

"(A) advise Federal, State and local programs and research concerning Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect, including programs and research concerning education and public awareness for relevant service providers, school-age children, women at-risk, and the general public, medical diagnosis, interventions for women at-risk of giving birth to children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect, and beneficial services for individuals with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect and their families;

"(B) coordinate its efforts with the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

"(C) report on a biennial basis to the Secretary and relevant committees of Congress on the current and planned activities of the participating agencies.

"(4) TIME FOR APPOINTMENT.—The members of the Task Force shall be appointed by the Secretary not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this part.

"SEC. 399H. ELIGIBILITY.

"To be eligible to receive a grant, or enter into a cooperative agreement or contract under this part, an entity shall—

"(1) be a State, Indian tribal government, local government, scientific or academic institution, or nonprofit organization; and

"(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may prescribe, including a description of the activities that the entity intends to carry out using amounts received under this part.

"SEC. 399I. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part, \$27,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1999 through 2003.

"(b) TASK FORCE.—From amounts appropriate for a fiscal year under subsection (a), the Secretary may use not to exceed \$2,000,000 of such amounts for the operations of the National Task Force under section 399G(d).

"SEC. 399J. SUNSET PROVISION.

"This part shall not apply on the date that is 7 years after the date on which all members of the national task force have been appointed under section 399G(d)(1)."

TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT

FRIST (AND ROCKEFELLER) AMENDMENT NO. 3486

Mr. GORTON (for Mr. FRIST, for himself, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) proposed an amendment to the bill (S. 1325) to authorize appropriations for the Technology Administration of the Department of Commerce for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 11, line 2, after "receives" insert "from the government".

On page 11 strike lines 5 through 7 and insert the following: "shall not exceed one-third of the total costs of operation of a center under the program."

On page 26 strike lines 6 through 18 and insert the following:

SEC. 17. FASTENER QUALITY ACT STANDARDS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 15 of the Fastener Quality Act (15 U.S.C. 5414) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a) TRANSITIONAL RULE.—" before "The requirements of this Act"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) AIRCRAFT EXEMPTION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The requirements of this Act shall not apply to fasteners specifically manufactured or altered for use on an aircraft if the quality and suitability of those fasteners for that use has been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, except as provided in paragraph (2).

"(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to fasteners represented by the fastener manufacturer as having been manufactured in conformance with standards of specifications established by a consensus standards organization or a Federal agency other than the Federal Aviation Administration."

(b) DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATIONS.—The regulations issued under the Fastener Quality Act by the National Institute of Standards and Technology on April 14, 1998, and any other regulations issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology pursuant to the Fastener Quality Act, shall not take effect until after the later of June 1, 1999, or the expiration of 120 days after the Secretary of Commerce transmits to the Committee on Science and the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, a report on—

(1) changes in fastener manufacturing processes that have occurred since the enactment of the Fastener Quality Act;

(2) a comparison of the Fastener Quality Act to other regulatory programs that regulate the various categories of fasteners, and an analysis of any duplication that exists among programs; and

(3) any changes in that Act that may be warranted because of the changes reported under paragraphs (1) and (2).

The report required by this section shall be transmitted to the Committee on Science and the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, by February 1, 1999.

FRIST AMENDMENT NO. 3487

Mr. GORTON (for Mr. FRIST) proposed an amendment to the bill, S. 1325, supra; as follows:

On page 17, strike lines 11 through 15.

MCCAIN AMENDMENT NO. 3488

Mr. GORTON (for Mr. MCCAIN) proposed an amendment to the bill, S. 1325, supra; as follows:

On page 11, after line 13, insert the following:

"(F) Environmental technology providers."

JOINT RESOLUTION FINDING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ IN UNAC- CEPTABLE AND MATERIAL BREACH OF ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

LOTT AMENDMENT NO. 3489

Mr. GORTON (for Mr. LOTT) proposed an amendment to the resolution (S.J. Res. 54) finding the Government of Iraq in unacceptable and material breach of its international obligations; as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

"That the Government of Iraq is in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations, and therefore the Presi-

dent is urged to take appropriate action, in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws for the United States, to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations."

AMERICAN GI FORUM LEGISLATION

HATCH AMENDMENT NO. 3490

Mr. GORTON (for Mr. HATCH) proposed an amendment to the bill (S. 1759) to grant a Federal charter to the American GI Forum of the United States; as follows:

On page 1, line 7, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 2, line 5, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 2, line 6, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 3, line 15, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 4, line 3, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 4, line 9, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 5, line 7, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

On page 5, line 10, strike "New Mexico" and insert "Texas"

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that an oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will take place on Monday, August 24, 1998, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 121 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska.

The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on high altitude rescue activities on Mt. McKinley within Denali National Park and Preserve, as well as, the potential for cost recovery for expenses incurred by the United States for rescue activities.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, 364 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-6150.

