

This demonstration program dramatically increases collections for Medicare and Medicaid services, and significantly reduces the turnaround time between billings and receipt of payment for Medicaid and Medicare services. Additionally, it increased the administrative efficiency of the participating health care providers. All the participants, two of which are in Alaska, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Indian Health Service, report that the program is a great success.

S. 406 will make permanent the demonstration program and will end much of the bureaucracy for Indian Health Care Service facilities involved with Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. The bottom line is that it will mean more Medicaid and Medicare dollars to Indian facilities to use for improving health care for their members.

Madam Speaker, I urge an aye vote on this important bill for American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, in 1988, a dozen years ago, Congress authorized the Indian Health Service to select up to four tribally controlled IHS hospitals to participate in a demonstration project whereby the hospitals could conduct direct billing and receipt of payment for health services to Medicare and Medicaid eligible patients.

Under the current practice, Medicare and Medicaid billings and collections are first sent through the IHS and then redirected to health care providers. Since 1991, the Bristol Bay Health Corporation, the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Corporation, Mississippi Choctaw Health Center, and the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma have taken part in the demonstration project.

The participants established in-house administrative operations to perform Medicare and Medicaid billing and collection and have been extremely satisfied with the results. Reports have shown dramatically increased collections which have been turned into additional health services. The demonstration program has resulted in a much shorter turnaround time between billing and receipt of payment, as well as improved accreditation, ratings and an overall higher level of health care quality for patients.

Madam Speaker, S. 406 would make permanent the demonstration program and would authorize additional tribes and tribal organizations to participate in the direct billing. This legislation is supported by the administration. It is good policy, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 406.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

1330

AUTHORIZING REPAYMENT OF MEDICAL BILLS FOR U.S. PARK POLICE

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4404) to permit the payment of medical expenses incurred by the United States Park Police in the performance of duty to be made directly by the National Park Service, to allow for waiver and indemnification in mutual law enforcement agreements between the National Park Service and a State or political subdivision when required by State law, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4404

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MEDICAL PAYMENTS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—*Subsection (e) of the Policemen and Firemen's Retirement and Disability Act (39 Stat. 718, as amended by 71 Stat. 394) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "Notwithstanding the previous sentence, in the case of any member of the United States Park Police, payment shall be made by the National Park Service upon a certificate of the Chief, United States Park Police, setting forth the necessity for such services or treatment and the nature of the injury or disease which rendered the same necessary."*

(b) *NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REIMBURSEMENT.*—*Section 6 of the Policemen and Firemen's Retirement and Disability Act Amendments of 1957 (71 Stat. 399) is amended by inserting after the first sentence the following new sentence: "Such sums are authorized to be appropriated to reimburse the National Park Service, on a monthly basis, for medical benefit payments made from funds appropriated to the National Park Service in the case of any member of the United States Park Police."*

SEC. 2. INDEMNIFICATION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—*Section 10(c) of the Act of August 18, 1970 (Public Law 91-383; 16 U.S.C. 1a-6(c)), is amended—*

(1) *by striking "and" at the end of paragraph (2);*

(2) *by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and*

(3) *by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:*

"(3) mutually waive, in any agreement pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection or pursuant to subsection (b)(1) with any State or political subdivision thereof where State law requires such waiver and indemnification, any and all civil claims against all the other parties thereto and, subject to available appropriations, indemnify and save harmless the other parties to such agreement from all claims by third parties for property damage or personal injury, which may arise out of the parties' activities outside their respective jurisdictions under such agreement; and"

(b) *TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.*—*Paragraph (5) of section 10(c) of the Act of August 18, 1970 (Public Law 91-383; 16 U.S.C. 1a-6(c)) (as redesignated by subsection (a)(2)), is further amended—*

(1) *by striking "(5) the" and inserting "The"; and*

(2) *by moving the text flush and 2 ems to the left.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MORELLA). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 4404 is a bill that would allow the payment of medical expenses incurred by the United States Park Police to be paid directly by the National Park Service. This bill would also allow the Park Service to enter into mutual aid agreements with adjacent law enforcement agencies in order that Park Police are indemnified from third party civil claims.

Currently, payments are made through the District of Columbia, a process which is very slow. As a result, reimbursement payments to the Park Police have been a hardship to the officers, staff, and their families. This bill would direct the NPS to make direct payments to the Park Police.

The bill would also allow the Park Service to enter into a mutual aid agreement with adjacent law enforcement agencies in order that the Park Police are indemnified from third party claims.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is ready to move forward. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4404, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, H.R. 4404, which was introduced at the request of the administration, addresses the payment of medical expenses for the United States Park Police and the indemnification needed for mutual law enforcement agreements.

Evidently, there have been a number of instances where there have been problems with timely medical payments being made to the Park Police officers injured in the performance of their duties. This has resulted in a hardship to some officers, staff, and their families.

Further, the lack of indemnification is a potential barrier to cooperative law enforcement agreements between the Park Police and other police agencies. Such indemnification is needed to hold the assisting agency harmless from claims by third parties dealing with property damage or personal injury.

