

enactment and signature into law by the President.

In June of this year, I introduced H.R. 4603, the Assistive and Universally Designed Technology Improvement Act for Individuals with Disabilities. H.R. 4603 was also introduced in the Senate as S. 2173, offered by my distinguished Senate colleague from Missouri, Mr. Bond. I am very pleased that S. 2432 incorporates a number of provisions from my bill, H.R. 4603.

Mr. Speaker, my Technology Subcommittee has held two hearings, and two exhibitions, in this Congress on the need to promote greater access to technology for people with disabilities. The testimony from the hearings demonstrated that clear need.

As a result of the hearings, the Technology Subcommittee was impressed with the need for a greater emphasis to develop assistive technologies. Yet, the area of assistive technology is greatly overlooked by the Federal Government and the private sector.

While the importance of assistive technologies spans age and disability classifications, assistive technologies still do not maintain the recognition in the Federal Government necessary to provide important assistance for research and development programs or to individuals with disabilities. The private sector generally lacks adequate incentives to produce assistive technologies and end-users lack adequate resources to acquire assistive technology.

It is also believed that there are insufficient links between federally funded assistive technology research and development programs and the private sector entities responsible for translating research and development into significant new products in the marketplace for end-users. Accordingly, new partnerships—involving the public and private sectors—must be formed to aid Americans with physical disabilities improve their quality of life and provide a means for acquiring a job to become self-sufficient.

The Assistive Technology Act of 1998 legislates a number of recommendations made in my Technology Subcommittee hearings. We heard of the need to promote greater interest in assistive technologies, to enhance investment opportunities by the Federal Government, as well as public and private entities, in addressing the unmet technology needs of individuals with disabilities, and to allow for increased methods by which individuals with disabilities could purchase assistive technologies. This bill would do just that.

The Act builds on the success of the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (known commonly as the "Tech Act" or as Public Law 100-407) that we enacted back in 1988. The Tech Act supports all 50 States in providing for the technology needs of our nation's 49 million disabled citizens, focuses the Federal investment in technology that could benefit individuals with disabilities, and supports micro-loan programs to provide assistance to individuals who desire to purchase assistive devices or services.

Title I of the Assistive Technology Act authorizes funding for a number of grant programs for five years, from fiscal years 1999 through 2004, extending the Tech Act after its sunset this year. Under the Act, States will be able to continue the successful programs of technology assistance that has served the disabled community well for the past decade.

In the 10 years since the enactment of the Tech Act, every State has established programs that promote assistive technologies to individuals with disabilities. For example, a very successful partnership has been established with my home state of Maryland to help people with disabilities access assistive technology services and devices.

Additionally, the Assistive Technology Act will help States establish and strengthen systems to inform people with disabilities in determining their best technology options. While there has been a great deal of progress in the creation of new assistive technologies, information about these devices is difficult to find and inconsistent. The Act would authorize the development of a national, on-line resource and distance learning center for people with disabilities. The Act also offers an on-line website to inform the disabled community of newly created assistive technology devices.

Mr. Speaker, assistive technologies are being used to increase, maintain, and improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. By encouraging the development of assistive technologies, we are offering people with disabilities the abilities they all seek—the ability to successfully compete in the modern workplace and the ability for independence in the home. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill and I will work towards enactment of this worthy legislation.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH AND VETERANS HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BARTON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for legislation passed by the House of Representatives on October 9, 1998, H.R. 4567, "The Medicare Home Health Care Interim Payment System Refinement Act," as it was amended by the Commerce Committee. This legislation will remedy some of the problems the home health agencies in my state and district are facing with the interim payment system passed in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

The state of Texas is a unique state in more ways than one. We have a very large and ever-growing population. We also have a very high number of "new" home health agencies, meaning agencies established after October 1, 1994. According to the September 1998 General Accounting Office report to Congress on Home Health Agency Closures, Medicare-certified home health agencies in Texas grew from 961 agencies in 1994 to 1,949 agencies in 1997. According to that same report, 134 agencies have closed recently, leaving the state with 1,758 agencies as of August 1, 1998, still more, many more agencies than existed in the state in 1994. As you can see, Texas, as opposed to a state like New Hampshire which has only 46 home health agencies, has been affected greatly by the interim payment system.

