

EC-3868. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report entitled "Assessment of International Air Pollution Prevention and Control Technology"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3869. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule relative to use of environman and human figure and design symbol, (RIN1024-AC50) received on August 21, 1996; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3870. A communication from the General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of two rules including one entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Commonwealth of Virginia—1990 Base Year Emmission Inventory," (FRL5603-5) received on September 3, 1996; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THURMOND, from the Committee on Armed Services:

The following-named officer for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general in the U.S. Air Force while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. David J. McCloud, 000-00-0000.

The following-named officer for reappointment to the grade of vice admiral in the U.S. Navy while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10 United States Code, section 601:

To be vice admiral

Vice Adm. Dennis C. Blair, 000-00-0000.

The following-named officer for appointment to the grade of admiral in the U.S. Navy while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, sections 601 and 5035:

VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

To be admiral

Vice Adm. Harold W. Gehman, Jr., 000-00-0000.

(The above nominations were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 2055. A bill to waive temporarily the Medicare enrollment composition rules for The Wellness Plan; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 2056. A bill to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; read twice and ordered placed on the calendar.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. THURMOND):

S. 2057. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs guar-

antee loans with adjustable rate mortgages; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DASCHLE (for Mr. LOTT (for himself, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. THURMOND, and Mr. WARNER)):

S. Res. 288. A resolution regarding the United States response to Iraqi aggression; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 2055. A bill to waive temporarily the Medicare enrollment composition rules for the Wellness Plan; to the Committee on Finance.

THE WELLNESS PLAN WAIVER ACT OF 1996

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, today I rise along with my distinguished colleague from Michigan, Senator LEVIN, to introduce legislation which will expand the number of health care choices available to residents of Michigan. This bill will provide Medicare beneficiaries in Michigan the opportunity to obtain health care from The Wellness Plan, a longstanding, federally qualified health maintenance organization. The Wellness Plan has been recognized by national leaders, including two former Secretaries of the Department of Health and Human Services, as a model managed care plan. In addition, the Wellness Plan has made significant contributions to improving the health and well-being of its enrollees, many of whom are poor women and children, by decreasing infant mortality, effectively reducing hypertension, and increasing mammography rates.

The Wellness Plan has been serving the Medicaid population for over two decades. It currently has 150,000 enrollees, 141,000 of whom are Medicaid, 12,000 commercial and 2,000 Medicare. Since 1993, the Wellness Plan has had a health care prepayment plan contract with Medicare. However, technical changes enacted by Congress effective January 1, 1996, had the unintended effect of preventing the Wellness Plan from enrolling additional Medicare beneficiaries under the HCPP contract. The Wellness Plan is positioned to become a full Medicare risk contractor but currently is precluded from doing so due to the 50/50 Medicare/Medicaid enrollment composition rule. It must be emphasized that the Health Care Financing Administration supports the Wellness Plan receiving a plan-specific 50/50 waiver at this time.

Allowing Medicare beneficiaries to participate in this program represents a small, but important step toward fulfilling Congress' commitment to improve the quality of this country's health care system. Given that the Wellness Plan has an established

record with respect to both the Medicaid and Medicare programs, and that the Health Care Financing Administration supports the Wellness Plan receiving a plan-specific 50/50 waiver, I urge Congress to move this bill before the end of this session so that Michigan Medicare beneficiaries will once again have the opportunity to participate in this plan beginning in 1997.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. THURMOND):

S. 2057. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs guarantee loans with adjustable rate mortgages; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

THE VA ADJUSTABLE RATE MORTGAGE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1996

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce on behalf of myself and Senator THURMOND a bill to permanently reauthorize the VA Adjustable Rate Mortgage Program.

This program was created in the 102d Congress to guarantee adjustable rate mortgages for a 3-year period ending September 30, 1995. The program allowed a maximum of 1-percent increase annually with a 5-percent maximum increase on the interest rate over the life of the loan. These annual and lifetime caps are identical to those contained in the FHA Adjustable Rate Mortgage Program, which is a permanent program.

Adjustable rate mortgages have proven to be a valuable and essential home mortgage financing tool for American families, particularly in times of rising interest rates. Adjustable rate mortgages allow borrowers to obtain home loans with interest rates below those required for normal fixed interest rate loans.

During the 3-year period that the VA Adjustable Rate Mortgage Program was in effect, large numbers of veterans took advantage of this financing tool, with 131,250 VA adjustable rate mortgages being originated nationwide, totaling \$14.9 billion. In Virginia alone, 10,599 loans granted totaling over \$1.2 billion. Over 58 percent of these loans nationally were made to first-time home buyers.

The VA Home Loan Guaranty Program was created by the Congress in 1944 to ensure that veterans returning home from World War II would have an opportunity to achieve the American dream of owning a home. This benefit was established for our veterans because their service to our country denied them the opportunity to save the necessary funds for a down payment for a home or to establish a credit rating. The program has since been extended to benefit all of the men and women who have served their country honorably in the Armed Forces. Since the program's inception, 14.8 million loans totaling \$515 billion have been made to veterans.

This bill simply guarantees that the home loans that are available to American veterans are affordable. I urge my