H.R. 4404 provides the U.S. Park Police with the authority to address these

two issues. The Committee on Resources did amend the bill to reflect technical changes to the legislation requested by the National Park Service.

We on the minority side support passage of the bill, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4404, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IVANPAH VALLEY AIRPORT PUBLIC LANDS TRANSFER ACT

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 1695) to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal public lands in the Ivanpah Valley, Nevada, to Clark County, Nevada, for the development of an airport facility, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Page 2, lines 24 and 25, strike out "assessment" and insert "assessment, using the airspace management plan required by section 4(a)".

Page 3, strike out lines 15 through 22 and insert:

(2) DEPOSIT IN SPECIAL ACCOUNT.—(A) The Secretary shall deposit the payments received under paragraph (1) into the special account described in section 4(e)(1)(C) of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2345). Such funds may be expended only for the acquisition of private inholdings in the Mojave National Preserve and for the protection and management of the petroglyph resources in Clark County, Nevada. The second sentence of section 4(f) of such Act (112 Stat. 2346) shall not apply to interest earned on amounts deposited under this paragraph.

(B) The Secretary may not expend funds pursuant to this section until—

(i) the provisions of section 5 of this Act have been completed; and

(ii) a final Record of Decision pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) has been issued which permits development of an airport at the Ivanpah site.

Page 3, strike out all after line 22 over to and including line 2 on page 4 and insert:

(d) REVERSION AND REENTRY.—If, following completion of compliance with section 5 of this Act and in accordance with the findings made by the actions taken in compliance with such section, the Federal Aviation Administration and the County determine that an airport should not be constructed on the conveyed lands—

Page 4, line 23, strike out "Secretary," and insert "Secretary, prior to the conveyance of the land referred to in section 2(a)."

Page 5, line 18, after "agencies," insert Any actions conducted in accordance with this section shall specifically address any impacts on the purposes for which the Mojave National Preserve was created."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the chairman of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), as well as the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), for their help and guidance on this very important piece of legislation for the State of Nevada.

I would also like to thank the House Members and our colleagues for their previous vote of 420 to 1 in support of H.R. 1695 for Nevada and its future.

The Las Vegas metropolitan area is the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country, growing by over 60,000 people in 1998. McCarran Airport, which currently serves the Las Vegas area, has seen its passenger traffic grow by over 64 percent in the last 10 years.

Because the Bureau of Land Management owns over 90 percent of the land in Clark County, any new airport to serve southern Nevada must be located on land purchased from the Federal government. Realizing that McCarran Airport would reach its full capacity in 2008, the Clark County Aviation Department completed an extensive review of options available for meeting the growing needs of air traffic in southern Nevada.

Because of the restricted airspace of Las Vegas due to military uses, and the existing full precision instrument landing requirements of McCarran Airport, the committee concluded that the Ivanpah Airport site is the only viable option that can accommodate the growing air traffic needs of the region.

H.R. 1695, the Ivanpah Valley Public Land Transfer Act, is of vital importance to the future health of the tourism economy of southern Nevada. Therefore, it authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to convey lands in the Ivanpah Valley to Clark County, Nevada for a second airport.

The legislation also requires that the land be returned to the Department of the Interior should the airport develop-

ment prove to be infeasible after abiding by all Federal, State, and local environmental rules and regulations.

Passage of H.R. 1695, with the inclusion of Senate amendments, will allow Clark County to proceed with the NEPA analysis and the proposed development of a new airport.

There are those who feared that commercial jets will fly over the Mojave Preserve. To address this very concern, the Federal Aviation Administration will undertake an airspace study to develop an airspace management plan that prohibits flights over the Mohave Preserve in California unless there is a safety reason for doing so.

Clark County will also be required to pay fair market value for the land, and the airport will be publicly owned and operated. The revenues collected by the government for sale will be available for use by the BLM for acquiring inholdings in the Mojave Preserve and to protect archeological sites in Clark County.

H.R. 1695 is supported by the entire bipartisan Nevada congressional delegation, and has been endorsed by business and labor interests from Nevada. The House supports this bill with inclusion of the Senate amendment, and we would be grateful for a concurring vote by this body.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1695 directs the conveyance of a substantial tract of public lands located near the Mojave National Preserve for development of a large commercial airport and related facilities for the Las Vegas area.

As the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) has presented, this is a rapidly growing area, and adjustments do need to be made for air traffic.

The bill originally passed the House on March 9 of this year. The Senate passed the bill on October 5, and has returned the measure to the House with amendments.

Prior to House consideration in March, H.R. 1695 was a very controversial measure. The bill was opposed by the administration, the environmental community, and many Members because the legislation failed to address adequately the potential environmental impacts, land use conflicts, and administrative problems associated with this large-scale land conveyance.

Fortunately, changes were made by the House to address most of these concerns. A significant improvement was made to the bill by providing joint lead agency status for the Department of the Interior on the environmental impact statement necessary for the planning and construction of the airport facility on the conveyed lands.

The potential environmental impacts of such an airport involve the Mojave National Preserve and other resource responsibilities of the Department of the Interior, so it is only proper that the Department be closely involved.