

House colleagues. We recognized that there was a need to provide our constituents with free screenings for glaucoma, a devastating disease that robs a person of his or her sight. There is no cure for glaucoma—but it can be prevented if caught early enough. Unfortunately, many of our fellow Americans who are at highest risk for glaucoma are also unable to easily avail themselves of the latest in medical testing. We formed the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus to bring important information and preventive screenings to constituents in our own districts. The idea has gained great momentum. There are now 40 members of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus and we have already held screenings in Florida, Illinois, New York, Tennessee, and Washington, DC. Hundreds of Americans have been referred for follow-up care of possible glaucoma or other acuity problems; hundreds of others have gone home from our screenings reassured that their eyes are healthy. In this effort we have had much help. The Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation was founded to bring together physicians, blindness prevention groups; industry spokespeople and others interested in this cause. The Foundation has done yeoman work in setting up the screenings and ensuring that they run smoothly and for that the members of the Caucus are profoundly grateful. A great deal of thanks is owed to the ophthalmologists and their staffs who have volunteered to conduct the actual screenings. And we owe the Pharmacia Corporation a debt of gratitude for its generous educational grant to the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation. Their support has been vital, and has meant that not one penny of anyone's tax dollars have been spent on this noble effort. This is truly a wonderful thing, and I commend everyone involved.

QUALITY HEALTH-CARE
COALITION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1304) to ensure and foster continued patient safety and quality of care by making the antitrust laws apply to negotiations between groups of health care professionals and health plans and health insurance issuers in the same manner as such laws apply to collective bargaining by labor organizations under the National Labor Relations Act:

Mr. STARK. Mr. Chairman, the fact that we are considering this legislation on the House floor today is a testament to the Republican leadership's lack of desire to deal with the real problems consumers are facing from managed care.

We passed a bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights last October, the conference was appointed nearly four months ago—but we have made precious little progress on that important legislation that is already so long overdue.

That is what we should be debating on the House floor today. We should be debating extending patient protections to consumers to ensure that health plans cover emergency

room care, that women have an unfettered right to ob/gyn care, that health plans are required to provide their members with access to specialists, that patients be guaranteed access to an independent external appeals, and that patients could hold health plans liable if their actions caused harm or death.

Instead, we are faced with a bill that does absolutely nothing to protect consumers in managed care—but does wonders to protect doctors' incomes.

I guess we shouldn't be surprised. This Republican Congress has shown us time and time again that they are far more interested in helping their monied friends and supporters than the general public.

On its face, this legislation raises numerous concerns. A simple look at the exceptions in the bill makes it clear that anti-trust exemptions fraught with potential problems.

It Exempts Federal Health Programs. In order to get the bill out of the Judiciary Committee the bill's supporters had to accept an amendment to exclude Medicare, Medicaid, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, Veterans Health services, Indian Health Services and all other federal health programs from the law.

The reason for this amendment was that Congressional Budget Office analysis showed that the bill would impact federal spending for these programs by increasing expenditures by some \$11.3 billion over 10 years.

Managed care plays a major role in most of these programs today. By allowing doctors to collectively bargain with managed care plans, CBO estimates that rates will increase by 15 percent. If the law applied to federal health programs it would obviously impact federal health spending. The supporters of the bill don't want to acknowledge the real costs associated with passage of this bill so they exempt federal programs from it.

Even with federal health programs exempted, CBO found that passage of the bill would decrease federal tax revenues by some \$3.6 billion over ten years. Those federal losses come about because employers would claim larger deductions for the increased expense of providing health benefits (because of the increased bargaining power of doctors). This would also result in employees receiving a greater share of compensation in tax-sheltered benefits.

The law sunsets after three years. In another attempt to gain support, the bill has a provision that would automatically sunset the law after three years. This sunset provision is a direct acknowledgement of the concern that granting anti-trust exemptions is a dramatic move. The fact is that we don't know exactly how much strength doctors would exert through this new found ability to collectively bargain. It may be that they would exercise restraint and put the quality of care of their patients first. Then again, they might exercise united power by refusing to contract with health plans that won't meet their demands—whatever those demands might be.

Should the latter occur, the impact on patient care could be devastating. Therefore, the authors are acknowledging that an escape hatch might be necessary. I'd rather not open such a risky door in the first place.

