purpose was to increase its emphasis on preserving and enhancing our natural resources, moving away from the old land idling purposes of the early 1980s.

My bill would further this effort by encouraging volunteer nonprofit organizations to use the tools of the Conservation Reserve Program to preserve and enhance the upkeep of environmentally sensitive lands in rural communities that might otherwise be neglected. Such organizations would be responsible for complying with all other aspects of the new Conservation Reserve Program and my proposed legislation makes no changes to the eligibility of land allowed to be entered into the CRP.

I am hopeful that my colleagues can join me in moving this legislation forward and allow rural communities to better preserve wildlife and water quality in rural areas.

THE IRS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, in April of 1996, a deadly tornado struck Fort Smith, Arkansas, causing widespread destruction, yet almost a full 2 years after this tragedy, the citizens of this town are yet again facing another terror. That is right, the IRS.

IRS agents are auditing these families for not correctly reporting their casualty losses that they incurred. These folks have not been targeted by the IRS because they bilked or cheated the U.S. Government out of money by claiming fraudulent tax deductions or utilizing illegal tax shelters. These people are being audited because the IRS just does not agree with how they reported their houses were ripped from their foundations and their lives torn apart.

The reprehensible actions prompted a survivor whose house was destroyed to say that ''While the death and destruction is behind us, the tornado, the IRS, is never going away.'' She said this, of course, under an agreement of anonymity, because she fears that her comments will spur further retaliation from the IRS.

Outrageous, Mr. Speaker. It is time to take the fear and the terror out of the hearts of Americans. The time to overhaul the IRS is long overdue.

PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues a disturbing story from yesterday's Washington Post. Jacqueline Lee of Bethesda fell off a 40-foot cliff in the Shenandoah Mountains while hiking in the summer of 1996, was taken by helicopter to a Virginia hospital with fractures of her skull, arm and pelvis. Her HMO refused to pay the hospital, saying it failed to obtain ''preauthorization.''

This decision by Jacqueline's HMO defies common sense, yet we all know that she is not alone. More and more Americans are finding themselves up against a wall that keeps them from getting the health care services that they need.

This is wrong. When you are suffering from an accident or illness, you need to focus and have all your energies involved in getting well. You should not have to battle with your insurance company for the coverage that you deserve.

This body needs to act on commonsense managed care reform. I urge the Republican leadership of this House to stop blocking reform, schedule a vote on managed care reform today.

THE TAX CODE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, while Republicans are working to sunset the tax code and consign it to the ash heap of history, the President has announced that to do so would be irresponsible.

Leaving the President's relationship with young interns aside, I think it is time for the President to come clean about another very disturbing matter: Just what is the President's relationship with the IRS?

I am sure that the President would say that there is no improper relationship with the IRS, but the facts suggest otherwise. After all, why would the President defend the current tax code, all 7 million words of it? Why else would the President think that overhauling the tax code would be an irresponsible scheme? Does the President really believe that a flat tax would not be simpler, more fair, more transparent than the current tax code?

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the President to tell us the truth about his improper relationship to the agency that presides over the most corrupt, most unfair, most outrageous tax code in American history.

THE E-RATE

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Congress has agreed that it is imperative to allow our schools access to the Internet. That is why an E-Rate was established under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This provided a discount between 20 to 90 percent, depending on the need of individual school districts and libraries, to purchase information services.

In my district, Portland schools alone would save $3 to $4 million a year in equipment and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for operations. Across the country, schools and libraries can expect to save over $2 billion a year. Clearly, the E-Rate will make a difference in society's efforts to prepare our children for the future. Unfortunately, it is not clear that the FCC shares our commitment, having provided only one-third of what will be required by the FCC's own estimates.

The FCC will fortunately reconsider its position in 6 months. It is time for Members of Congress to show their support for this critical program. I urge my colleagues to join me in a letter to the FCC in support of the E-Rate.

MORE ON MANAGED CARE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask those of you this morning how many of you felt pain, the pain of having a youngster break his leg, and your managed care insurance indicated that it does not meet the deductible; or the pain of having an older parent whose treatment is not able to be gotten in the jurisdiction in which you live, and you have to transport them across State lines, the United States of America, and being denied by your HMO that service for that elderly parent that you so care and love for.

I tell you it is interesting that in a House that should believe in the Bill of Rights, the Republican leadership does not want us to pass the Patient Bill of Rights, giving rights to those of you who pay every day for your health insurance, who time after time after time get denied by some bureaucrat when your doctor says you need the care.

Republicans, they say, wait a while, we will do it in increments, one by one by one. While you are staying there, not surviving, not getting the care you need and having the bureaucrat tell you what kind of hospitalization you need, what kinds of surgery you need, what kind of prescriptions you need.

It is time to pass the Patient Bill of Rights. I do not know what is wrong with the Republican leadership, but I would say to them that this body should support the Patient Bill of Rights.

ALBANIANS IN KOSOVA ARE TARGET OF GENOCIDE

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, systematic, brutal genocide has once again reared its ugly head. Ethnic Albanians in Kosova are being slaughtered. And after all this, an official at