

Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. KYL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. HAGEL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. GLENN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. FRIST, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. INOUE, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BOND, Mr. KERREY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. KOHL, Mr. ENZI, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. FORD, Mr. GORTON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. GRAMM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. GRAMS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. KEMPTHORNE, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. LUGAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. REED, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. REID, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROTH, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. THOMAS, and Mr. THURMOND):

S.J. Res. 46. A joint resolution expressing the sense of the Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MACK (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. Res. 219. A resolution to authorize printing of the minutes of the Senate Republican and Democratic Party Conferences; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. TORRICELLI (for himself and Mr. D'AMATO):

S. Con. Res. 92. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the collection of demographic, social, and economic data as part of the 2000 decennial census of population; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BENNETT:

S. 2000. A bill to ensure that businesses, financial markets, and the Federal Government are taking adequate steps to resolve the year 2000 computer problem; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEM LEGISLATION

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2000

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

SECTION 1. FIDUCIARIES OF EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS MUST CONSIDER YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEMS IN MAKING INVESTMENT DECISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 404(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of

1974 (29 U.S.C. 1104(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) A fiduciary shall not be treated as meeting the requirements of paragraph (1)(B) unless—

“(A) the fiduciary determines that—

“(i) the issuer of any security in which the fiduciary seeks to invest the assets of the plan has, or is taking, steps to substantially eliminate any year 2000 computer problem faced by the issuer, and

“(ii) such security is traded on a market that is prepared to operate without any interruption due to the year 2000 computer problem, or

“(B) in any case where such assets are invested by an insurance carrier, bank, or similar institution, the fiduciary determines that such institution makes the determinations described in subparagraph (A) with respect to the investment of such assets.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to investments made by a fiduciary, and contracts to invest plan assets entered into with insurance carriers, banks, and similar institutions, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. STEPS TO ENSURE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEM.

(a) PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON YEAR 2000 CONVERSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall establish the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion (the “Council”) which shall be chaired, at the President's discretion, by an Assistant to the President.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be composed of 1 representative from each of the executive departments and from such other Federal agencies as the Chair shall designate.

(B) VICE CHAIR; OTHER PERSONNEL.—The Chair shall appoint a Vice Chair and shall assign other responsibilities to members of the Council as the Chair determines necessary.

(3) FUNCTIONS.—The Chair shall—

(A) oversee the activities of executive departments and other Federal agencies to assure that their computer systems operate smoothly through the year 2000,

(B) provide policy direction to, and receive reports and data from, executive departments and other Federal agencies, as is necessary to ensure progress and compliance with Federal standards for remediation of the year 2000 computer problem,

(C) allocate resources for correcting critical year 2000 computer problems among executive departments and other Federal agencies in order to meet critical deadlines, and

(D) utilize any existing authorities granted to the executive branch, or recommend to the Congress other appropriate plans, for the retention of critical personnel needed to address the Federal Government's year 2000 computer problem in a timely manner.

(4) COOPERATION.—The head of each executive department and any other Federal agency shall cooperate to the fullest extent with the Council.

(b) REPORT.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall report quarterly to the Congress on the progress made by the Federal Government—

(1) in achieving year 2000 compliance, and

(2) in obtaining and retaining the resources and personnel necessary to achieve an orderly conversion to year 2000 compliance.

By Mr. MURKOWSKI (for himself, Mr. LOTT, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 2001. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to make

permanent the demonstration program that allows for direct billing of medicare, medicaid, and other third party payors, and to expand the eligibility under such program to other tribes and tribal organizations; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

THE ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN DIRECT REIMBURSEMENT ACT OF 1998

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I rise on behalf of myself and Majority Leader LOTT, Senator BAUCUS, and Senator CAMPBELL, to introduce legislation which would permanently authorize and expand the Medicare and Medicaid direct collections demonstration program under section 405 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

This act will end much of the redtape and bureaucracy for IHS facilities involved with Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, and will mean more Medicaid and Medicare dollars to Native health facilities to use for improving health care.

Our bill will allow Native hospitals to collect Medicare and Medicaid funds directly from the Health Care Financing Administration instead of having to go through the maze of regulations mandated by HIS.

This bill is an expansion of a current demonstration project that includes Bristol Bay Health Corporation of Dillingham, Alaska; the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Corporation of Sitka, Alaska; the Mississippi Choctaw Health Center of Philadelphia, Mississippi; and the Choctaw Tribe of Durant, Oklahoma. All of the participants in the demonstration program—as well as the Department of Health and Human Service and the Indian Health Services—report that the program is a great success. In fact, the program has:

Dramatically increased collections for Medicare and Medicaid services, which in turn has provided badly-needed revenues for Indian and Alaska Native health care; significantly reduced the turn-around time between billing and the receipt of payment for Medicare and Medicaid services; and increased the administrative efficiency of the participating facilities by empowering them to track their own Medicare and Medicaid billings and collections.

In 1996, when the demonstration program was about to expire, Congress extended it through FY 1998. This extension has allowed the participants to continue their direct billing and collection efforts and has provided Congress with additional time to consider whether to permanently authorize the program.

Because the demonstration program is again set to expire at the end of FY 98, it is time to recognize the benefits of the demonstration program by enacting legislation that would permanently authorize it and expand it to other eligible tribal participants.

I hope that my colleagues will support this important legislation.

By Mr. REID: