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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 20, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable CLIFF STEARNS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) for 5 minutes.

THE NEED FOR MANAGED CARE REFORM

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the patients of the Central Coast of California and all across America, I rise today to say that enough is enough. With only 36 days left in this Congress, the House has yet to debate and vote on real managed care reform. The leadership has consistently blocked efforts to bring a comprehensive HMO or health care reform bill to the floor, and the American people deserve better.

Instead, this week the House will vote on partisan bills that have just been slapped together, and not the bipartisan patients' rights measures that already have significant support here in the House and all across this country. As a nurse, I know firsthand the importance of accessible, quality, patient-centered health care. Basic patients' rights can mean the difference between life and death.

As I meet with constituents in my district, no matter what the occasion, they very often come forward to me with their concerns about their health care. Sometimes these are dramatic stories which make the news, which horrify us all. More often, though, they are individual instances of promises not kept, compromised outcomes, resources depleted, and care that is just halfway good.

My fellow nurses tell me with great sadness in their voices how it hurts to deny basic health care needs; to send frail, elderly patients home alone, so dizzy they cannot even stand. Surely we can do better than this in this great Nation, with the medical resources that we have at our disposal.

Before us today, before us this week, we have the opportunity to consider landmark legislation which will allow people to choose their own doctor, which will end oppressive gag rules so patients have access to all critical treatment options, and perhaps, most importantly, which will give patients legal recourse when insurance companies deny necessary medical coverage.

Mr. Speaker, today I will be among the first to sign the bipartisan HMO reform discharge petition. This petition will allow an open debate on health care proposals that will enable doctors and patients to make essential medical decisions. If patients can sue their doctors for poor care, they should be able to sue the big insurance bureaucrats who pull the strings and are behind these cost-cutting decisions which do affect the quality of care.

As one of three nurses in Congress, I feel it is my duty to speak out. Our health care system needs serious medicine, not a political placebo.

Mr. Speaker, 230 of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, have already cosponsored both the Patients' Bill of Rights and the Patients' Access to Responsible Care Act. I strongly encourage all 230 Members to sign this discharge petition today, so we can finally pass comprehensive, bipartisan managed health care reform legislation this year.

OUR NATION'S SECURITY DEPENDS ON RESTORING OUR MILITARY FORCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have three military bases in my district in eastern North Carolina: Camp LeJeune Marine Base, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Perhaps that is why I continue to join many of my colleagues who come to the floor on a regular basis to talk about the current deplorable state of our military.

I hope my colleagues and I do not speak in vain, but rather that the President and his advisers will heed the concerns of the Congress and the American people, and make sure our military is adequately prepared to defend the freedoms of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, when I returned home over the Fourth of July break, and each time I go home, I am reminded of how we take our Nation's military for granted. Many times when traveling in my district I have had the honor of meeting and talking with the men and women who currently and courageously serve our Nation, as well as

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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