After all of these strong statements, I must also acknowledge that I understand and empathize with the frustration of America's

physicians and other health care providers. The growth of managed care has significantly altered their professions in ways in which we could not have imagined even 10 years ago. And, much of this change has not been good for patients or health care providers. Congress can and should take action to address those concerns, but this bill isn't the solution.

Instead, I urge Congress to move forward with passage of the Patients' Bill of Rights which would limit health plans' abilities to use financial incentives, eliminate gag clauses, and finally extend liability already faced by doctors and hospitals to the health plans that are making many of today's medical decisions.

Many of my colleagues may not know that I was voted the most fiscally conservative Democrat this year by the National Taxpayer's Union. In the spirit of maintaining my standing of strong fiscal responsibility—and on the many additional grounds I've mentioned—I strongly oppose H.R. 1304 and urge my colleagues to join with me in opposition to this so-called managed care "solution" that is fraught with such serious flaws.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CITY
OF CLINTON ON RECEIVING THE
ALL-AMERICAN CITY AWARD

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the community of Clinton, Missouri, which recently received the designation of All-American City from the National Civic League.

The All-American City Award recognizes towns that work together to address critical community issues. The sponsors of this award commended Clinton for exhibiting outstanding citizen involvement, high government performance, local philanthropic resources, and inter-community cooperation.

With a population of 9,300, Clinton was the smallest of the 10 cities selected for this award, although towns of all sizes participated on an equal level. A group of 75 residents of Clinton—including many student ambassadors—traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, in early June to present a summary of three of their community betterment programs to a panel of judges selected by the sponsor of the award.

Several projects which the sponsors noted as especially worthwhile included the START (Students Together Achieving Responsible Tasks) program. This local youth community service organization connects students with charitable volunteer opportunities. In addition, Clinton has made progress in attacking its biggest killer, cardiovascular disease, by creating a CHART wellness center staffed by local hospital employees. Through community educational measures and blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, this group helps increase awareness and prevention of heart disease. Also, the town participates in the Main Street USA program in an effort to revitalize its downtown and Historic Square Districts.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to the residents of the city of Clinton. It is with great pride that I honor them for being designated an All-American City.

IN MEMORY OF IRENE WOODFIN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I now rise to honor the life and memory of an outstanding person, my friend Irene Woodfin. Sadly, Irene passed away July 8, 2000 in her own home. As family and friends mourn her passing, I would like to pay tribute to this beloved wife to her husband, mother to her children, and friend to all. She will be missed by many. Even so, her life was a remarkable one that is most deserving of both the recognition and praise of this body.

Much of Irene's life was spent educating and helping others. Irene graduated from Greeley Colorado State Teacher's College (UNC) in 1927. After her distinguished teaching career, Irene retired from teaching in 1971. Irene was also very involved in community organizations and events throughout her life. Some of the groups she belonged to included being a member of Delta Kappa Gamma (Xi Chapter), American Association of University Women (AAUW), and always an active participant in her local church choir. Irene's love of making music and crafts brought her great distinction and were rightly a source of pride.

While her involvement in education and community are to be remembered, Irene's lasting legacy rests in her family. Irene is survived by her husband of 69 years, Dick Woodfin. Irene was the mother to three, grandmother to eight, great-grandmother to 17, and great-great-grandmother to 4. She also had 11 step-grand-children. In her children, grandchildren, and their offspring, Irene's love and generosity will endure.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, Irene was a person who lived an accomplished life. Although friends and family are profoundly saddened by her passing, each can take solace in the wonderful life that she led. I know I speak for everyone who knew Irene well when I say she will be greatly missed.

RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE OF
THE INDIAN STATE OF PUNJAB

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary people of the Indian state of Punjab.

Punjab is an agricultural state, home of the Green Revolution and famous for the diligence of its people. Though Punjab comprises only 1.5 percent of India's territory, farmers from the state have provided 65 percent of India's wheat and 45 percent of its rice for the past 25 years. Punjab is a naturally breathtaking place, but I was most inspired by the limitless potential of its people. They are hardworking men and women, striving to better the lives of their families and neighbors, and sharing a deep devotion to God.

While in the city of Amritsar I visited the Golden Temple, the spiritual capital of Punjab and the destination of all Sikh pilgrims. It was truly an honor to witness the Sikh faith in prac-

tice within the walls of their holiest of temples. After experiencing the Punjabi people's intense spirituality firsthand, I now understand why Punjab today enjoys peace and stability.

Mr. Parkash S. Badal, Chief Minister of Punjab, was kind enough to meet with me during my stay in Punjab. We met not in the capital city, but in the small village of Sahouli, where the Chief Minister demonstrated his sincere concern for the villagers and farmers of Punjab. He is a man of great commitment to the state of Punjab and its people, and he has worked relentlessly to improve the lives of all Punjabis. The Chief Minister expressed to me the Punjabi people's profound desire to build a strong and lasting relationship with the United States, and he has asked for the help of this House of Representatives in doing so.

I encourage my colleagues and all Americans to welcome the Punjabi people with open arms. President Clinton recently traveled to India, and in doing so he displayed great foresight and wisdom. I believe it is our obligation to follow the President's lead and work to establish strong ties between our two nations' governments, businesses and citizens. I am confident Chief Minister Badal will continue to guide Punjab towards progress and prosperity, and I am hopeful my colleagues here today will join with me in my efforts to broaden and extend our personal and economic collaboration with the people of Punjab indefinitely.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently voted yes on Roll Call No. 369 and was unable to correct my vote in time prior to announcement of the result. My intention was to vote no.

TRIBUTE TO TURNER N.
ROBERTSON

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, July 2, 2000, a long-time official of the House will be laid to rest in Scotland Neck, North Carolina. At age 91, Turner N. Robertson has been called to rest and to reside in a place of total peace.

Mr. Robertson came to Congress in 1939, with then Representative John Kerr. He served in various positions until 1947, when he was appointed by Speaker Sam Rayburn as Chief of Page. He served in that position until his retirement in 1972, and moved to Coral Springs, Florida. Yet, even in retirement, he was consulted by Speakers John McCormick and Carl Albert. He received the Employee of the Year Award for the House of Representatives in 1971. A plaque to this effect hangs in the U.S. Capitol, across from the Speaker's office.

Turner was a gentle man, a true and honest American, a devoted husband and loving father. All who knew him were touched by his

humility, strength of character and faith in God. He was well respected on Capitol Hill, and his friends spanned the spectrum from the Congresspersons he served to the Pages he supervised.

Born in Macon, North Carolina, on April 22, 1909, his early life involved great personal sacrifice. Yet, he was guided by faith. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Ernestine, his daughter Barbara, his brother Bernard and sister Mrytice. His earthly family included many relatives, friends and church families in Washington, DC, Virginia, North Carolina and Florida. Turner N. Robertson was an ordinary man who was special and a special man who was ordinary.

God's finger has gently touched him and he now sleeps. I am confident that he has left a lasting impression on those who came to know him, and the principles that guided him will now serve as guideposts for those he leaves behind. He shall surely be missed. I feel certain, however, that he would want all of us to rejoice in his life and the time he spent on this earth.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN LINDER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I would like it to be noted in the RECORD that on June 23, 2000, I intended to vote nay on Roll Call No. 372, final passage of H.R. 1304, the Quality Health Care Coalition Act.

IN HONOR OF THE LATE BENNIE
HOLMES, JR.

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and sadness that I honor the life of Bennie Holmes Jr., who passed away recently at too young an age. Mr. Holmes' leadership in the civil rights movement and as an anti-poverty activist earned him the respect of our entire San Francisco community; his caring heart and kind ways earned him our affection. Bennie's presence in the community can never be replaced, but the work of his life will live on after him.

Bennie was born and reared in McComb, Mississippi, and it was there that he learned the values of hard work, community, and his deeply rooted sense of justice. In the late 1950's, he moved to California, and in 1961 he graduated from Monrovia High School in Los Angeles County. He later moved to San Francisco and continued his education at San Francisco State University, where he earned a degree in Political Science.

Mr. Holmes worked much of his life for racial equality. He helped to found the N.A.A.C.P. Junior Chapter at Pasadena College in 1961. In 1964 he organized a group from San Francisco which joined the 1964 march for civil rights that went from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. He fought continually for the cause of civil rights with the Congress