One issue I have been very involved with as the Chairman of the House Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is the problem of fraud and abuse in the Medi-

care and its effect on the continued solvency of the program. One of the changes made in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 was to move Medicare home health care reimbursement to a prospective payment system (PPS). Since there were impediments to going to a PPS immediately, an interim payment system (IPS) was established for reimbursement to home health care agencies. As stated above, the IPS has caused problems for many agencies, especially newer agencies. The problems with the IPS and the fact that HCFA recently announced that they will not meet the original October 1, 1999 date set for the PPS to be enacted required Congressional action to straighten out some of the problems with the IPS.

There are obviously some bad actors in home health care, but there are many more good ones. I do not believe it was the Congress' intention for good operators to be punished by regulations that are too punitive. The honest providers who want to provide quality care should not be penalized.

The legislation considered by the House makes a move in the right direction. I commend the principals involved, Ways and Means Chairman BILL ARCHER and Health Subcommittee Chairman BILL THOMAS, as well as Commerce Chairman TOM BLILEY and Health Subcommittee Chairman MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, on achieving some legislative relief for the home health agencies in my state as well as across the country.

I do not believe that I am alone in the sentiment that we will be revisiting the home health care issue in the 106th Congress for there are additional issues yet to be considered. I do support this home health package and its contribution towards a workable, efficient, and common sense solution for home health care agencies across this country.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-BRIBERY AND FAIR COMPETITION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4353, "The International Anti-Bribery and Fair Competition Act" and ask permission to revise and extend my remarks.

This legislation provides the underlying authorities for the implementation of the Anti-Bribery Convention of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development which criminalizes the bribery of foreign public officials.

I would like to compliment the principal sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from Virginia, Chairman BLILEY, for his leadership in this issue and for his assistance and cooperation in including reporting provisions that ensure that the administration carefully monitors the implementation of this OECD Convention, that it be updated and amended to include other officials, including political parties, party officials or candidates, and that nongovernmental groups such as Transparency International have a role in the review process.

Mr. Speaker, since the Foreign Corrupt Practices was adopted in 1977, the U.S. was

the only country that prohibited the practice of bribery of foreign officials.

From the point of view of our Committee, fighting corruption on an international basis is important for reasons beyond just "levelling the playing field" for business.

It is also important because corruption, in and of itself abroad harms American interests. Corruption of public officials abroad undermines democracy and retards development: funds are diverted from the intended use into the hands of ruling elites who perpetuate their power. This is truly a vicious circle—one that has to be broken.

Even though it has taken decades for the world to begin to follow our unilateral effort, and I stress the word "unilateral", I believe the prize is worth having.

With The passage of this implementing legislation today I am pleased that we will soon be taking part in a 29-nation OECD-led effort toward this same goal. It is critical that we pass this important legislation so the U.S. can continue to take the lead in ensuring that bribery and corrupt practices be driven from the international marketplace.

Accordingly, I urge the adoption of this measure.

AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER SUFFICIENT GROUNDS EXIST FOR THE IMPEACHMENT OF WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 1998

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 581. The House Judiciary Committee must hold a formal inquiry into whether the charges set forth by the Independent Counsel are sufficient grounds for the impeachment of the President of the United States.

We shirk our constitutional duty as Members of the U.S. House of Representatives if we bury our heads in the sand in the face of evidence that the President—having sworn an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—may have committed perjury before a Federal judge and before a grand jury, may have involved other administration officials in a cover-up, and may have conspired to suborn perjury.

The President's apologists on the other side of the aisle are quick to point out that Mr. Clinton's admitted pattern of lies were to cover up an affair with a White House intern. The lies with which we are concerned were not to his family. Let us face the fact that his lies also were a deliberate effort to subvert justice in a sexual harassment suit filed against him by another workplace subordinate. He was a defendant, trying to dodge a judgment by fudging the truth.

