribed to them by their doctors.

Recent data indicates that the current system of incorporating private sector principles into the prescription drug plan is working to control costs, while providing prescription drug coverage to millions of seniors who did not have it previously. Independent estimates for the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit for Fiscal Year 2008 show that net costs are thirty percent less than were originally predicted when the benefit was created four

years ago. In addition, based on strong, competitive bids by health care plans for 2007, average monthly premiums will be approximately \$22 for beneficiaries, a drop from last year's average premium and well below initial premium estimates.

The bottom line is that consumer choice is working. There are currently many different drug plans available to seniors. These plans compete with each other and negotiate prices with the pharmaceutical companies. As we have seen, this competition has resulted in lower costs for the program than originally expected. Such cost savings have been achieved while preserving the ability of seniors to obtain the drugs their doctor has prescribed from a local pharmacist of choice.

The misguided proposal before us today to put the government in charge of negotiating prescription drug prices does not serve the interests of seniors. Government controls will lead to restrictive formularies, denying seniors coverage for the drugs their doctors prescribe. While seniors will have fewer prescriptions to choose from, they will not realize savings from this reduction in prescription options. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) affirmed that government negotiation will only yield savings if access to medicines is restricted.

H.R. 4 will limit seniors' choice of plans and access to necessary treatments; what's more, it will stifle innovation. In examining ways to control the costs of prescription drugs, we must not forget that innovations by pharmaceutical companies lead to the development of newer and better treatments. Price controls create barriers to pharmaceutical innovation that can hurt patients and slow the potential for innovative therapy discovery. Some estimates find that almost 200 new drugs would go undiscovered over the next two decades as an indirect result of federal price negotiations.

We all want to ensure our seniors can get the prescriptions they need at the lowest cost. The debate before us today is about who we think is most effective in negotiating with the drug companies to achieve this low cost. We do not need to speculate on the answer to this question. The current program of senior choice and market competition has already lowered costs by forty percent in one year. In contrast, the CBO has said that the proposal to move toward socialized medicine will not save seniors any money unless access to needed medications is limited. I cannot support limiting access and choice for the 66,000 Medicare Part D beneficiaries in my district and as such strongly oppose H.R. 4.

CORRECTING THE COLLOQUY OF  
JANUARY 19

**HON. DAVID DREIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 19, 2007*

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, during this afternoon's colloquy between the Republican Whip and the Democratic Leader, I was in a bipartisan meeting of the leadership of the California delegation. However, I understand that the distinguished Majority Leader indicated that I had objected to consideration of the member pension bill today. While I am flattered that my colleagues believe that I still

wield that level of influence now that I am the Ranking Republican of the Rules Committee, I simply want to clarify that at no time did the Republicans object, but simply pointed out to the new majority that a meeting to consider a rule would need to be an "emergency" meeting under the committee rules.

TRIBUTE TO KANSAS BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION DIRECTOR

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 19, 2007*

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and individual of the highest integrity, Larry Welch, who has announced he is retiring after 12 years as director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and a lifetime of public service in law enforcement.

A graduate of the University of Kansas, with undergraduate and law degrees, and of the FBI Academy, Larry Welch served as an FBI agent and supervisor from 1961–1986 in Tennessee, Washington, Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas, Missouri and Kansas. From 1986–1989, he served as deputy director of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, where he also served as director from 1989–1994. In 1994, he was named director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation; his longevity in that post is exceeded only by the first director, Lou Richter, who served from 1939–1956.

The KBI has approximately 300 employees, including about 80 agents posted across Kansas. It has four forensic labs, with 53 forensic scientists at the labs in Topeka, Great Bend, Pittsburg and Kansas City. The labs provide technical support to local police agencies in areas including DNA analysis and fingerprint analysis.

Larry and Shirley Welch have three grown children and eight grandchildren. During my twelve years as District Attorney of Johnson County, I worked closely with Larry in his capacity as administrator of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center. He is a public servant of unquestioned dedication and skill. The people of Kansas have been extraordinarily lucky that he has served them in a series of sensitive, important law enforcement positions in our state.

Madam Speaker, I include with this statement a column by the editor of the Lawrence Journal-World, Dolph Simons, Jr., entitled "Welch has run KBI with integrity and professionalism." I couldn't have said it better myself, and I commend the career of Larry Welch to all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives.

[From LJWORLD.COM, Jan. 13, 2007]

SIMONS: WELCH HAS RUN KBI WITH INTEGRITY  
AND PROFESSIONALISM

(By Dolph C. Simons, Jr.)

Kansas and the residents of the state are losing the services of an excellent lawman.

At the end of May, Larry Welch will step down as director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

He has done a superb job as KBI director since assuming the role in 1994 at the invitation of then-Attorney General Bob Stephan. Welch became the KBI's 10th director and served in this position under four Kansas attorneys general, including the recently sworn-in Paul Morrison.

Whether Welch's decision to leave at this time has anything to do with the new attorney general is anyone's guess. However, his announcement about plans to retire said nothing to indicate he has any differences with the new leadership in the AG's office.

The KBI does not have a high public profile, and it is obvious Welch has directed the agency with the goal of being an excellent arm of the law enforcement business, conducting its affairs and efforts in a professional manner, not trying to capture headlines and public attention. Welch and his associates have been far more interested in capturing those who violate the law rather than tooting their own horns or patting themselves on the back.

Welch is a professional and served as a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent before moving into the KBI director's office. He has put together an effective, efficient and lean staff and has gained the respect and high regard of Kansas legislators. He has kept lawmakers informed about KBI activities, and his annual reports detail the work of his agents, scientists and other members of the KBI team.

In his latest report, he notes the success of the KBI in identification and seizure of meth labs in 2006. Over the past five years, the number of meth labs seized and put out of operation has dropped from a high of 846 in 2001 to an estimated 155 for 2006. He attributed this success to the support of Kansas legislators and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and the legislation that provided funding and manpower to discover, seize and destroy the labs.

He points out, however, "Before we form a circle, hold hands and sing 'Kumbaya,' let me hasten to admit that even one meth lab, with all its dangers and attendant dire consequences is too many, and let me also remind you that, as I have been advising you since 1997, the majority of methamphetamine in Kansas, probably more than 80 percent, has always been of foreign origin, mostly Mexican, and not manufactured locally."

Welch tells the lawmakers the effort to seize and shut down meth labs "remains one of the most dangerous of all law enforcement activities."

He added there still will be meth labs to seek out, investigate, seize and prosecute, but with the effectiveness of the current program, KBI agents will be able to spend more time on efforts to reduce the importation, trafficking and interdiction of methamphetamine in Kansas. He noted, "We will not completely solve our state's methamphetamine problem, of course, until our nation's Southern and Southwest borders are better secured, in my opinion. If that's ever possible."

Not only has Welch's professionalism added stature and respect to the KBI, but also his personal manner has reflected credit on the organization.

The public must have respect for those in the law enforcement business. They don't have to like a local police officer, a member of the sheriffs staff, a local judge, a KBI agent or judges on high state and federal benches, BUT it is essential that citizens respect these men and women. Those in the law business, at whatever level, must perform in a manner that reflects credit on their respective agencies if our system of laws is to work and be effective.

Larry Welch certainly has done this in how he supervised and led the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. All law-abiding Kansans are better off and safer today because of the efforts of Welch and his fellow agents.

The state will miss Welch, and it is important he be succeeded by an equally committed, effective and professional individual.