

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PATIENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H.R. 4250, the Republican Patient Protection Act. We have the opportunity to institute real change today, and to give the citizens of this country the peace of mind that comes with knowing that their health plan is working with them, not against them. In particular, we should act to protect and promote the interests of women's health. The Dingell/Ganske bill provides guarantees, the Republican bill offers HMO-controlled possibilities. I urge my colleagues to support the Democratic alternative, H.R. 3605, the Patient's Bill of Rights.

Only the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights would require health plans to cover a hospital stay of at least 48 hours for women undergoing a mastectomy, and at least 24 hours for women having a lumpectomy with lymph node dissection. Furthermore, only the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights would require health plans that provide coverage for mastectomies to also cover prostheses or reconstructive breast surgery. The Republican bill would not allow patients to continue seeing their physician if that physician leaves the plan or their employer changes plans. The Democratic legislation would allow patients to continue treatment with their current physician for 90 days, and longer for pregnant women. How can we tell a woman in the fourth month of her pregnancy that she has to find a new doctor if her current physician leaves her health plan? I ask you to consider the health of your wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. I ask you to consider the health of your female constituents. Do you want health to be jeopardized or do you want to give them access to the health care they deserve?

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the patients' rights debate is that of the gag clause. Simply put, patients should have access to all necessary information concerning their health and medical options. The Republican bill makes this promise, but offers no protection for providers from retribution from their health plan when dispensing this critical knowledge. Without this safeguard, the gag clause is truly an empty promise. Only the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights makes this guarantee, the Republican bill does not. For my colleagues who are concerned with women's health and the basic premises of HMO reform, I again urge you to vote for the Dingell/Ganske bill.

RECOGNIZING THE CHRISTIAN CHILDRENS FUND

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 27, 1998

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like take an opportunity to identify an organization headquartered in Richmond, Virginia that has been extremely successful in bringing hope to the world's poor.

Christian Children's Fund (CCF) serves the needs of 2.5 million children in 31 countries throughout the world, including the United States. CCF began assisting children through the Moda Kane Project in Senegal in 1988. Since that time, they have provided over \$199,000 of assistance to this project. Christian Children's Fund currently assists 654 families through the Moda Kane Project.

In 1988, the Moda Kane school had only 6 classrooms and very little educational activity to support the book work. Christian Children's Fund has added 7 classrooms, constructed a medical hut and employed a community health worker, provided teaching materials for the whole school, and provided school supplies for all Christian Children's Fund children.

This Christian Children's Fund project has had great impact on the school and community including:

The number of children who pass the primary school exam and earn their certificate for successful primary school completion has improved from 39% to 83%;

The number of children passing the secondary school entrance exam also increased;

The school headmaster has been recognized for his excellence; and

Families in the region are very interested in enrolling their children in the Moda Kane school.

The Moda Kane School has now become a focus of community development activity. In addition to classes for children, Christian Children's Fund has initiated a literacy program in the national language and a small loan program for women.

I salute CCF for the efforts they are making abroad and wish to identify them as being successful in their efforts to bring hope to a troubled world.

PATIENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNE M. NORTHUP

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, our discussion on health care is extremely important, especially to residents in Kentucky. For the last few weeks, I have received calls and letters from patients stating that they want me to protect their rights to have health care—afford-

able health care. You see, Kentucky residents know what it is like to have very few choices in health care, to only have two insurers left in the state to offer health plans, and they know what it is like to have their health care premiums go through the roof. Well-meaning, but very poorly thought-out mandate-laden legislation on the state level created a monster they must face every day. We cannot have that happen nationwide.

Kentucky residents have told me they must have affordable health care. The Republican bill which passed the House last Friday, H.R. 4250, improves a patient's access to affordable health care and protects patients against abuses in the delivery of care. The bill allows employees to direct their health care benefits toward the coverage they deem most appropriate for themselves—if they want to have chiropractic care, they can choose a plan that offers these benefits. In addition, the bill makes Medical Savings Accounts a more attractive option, and permits individuals to participate in a Flexible Spending Account similar to the option currently provided to Kentucky state employees. The bill also would enable more small businesses to provide affordable health care coverage to their employees, an option which is not available right now.

Patients also deserve to know that they can get quality health care when they need it. That is why H.R. 4250 guarantees women direct access to OB/GYN care and allows parents to have direct access to pediatricians so that they can get the care they need as soon as necessary. The bill prohibits health plans from restricting physicians from giving advice to a patient about the best medical treatment for that patient and requires health plans to provide information about their plans to patients, and allows patients to inspect their medical records.

No one should argue with the fact that medical dollars should go strictly to medicine—not to administration of the plans and not to lawyers. Talking to my constituents, they have told me they want health care not court action. If their child is ill, they want them to see a doctor for care, not a lawyer. H.R. 4250 requires plans to provide written and understandable notice to patients of any negative coverage decision within 30 days (for emergencies or specialty care—72 hours); it allows patients to appeal a decision internally with a doctor who did not make the initial decision; and permits patients to request an external review within 30 days with one or more independent medical experts.

This bill is about protecting the rights of patients to have affordable quality health care. It is the right bill for the 42 million Americans who currently have no insurance, and it is the right bill for those who currently have health insurance. It will provide more opportunities, more choices, and more patient control over health care decisions. It is a bill for children, women and families in Kentucky and throughout our nation.

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