To ignore the President's transgressions, to allow this President to escape the scrutiny he has earned by his own actions, would be to establish a precedent in which perjury by future elected officials would be permissible. That is not tolerable in a nation based on the sanctity of law.

What do we say to the 100-plus prison inmates who are behind bars for their failure to tell the truth in courtrooms if we abdicate our duty to further investigate this President? What do we say to Susan McDougal, a friend of Mr. Clinton's who languished in prison for 18 months after refusing, like our President, to fully answer the questions of a grand jury? Do we tell them that our President is above the law?

More importantly, what do we say to those who are victims of such perjury in the future? Do we tell them justice does not matter and lies under oath are no longer really important?

Mr. Speaker, Justice is blind so she cannot be influenced by the sight of who is before her, no matter how exalted an office he may hold. Her scales are balanced so that all before her are treated equally. If a man who holds the highest office of trust the people of this Nation can bestow may—with impunity—unbalance those scales through perjury, none of our fine legal and judicial institutions mean anything other than a cynical farce.

The President is still presumed innocent. By voting for this resolution, I am not voting for a rush to judgment or a preordained result. That would be just as much an abuse of the process as ignoring the charges because they are made against the President. The Independent Counsel has presented his report and the evidence supporting it cites possible impeachable offenses. The President has the right to present his formal defense. But for him to do so, there must be an inquiry. That is why we must pass this resolution.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3874, WILLIAM F. GOODLING CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 1998

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important bill. This program, the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program provides nutrition education and supplemental food to low-income pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children up to age five. The purpose of the bill is to reauthorize through the year 2003, the WIC nutrition program. It also contains other provisions including breastfeeding promotion which I have supported through my co-sponsorship of the Lactation in the Workplace Act.

This program will also reauthorize a national summer food program for children of low income families, because children need to eat even when they are out of school. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important than making sure our children and our families are safe and healthy.

WIC provides our children with the basics they need. This is not a luxury program, it is a necessity, and we must continue to reauthorize it!

I cannot imagine that anyone would vote against this bill that keeps our children fed, and helps our families survive. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

TRIBUTE TO ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 10, 1998

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Allstate Insurance Company for its leadership and dedication to enhance the lives of the members of the communities it serves and for its strategic commitment to the diverse Hispanic community. Today Allstate is the leading national company among Hispanics for auto, property, and life insurance.

The Allstate Insurance Company and its agent network have a long heritage of caring and commitment. For over sixty years Allstate has actively supported the community by establishing "Helping Hands" activities, the philanthropic efforts of the Allstate Foundation, programs such as the Allstate Giving Campaign and All-American City Awards, and by their participation in the President's Summit for America's Future and important working relationships with the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), HAPCOA (Hispanic American Police Commanders Association) and SER (Service, Employment and Redevelopment).

Add to this the more than one million hours Allstate employees and their families volunteer annually to shelters, hospitals, soup kitchens, schools, and places of worship and we see how Allstate keeps the tradition of giving alive.

Throughout its history the company has been tirelessly involved in providing time and financial resources to civic, charitable, humanitarian, government, and educational causes as well as safety and prevention programs that target teen drivers, fire prevention, theft, and child, property, and home safety.

Becoming a major sponsors of the 1998 Latino Book and Family Festival and supporting Edward James Olmos' efforts to link culture through literacy and education, further demonstrates the Allstate commitment to support programs that are of importance to their customers and to each of us.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in paying tribute to the Allstate Insurance Company, a role model of good corporate citizenship for Corporate America.

MONEY LAUNDERING AND FINANCIAL CRIMES STRATEGY ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES A. LEACH

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 5, 1998

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include for the RECORD the following statement memorializing an understanding between the Committee on Commerce and the Committee on Banking and Financial Services relating to a specific provision of H.R. 1756:

Section 2 of H.R. 1756 amends Chapter 53 of Title 31 of the United States Code to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to "regularly review enforcement efforts under this subchapter and other provisions of law and, when