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H. CON. RES. 56

Expressing the sense of the Congress that access to basic health care services is a fundamental human right.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 2, 1993

Mr. PASTOR (for himself, Mr. STARK, Mr. LAFALCE, Mrs. MINK, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. FILNER, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Mr. CLEMENT) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that access to basic health care services is a fundamental human right.

Whereas the assurance of adequate health care is essential to the general welfare and to the Nation's security, strength, productivity, wealth, and social order;

Whereas approximately 35,000,000 Americans have no insurance coverage for health care services, an additional 60,000,000 are underinsured, millions more are in jeopardy of losing their health insurance if they become ill and cannot work or otherwise lose their jobs, and many who have insurance find that necessary services are not covered;

Whereas the poor, minorities, individuals in rural communities, and the disabled have long been inadequately served by the health care system and encounter barriers to access to basic health care services that exceed those faced by the general population;

Whereas the lack of access to basic health care services results in underutilization of preventive health care, the occurrence of preventable disease, and the eventual need for more costly curative care;

Whereas the \$800,000,000,000 annual national expenditure on health care is an excessive burden on families and businesses, and health care costs are continuing to rise;

Whereas the present health care system in the United States has failed to deliver at least a basic level of health care services to all individuals who are in need of such services;

Whereas recognition of access to health services as a basic human right is already contained in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a covenant to which 118 countries have agreed to be bound but that the United States has not yet ratified;

Whereas declarations and recognition of rights have served to distinguish our Nation's highest priorities, such as freedom of speech and the right to a fair trial, and have provided for recourse in cases in which these rights are abridged;

Whereas recognition of an ethical obligation by society to ensure equitable access to basic health care services for all was made in 1983 by the President's Commission for the

Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavior Research;

Whereas the Commission's report, *Securing Access to Health Care*, concluded that the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that such obligation is met rests with the Federal Government, and that access to basic health care services requires that all citizens be able to secure an adequate level of care without excessive burdens;

Whereas many other industrialized countries provide universal access to health care and spend substantially less to do so per person than is spent under the current health care system of the United States;

Whereas it is possible to identify a universal standard of basic health care services and to achieve it as a matter of right for the people of the United States; and

Whereas the determination of this standard should be developed on the basis of substantial public participation, should be revised as new services become available, and should make necessary health care services available to all: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

3 (1) access to basic health care services is a fun-
4 damental human right;

5 (2) all legislative proposals by the President
6 and Congress concerning national health care reform
7 and any initiatives to improve the delivery of health
8 care should be based upon recognition of this fun-
9 damental right; and

1 (3) legislative proposals should be specifically
2 developed which make policy changes necessary to
3 protect and guarantee this fundamental right, in-
4 cluding the development of comprehensive and cost-
5 effective strategies for delivery of primary and pre-
6 ventive health care, the determination of a universal
7 standard of basic health care services, the reform of
8 public and private sector health care financing, and
9 the determination of priorities in the health care
10 sector.

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