Most legislators predict there will be few concrete changes on the books after the dust clears.

“There’s no question there will be election-generated bills ... but I would just be pooh-pooh-dow-dressing,” said Rep. Kurt Granbery, D-Carlyle. “Mainly, I think it’s going to be a budget year.”

AMONG THIS YEAR’S LIKELY TOPICS OF DEBATE

The House last year passed several bills that would have regulated how HMOs deal with their patients and members doctors. Most of those bills would have remained stilled in the Senate but could be called up again through the end of this year.

One measure, labeled the “Patient Bill of Rights,” would have legally required that insurance companies provide certain information to patients, would set up a formalized grievance process and would make other changes to the HMO industry.

“There seems to be a real ground swell about this,” said Holbrook, a co-sponsor of the bill. HMO expenses and alleged lack of responsiveness to patients have “become such a glaring atrocity.”

Not everyone agrees with that assessment. But even Republican Senate President James “Pate” Philip of Wood Dale, who has been one of the main HMO critics, said she would support any legislation that would make the health industry more responsive to patients.

Proposals of the changes believe public frustration will work in their favor in an election year.

That trend has a chance at moving forward,” said Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Collinsville. “I see bipartisan support.”

Mr. INOUYE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2961

(Purpose: To provide for improved monitoring of human rights violations in the People’s Republic of China, and for other purposes)

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I call up my amendment, No. 2964 and ask for its immediate consideration, and I ask unanimous consent that Senator Hutchinson from Arkansas be added as a co-sponsor to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The clerk reported the amendment. The President, for himself and Mr. Hutchinson, pro-poses an amendment numbered 2964.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following new titles:

TITLE —MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN CHINA

SEC. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Political Freedom in China Act of 1998”.

SEC. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Congress concurs in the following conclusions of the United States State Department on human rights in the People’s Republic of China in 1997:

(A) The People’s Republic of China is “an authoritarian state” in which “citizens lack the freedom to peacefully express opposition to the party-led political system and the right to change their national leaders or form of government”.

(B) The Government of the People’s Republic of China has “continued to commit wide-spread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms, stemming from the authorities’ intolerance of dissent, fear of unrest, and the absence or inadequacy of laws protecting basic freedoms”.

(C) “[a]llegations of torture and mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, and arbitrary and incommunicado detention”.

(D) “[p]rison conditions remained harsh [and] [t]he Government continued severe re-strictions on freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, religion, privacy, and worker rights.”

(E) “[a]lthough the Government denies that it holds political prisoners, the number of persons detained or serving sentences for ‘counterrevolutionary crimes’ or ‘crimes against the state’, or for peaceful political or religious activities are believed to number in the thousands.”

(F) “[a]nonapproved religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic groups . . . experienced intensified repression”.

(G) “[s]erious human rights abuses persist in minority areas, including Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia, and in other fundamental freedoms in these areas have also intensified”.

(H) “[i]n 1996, the authorities stepped up efforts to cut off expressions of protest or criticism. All public dissent against the party and government was effec-tively silenced by intimidation, exile, the imposition of prison terms, administrative detention, or house arrest. No dissidents were known to be active at year’s end.”

(2) In addition, the Department, credible independent human rights organizations have documented an increase in repression in China during 1995, and effective de-struction of the independent human rights movement through the arrest and sentencing of the few remaining pro-democracy and human rights activ-ists not already in prison or exile.

(3) Among those were Li Hai, sentenced to 9 years in prison on December 18, 1996, for gathering information on the victims of the 1989 crackdown, which according to the court, was duties “state secrets”.

Liu Nianchun, an independent labor organ-izer, sentenced to 3 years of “re-education through labor” on July 4, 1996, due to his ac-tivities in a petition campaign calling for human rights reforms; and

Ngodrup Phuntsog, a Tibetan national, who was arrested in Tibet in 1987 immediately after he petitioned the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in New Delhi, where the Tibetan government in exile is located, and following a secret trial was con-
Mr. President, let me speak a little bit about this amendment. I intend to take up too much of the Senate’s time discussing it, because I know other Senators, including Senator Hutchinson, are interested in speaking at a more detailed level.

Essentially, this amendment sets forth specific steps by which the United States would support the improvement of human rights in the People’s Republic of China. Its provisions regarding human rights are identical to those included in the legislation that was recently passed by the other Chamber by an overwhelming vote of 394-29.

The amendment I am offering is based on the recognition that the United States can engage with China only if we are honest with Chinese leaders, and only if we are willing to stand up for our principles. And chief among the principles on which our nation was founded is an unyielding commitment to fundamental human rights.

The current regime in China suppresses fundamental human rights on a daily basis:

- Women pregnant with their second or third child are pressured to have abortions and even subjected to forced abortion and sterilization.

Religious exercise is violently suppressed among Christians in China, and among indigenous Buddhists in Tibet.

