

The Detroit community, and indeed the Nation, have benefited from his efforts to promote understanding and healing. It is with joy and sincerity that I thank Arthur Johnson. Because he never allowed anyone to shackle his mind, he made it possible for others to know the beauty of freedom.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
GIFT REFORM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 16, 1995

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Gingrich amendment to the Gift Ban Reform Act.

We were elected to Congress to conduct the peoples' business. We were not elected to feed at the trough of the Gucci clad lobbyists and special interests that dominate our Nation's Capitol.

If Members of Congress want to enjoy fine dining, golf excursions, and exotic vacations, then they should be willing to pick up the tab.

The American people have grown sick and tired of perks and privileges extended to Members of Congress.

Our constituents do not receive unsolicited gifts and meals and neither should we.

By eliminating the potential for corruption and perception of impropriety, House Resolution 250 will help to restore the American peoples trust in elected officials and the Congress.

It's time to clean up this institution and restore the public confidence in our Nation's leaders.

We have a moral imperative to hold ourselves to a higher standard of conduct than practices of the past.

The American people have demanded a Federal Government that is open and accountable. We need to assure them that all citizens, not just special interest and lobby groups will have access to elected officials.

By passing the Gingrich proposal, we can demonstrate our sincerity and dedication to ensuring that congressional activities are conducted honorably and legitimately.

The overwhelming majority of my colleagues are sincere, hard working, and dedicated public servants. I am not of the opinion that Members of this body are bought and sold over a dinner or golf outing.

However, by eliminating gifts we remove all doubt of impropriety and wrongdoing.

In my opinion this is all about trust and perception. By banning all gifts and junkets, we can prove to our constituents and to the American people that we are, in fact, sincere about cleaning up Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support the Gingrich proposal.

RENA BAUMGARTNER

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 17, 1995

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a personal friend of mine who

has become one of northeastern Pennsylvania's most important and influential political and community leaders, Rena Baumgartner. I am proud to have been asked to participate in a tribute to Rena and to be able to tell my colleagues of her contributions and accomplishments.

As an active member of her community, Rena has participated in numerous clubs and organizations which work diligently to promote the betterment of and ensure safety to the general public. Rena has worked with the West End Ambulance and West End Fire Company Auxiliaries as well as the Polk Township Fire Company Auxiliary. She is a member of the Exchange Club of the Pocono Mountain. In addition to these organizations and others, Rena remains an active member in the United Effort Methodist Church.

Rena may be best known for her leadership positions within the Democratic Party organization. Since 1968 Rena has been active in the political arena, beginning as a Democratic township committee person. From that position, Rena graduated to become the Assistant Secretary of the Monroe County Democratic Committee and eventually the Chairperson of the Monroe County Democratic Committee, a position which she still holds today.

Rena's involvement in the Democratic Party was not limited to local politics. On the statewide level, Rena was appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Democratic State Party and in 1984 was made Vice-Chair of the party.

On the national level, her involvement in the Democratic Party is deserving of even more recognition. Rena has been a member of the Democratic National Committee since 1979 and has taken a leading role in every national election since becoming a member. During the last three presidential elections she served as a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions. She has served on the executive committee of the Democratic National Women's Caucus and has been the Treasurer and Secretary of the Democratic National Committee's Eastern Regional Caucus. Presently, Rena is helping to select the delegation which will be sent to the 1996 Democratic National Convention. No one can question Rena's commitment to the Democratic Party.

Certainly, an accomplishment that Rena can be extremely proud of is her family. With her husband William, Rena has raised two wonderful children, her daughter Robin and her son Bryan. In addition to having such a positive role on her own children, Rena is also able to play an active role in the upbringing of her two grandsons. Throughout all of her other undertakings Rena managed to keep her family at the center of her attention and in a position of importance above everything.

Mr. Speaker, my close friend Rena Baumgartner has been a caring mother and wife. She also has been a strong leader in her community and throughout Monroe County. Finally, Rena Baumgartner has been a true leader in the Democratic Party. I salute and thank Rena for everything she has contributed to the betterment of northeastern Pennsylvania and the Democratic Party.

HEALTHY CHOICE: BALANCING
THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND IMPROVING MEDICARE

HON. STEVE GUNDERSON

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 17, 1995

Mr. GUNDERSON. Mr. Speaker, within the past few weeks, Congress has taken historic steps to balance the Federal budget and improve the way the Federal Government provides and delivers health care services to the more than 36 million Medicare beneficiaries. The goal of this reform initiative has been to secure the future of Medicare for today and tomorrow while providing beneficiaries with better benefits, additional health care options, and lower out of pocket costs. All of this will be accomplished while slowing the overall growth of Federal Medicare spending. I commend the House and Senate Committees for their work to improve and preserve Medicare.

Many of the Medicare provisions in the Balanced Budget Act will benefit the ailing health care delivery system in many small communities in my western Wisconsin district and identical communities throughout rural America.

In terms of rural health care, I believe the most dynamic Medicare improvement was changing the adjusted average per capita cost [AAPCC] payment formula. As the cochair of the Rural Health Care Coalition, the dedication of the coalition enabled us to work with the leadership during House and conference committee deliberations to craft a new formula favorable to all beneficiaries regardless of where they live. In this endeavor, the Rural Health Care Coalition had the good fortune to receive outstanding technical assistance, counsel and support from the Fairness Coalition, representing a diverse group of hospital systems, hospital associations, managed care providers, and insurers.

What does an improved AAPCC payment formula mean for Medicare beneficiaries? The AAPCC is the total amount of Medicare fee-for-service dollars spent on doctors and hospitals annually in a county, divided by the number of Medicare beneficiaries in that county. It also represents the dollars available to beneficiaries to purchase health care choices under the new Medicare-plus program.

For Grandma Smith living in the Bronx, NY, her 1995 AAPCC payment is \$679 a month and she can enroll in a health maintenance organization [HMO] providing the required Medicare services and additional benefits or traditional fee-for-service. Grandma Smith's brother living in Fall River County, SD, has a monthly payment of \$177. Unfortunately, because of the low payment an HMO is not available to him, just the traditional fee-for-service. A low AAPCC payment has a devastating effect on the health care choices available to beneficiaries living in rural counties and in those counties with efficient health care markets. Why should there be a 367-percent payment difference between these two Medicare beneficiaries just because of where they live?

The situation facing Grandma Smith's brother is not unusual. Approximately 4 million beneficiaries live in counties that have access only to Medicare fee-for-service. My home State of Wisconsin, with 769,000 Medicare beneficiaries, is 1 of 15 States that currently