For further information, please contact Jim O'Toole of the Committee staff at (202) 224-6969.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be allowed to meet during the

session of the Senate on Friday, July 31, 1998. The purpose of this meeting will be to review pending nominations to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and vote on confirmation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be allowed to meet during the session of the Senate on Friday, July 31, 1998. The purpose of this meeting will be to mark-up legislation related to the year 2000 computer problem and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Friday, July 31, 1998, to conduct an oversight hearing on mandatory arbitration agreements in employment contracts in the securities industry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Friday, July 31, 1998 at 10:00 a.m. in room 226 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a hearing on: "Drugs, Dignity and Death: Physician Assisted Suicide?"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON YEAR 2000 TECHNOLOGY PROBLEM

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem be permitted to meet on July 31, 1998 at 9:30 a.m. for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

"PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE: IMPACT OF PREMIUM INCREASES ON THE NUMBER OF COVERED INDIVIDUALS IS UNCERTAIN" (GAO/HEHS-98-203R)

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today, I am releasing a new U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report entitled "Private Health Insurance: Impact of Premium Increases on the Number of Covered Individuals Is Uncertain" (GAO/HEHS-98-203R). In November, 1997, the Lewin Group published a study that estimates for every one percent increase in health insurance premiums, 400,000 people would

lose their health care coverage. This GAO report assesses the methodology used in the Lewin Group report and evaluates the factors that could determine how premium increases relate to the number of individuals with health insurance coverage.

Over the past 14 months, the Committee on Labor and Human Resources has held nine hearings on issues relating to health care quality and two hearings on ways to increase health insurance coverage. At each of these hearings, the point was made that proposed health care legislation could increase the cost of health care and have the unintended consequence of reducing the number of individuals covered by employer-sponsored health care.

The GAO report found several problems with the original November, 1997, Lewin Group estimate. GAO concluded that, based on a more recent Lewin Group report, if health insurance premiums increase by 1 percent for only some types of insurance (for example, HMOs), then the coverage loss would be less than 300,000.

The first concern identified by the GAO with the November, 1997, Lewin Group report is that it was based on the effects of insurance premium subsidies on an employer's decision to offer insurance. The Lewin Group concluded from its studies that a one percent decrease in premiums would induce employers to offer coverage to an additional 400,000 employees. The Lewin Group then assumed that this same relationship could be reversed to represent accurately the number of employees who would lose coverage if premiums increased. The GAO analysis concludes that a more important variable in assessing the impact on health insurance coverage is not whether an employer decides to offer insurance coverage, but whether an employee will choose to accept it.

According to the Current Population Survey data, in 1996, about 70 percent of the population under the age of 65 was covered by health insurance purchased through an employer or purchased privately. About 12 percent of the population was covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services. And the remaining 18 percent of the population was uninsured.

Between 1987 and 1996, the number of workers who were offered insurance by their employers rose from 72.4 percent to 75.4 percent; but, at the same time, the number of workers who accepted coverage actually fell from 88.3 percent to 80.1 percent. There could be several reasons for this declining acceptance rate. In 1988, employees in small firms with fewer than 200 workers paid an average of 12 percent of their premiums. However, by 1996, the employees' premium contributions had risen to 33 percent. Also, during this same period, the States were expanding the eligibility requirements for their Medicaid programs, and the real incomes of workers declined.

The studies available to the Lewin Group in preparing their November, 1997, report were primarily focused on an employer's decision to offer coverage, not on the relationship between the cost of insurance and the number of individuals covered by insurance. These studies also varied widely in their research questions and their findings. Some of the older studies used data from 1971 and earlier.

The second factor identified by the GAO was the release by the Lewin Group, in January, 1998, of a revised estimate of the coverage loss due to health care premium increases. The Lewin Group now believes that approximately 300,000 people could lose their employer-sponsored coverage for every one percent increase in premiums. The new estimate is based on a new statistical analysis of the relationship between what employees pay for health insurance, and the likelihood that their families have access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

The Lewin Group estimates also assume equal premium increases for all types of insurance products. Since the legislation that Congress is considering will primarily affect HMO premiums, employees faced with higher premiums may switch to other types of insurance rather than drop coverage entirely. Based on the work of the Barents Group, the GAO found that this change in plans by employees would further reduce the Lewin Group estimate to a number less than 300,000.

In conclusion, the GAO report indicates that if health insurance premiums increase by one percent for only some types of insurance (for example, HMOs), then the coverage loss predicted by the Lewin Group would be less than 300,000. However, the GAO urges that this figure must be used cautiously. There are still many factors that were not included in the Lewin Group estimate, such as: changes in benefits offered by an insurance plan; changes in real wages; and what percentage of a premium increase is passed on from the employer to the employee.

Mr. President, as we consider legislation to ensure that Americans have access to high-quality health care, we must also be concerned that new health plan requirements do not lead to increased numbers of the uninsured. The GAO report, "Private Health Insurance: Impact of Premium Increases on the Number of Covered Individuals Is Uncertain," will be a valuable resource for the Congress in achieving an appropriate balance between these two important societal goals. •

FISCAL YEAR 1999 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee—Senator STEVENS and Senator INOUE, respectively—for finishing work on this appropriations