Individuals who engage in peaceful acts to promote human dignity and civil society.

And the Chinese regime’s recent conduct gives us no reason to expect improvement any time soon. Indeed, Mr. President, since President Clinton returned from his trip to China this June, that government has detained 21 prominent human rights activists. At least three remain in custody today.

Through this amendment, Mr. President, we would make clear to the Chinese government our opposition to its oppressive practices and initiate concrete steps to monitor human rights abuses and assist those seeking to promote human dignity and civil society.

Among the provisions in this amendment:

First, it contains findings detailing the deplorable human rights record of the Chinese government. Second, the amendment calls for greater efforts on the part of our Secretary of State to improve the behavior of the current Chinese regime:

- It calls on the Secretary of State, during official meetings with the Chinese government, to call for the release of political prisoners in China and Tibet.

The amendment also calls on the Secretary of State to seek greater access for international humanitarian organizations to prisons in Tibet and China—access that will ensure that prisoners are not being mistreated and that they are receiving necessary medical treatment.

And the amendment calls on the Secretary of State, during official meetings, to request that China begin serious discussions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, on the future status of Tibet.

Third, the amendment authorizes funding for several programs intended to improve human rights conditions in China. These include: $2.2 million in 1999 and 2000 for additional personnel at diplomatic posts to monitor human rights in China; $4 million in 1999 and 2000 for the National Endowment for Democracy to promote democracy, civil society, and the development of the rule of law in China, and permits liabilities for the East Asia-Pacific Regional Democracy Fund to be used to provide grants to nongovernmental organizations to promote democracy, civil society, and the development of the rule of law in China.

Finally, this amendment includes several sense of Congress resolutions, including: A sense of the Congress resolution on security and cooperation in Asia; A resolution concerning democracy in Hong Kong; and a resolution condemning organ harvesting and transplantation in the People’s Republic of China.

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Finally, this amendment includes several sense of Congress resolutions, including: A sense of the Congress resolution on security and cooperation in Asia; A resolution concerning democracy in Hong Kong; and a resolution condemning organ harvesting and transplantation in the People’s Republic of China.

Mr. President, these provisions will make clear our determination to stand up for the fundamental human rights of the Chinese people. We cannot, without undermining freedom in our own nation, turn our backs on those who are being oppressed in China, or in any other nation.

Our principles as well as our national interest demand that we pursue meaningful engagement with the current government in China. And that requires at a minimum, an open discussion of human rights abuses and concrete steps aimed at bringing those abuses to an end.
These amendments will not destroy our current relationship with China. None of the amendment’s supporters seek an isolationist policy. I for one support normal trade relations with China because I see them as a necessary element of effective engagement.

But this amendment serves an important function in our effort to achieve and maintain meaningful engagement with China. It signals this Congress’ continuing concerns for human rights, democracy, and respect for law in China. It signals our determination to speak up and support the fundamental principles of civilized society.

Through this amendment we can stand with oppressed people of conscience in China, for our sake as well as theirs.

I yield the floor.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Abraham amendment 2964 to the Defense appropriations bill. The Abraham amendment would authorize additional human rights monitors at the embassy in Beijing, China, as well as our other consulates around China. I think it is exceptionally warranted. It is very, very much needed.

The Chinese Government has repeatedly, and with a lack of respect for human rights. We have seen how the Government controls its people through registration, through coercive and repressive practices. We have seen how the Chinese Government punishes those who would dare to worship by the dictates of their conscience. We have seen how the Government punishes those who would speak in the name of civilized society.

It is, I think, evident that this is needed in light of this latest round of arrests of political dissidents in China. It is puzzling to me that we can talk about the great improvement in China and the reforms that are taking place, and that this Democratic Congress could put so much faith in President Jiang and his regime in Beijing when all of the evidence that is forthcoming, whether it is in the media, through our intelligence agencies, or the State Department itself indicates that, in fact, those abuses are as bad as ever, and that the crackdown on religious believers is now only most recently exceeded by the crackdown on political dissidents. I do believe, as the President has expressed, that eventually China will be different. I believe that. I think someday China will be a country in which free expression is tolerated and the freedoms that are not American values, but are fundamental human values, will exist in China. But I think it will not be through the regime that rules with an iron fist in Beijing, China, today. So, let us engage, but let us engage thoroughly and on all fronts.

The package of amendments that is before the Senate today will enable us to do that. So it is essential that we not table the China amendments, that we support them, that we agree to them as part of the appropriations bill. I believe, because the House passed these measures by such an overwhelming vote, that they will be preserved in the conference and we will be able to give the President an opportunity to truly involve this administration in an engagement policy that will reflect the values that are precious to us and help to bring about the change that we desire to see in China and to give support to the freedom fighters, freedom lovers in China today who risk the limited freedom that they have to go about their daily activities by speaking out, by seeking to form an opposition political party, by taking a far more dangerous stand there, in China, today.

