This legislation also allows both employers and employees to contribute to an employee's MSA. It lifts the arbitrary caps on how one can obtain MSA's and expands the limits on the MSA deductible. Also it provides that possession of an MSA satisfies all mandated benefits laws as long as individuals have the freedom to purchase those benefits with their MSA.

However, as much as I support H.R. 4250's expansion of MSA's, I equally object to those portions of the bill placing new federal standards on employer offered health care plans. Proponents of these standards claim that they will not raise cost by more than a small percentage point. However, even an increase of a small percentage point could force many marginal small businesses to stop offering health care for their employees, thus causing millions of Americans to lose their health insurance. This will then lead to a new round of government intervention. Unlike Medical Savings Accounts which remove the HMO bureaucracy currently standing between physicians and patients, the so-called patient protections portions of this bill add a new layer of government-imposed bureaucracy. For example, H.R. 4250 guarantees each patient the right to external and internal review of insurance company's decisions. However, this does not empower patients to make their own decisions. If both external and internal review turn down a patient's request for treatment, the average patient will have no choice but to accept the insurance companies decision. Furthermore, anyone who has ever tried to navigate through a government-controlled ''appeals process'' has reason to be skeptical of the claims that the review process will be completed in less than three days. Imposing new levels of bureaucracy on HMO's is a poor substitute for returning to the American people the ability to decide for themselves, in consultation with their care giver, what treatments are best for them. Medical Savings Accounts are the best patient protection.

Perhaps the biggest danger these regulations pose is ratification of the principle that guaranteeing a patients' access to physicians is the proper role for the government, thus opening the door for further federal control of the patient-physician relationship. I ask my physician-colleagues who support this regulation, once we have accepted the notion that federal government can ensure patients have access to our services, what defense can we offer when the government places new regulations and conditions on that access?

I am also concerned that this bill further tramples upon state automony by further preempting their ability to regulate HMO's and health care plans. Under the 10th amendment, states should be able to set standards for organizations such as HMO's without interference from the federal government. I am disappointed that we did not get an opportunity to debate Mr. BRADY's amendment that would have preserved the authority of states in this area.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, while the Patient Protection Act takes some good steps toward placing patients back in control of the health care system, it also furthers the federal role in overseeing the health system. It is my belief that the unintended, but inevitable, consequence of this bill, will require Congress to return to the issue of health care reform in a few years. I hope Congress gets it right next time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday morning July 29, 1998 I was in my district attending to official business and as a result missed two roll call votes.

Had I been present, the following is how I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 343 (the ''Rule'' on H.R. 629) ''Aye''

Rollcall No. 344 (final passage of H.R. 629) ''Aye''.

INTRODUCTION OF THE JACOB JOSEPH CHESTNUT-JOHN MICHAEL GIBSON CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER ACT OF 1998

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Jacob Joseph Chestnut-John Michael Gibson United States Capitol Visitor Center Act of 1998 (Chestnut-Gibson Act). I feel a special obligation to do so because I represent the District of Columbia in which the Capitol is located. I also introduce the bill because the residents of the District have a special relationship with the Capitol Police. In 1992, when there was a large spike in crime in the District, Congress passed the United States Capitol Police Jurisdiction Act, a bill I introduced authorizing the Capitol Police to patrol parts of the Capitol Hill residential community closest to the Capitol where various facilities of the Capitol are located. Capitol Police officers were not only willing; they were enthusiastic to use their excellent training and professionalism for the benefit of residents and the many tourists and visitors whose safety might be compromised by having to travel through high-crime areas in order to get to the Capitol.

My bill authorizes the Architect of the Capitol ''to plan, construct, equip, administer, and maintain a Capitol Visitor Center under the East Plaza of the Capitol'' grounds. The primary purpose of the bill is to increase public safety and security. A second purpose is to provide a place to welcome visitors who are seeking tours, taking into account their health and comfort. To guard against excessive costs and to obtain quick action, the bill requires the Architect to consider existing and alternative plans for a visitor center and to submit ''a report containing the plans and designs'' within 120 days.

I have supported a Capitol Visitor Center since it was first extensively discussed in 1991. During this decade of high deficits, the reluctance of Congress to appropriate funds for such a center has perhaps been understandable, until last Friday. No one knows whether Officer Chestnut or Detective Gibson or, for that matter, any other officer or individual would have been spared had a visitor center been in place. What we do know is that our nineteenth century Capitol was not built with anything like today's security hazards in mind. According to the Capitol Police and the United States Capitol Police Board, a visitor center would provide significant distance between the Capitol and visitors, and for a host of reasons they have documented, would make the Capitol more secure.

Our foremost obligation is to protect all who visit or work here and to spare no legitimate consideration in protecting the United States Capitol. The Capitol is a temple of democracy and is the most important symbol of the open society in which we live. It is more so than the White House, in part because the President's workplace is also a residence and cannot be entirely open. However, the Capitol symbolizes our free and open society not only because it is accessible but also because of what transpires here. It is here that the people come to petition their government, to lobby and to persuade us, and ultimately to discharge us if we stray too far from their democratic demands. Thus, we neither have nor would we want the option to make the Capitol more difficult to access. After last Friday's tragedy, we have an obligation to demonstrate that security is not inconsistent with democracy.

There is a second reason why this bill is necessary. Visitors are safe when they come to the Capitol, but the conditions they encounter do not ensure their health, convenience, and cordiality, nor afford them the welcome to which they are entitled. Members address constituents seated on stone steps outdoors. In the blistering heat and merciless cold of Washington, visitors wait in line outdoors to tour the Capitol. During this summer, the hottest on record in the United States, it has not been uncommon for tourists to faint during lengthy waits on line and then be rushed inside to be treated by our physicians. Even if the Capitol had not incurred a terrible tragedy, we would be in need of a more civil way to welcome the people we represent.

I will seek cosponsors for this bill at once. I have not waited to do so because I believe a bill requiring plans for a visitor center is necessary to provide the assurance of safety and comfort the public has a right to demand. We must do more than try to recover from the shock of the invasion of the Capitol by a gunman. We must do more than mourn the irreplaceable loss of two fine men. We must do what we can and we must do it now.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, July 29, 1998, I was unavoidably detained while conducting official business and missed rollcall vote No. 344. Had I been present I would have voted ''yea.''

SHAME ON THE GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it was 15 years ago that American soldiers liberated