I applaud Senator Abraham for bringing the human rights monitors amendment to the floor of the Senate, and I look forward to casting my vote against tabling and for the amendment. I ask my colleagues to do likewise.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. WELLS. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Abraham amendment 2964 to the Defense appropriations bill. The Abraham amendment would authorize additional human rights monitors at the embassy in Beijing, China, as well as our other consulates around China. I think it is exceptionally warranted. It is very, very much needed.

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I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant legislative clerk will call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOURVILLE). Without objection.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Abraham amendment 2964 to the Defense appropriations bill. The Abraham amendment would authorize additional human rights monitors at the embassy in Beijing, China, as well as our other consulates around China. I think it is exceptionally warranted. It is very, very much needed.

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We have seen that in the last two, at least the last two annual State Department reports on human rights that China was found to be one of, if not the worst human rights abuser in the world today. I think that fact alone, the fact that our State Department, in monitoring the countries of the world, the nations of the world, issuing reports on human rights conditions in the various nations, found China to be the greatest abuser of human rights justifies the Abraham amendment in establishing additional human rights monitors, additional personnel in the embassy to monitor situations like this: “Chinese Resume Arrests,”” so that we will have the kind of knowledge about what is going on in the area of human rights within China that will allow us to, I think, engage China in the correct manner.

Mr. President, we do not expect that China will change overnight, nor do we expect that the amendment that I have offered dealing with forced abortions and religious repression, or the amendment that Senator ABRAHAM has offered will magically produce the change that we all desire. But it is essential that we shed light on the kind of human rights abuses, the dark practices that have become too evident for too many years. And it is essential that we engage those abuses with a substantive response.

This is part of that substantive response. The question before us is not whether we contain and isolate China. We cannot abandon China. We cannot do that. We would not want to do that. The question before us is whether or not we will engage them on issues of human rights, as well as trade, as well as national security issues, whether we will actually engage them, and in so doing support the cause of freedom.

Frankly, I am puzzled by those who would excuse themselves and pardon themselves by saying that they, too, are opposed to the human rights abuses in China but that they oppose any effort to have a substantive response to those human rights abuses.

So I believe that this is not only a well-intended but a well-drafted amendment. It is, once again, part of the package that passed in the House of Representatives now almost a year ago with overwhelming bipartisan support, and it is long past time for the Senate to weigh in on that; to support the monitoring of human rights abuses in China, as we seek to do throughout the world; to give the kinds of personnel to our State Department, to our diplomatic people to assure that we have the best intelligence, the best reporting possible.

It is, I think, evident that this is needed in light of this latest round of arrests of political dissidents in China. It is puzzling to me that we can talk about the great improvement in China and the reforms that are taking place, and that this Democratic Congress could put so much faith in President Jiang and his regime in Beijing when all of the evidence that is forthcoming, whether it is in the media, through our intelligence agencies, or the State Department itself indicates that, in fact, those abuses are as bad as ever, and that the crackdown on religious believers is now only most recently exceeded by the crackdown on political dissidents. I do believe, as the President has expressed, that eventually China will be different. I believe that. I think someday China will be a country in which free expression is tolerated and the freedoms that are not American
MA N'S LONGING FOR IMMOR- 
TALITY SHALL ACHIEVE ITS RE-
ALIZATION.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article from the July 20, 1998, edition of U.S. News & World Report and an article from the July 20, 1998, edition of Newsweek be printed in the Record.

The two articles are relevant to the speech that I delivered on Tuesday this week entitled “Man’s Longing for Immortality Shall Achieve Its Realization.”

I understand the Government Printing Office estimates it will cost approximately $1,283 to have these articles printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From U.S. News & World Report, July 20, 1998]

SCIENTISTS AND THEOLOGIANS DISCOVER A COMMON GROUND

Darwin, Freud, relativity, the mechanics of the atom, and other cornerstone ideas have been taken as supporting the modernistic conception of a change-based world in which forces devoid of meaning account for all outcomes. But there have remained that the big-bang theory shows that no god was necessary at the creation. Intellectuals have wrung their hands in angst about how bang-caused expansion will result in an inescapable running down of the stars, proving existence to be pointless. A depressing inevi-
table death of the universe figures promi-
nently in the works of post-modern novelist Thomas Pynchon, while in the movie Annie Hall, Woody Allen's character is psycholog-
ically paralyzed by his dread of the gal-
axies expanding until they die.

By contrast new developments in big-bang science are almost supernaturally upbeat: The universe wants us, and the stars will shine forever.

This remarkable change in perspectives is helping inspire a warming trend between sci-
etific and spiritual disciplines. A con-
ference at Berkeley, California, at which cosmologists discussed the theological implications of their work, is representative. Allan Sandage, one of the world’s leading as-
tronomers, told the gathering that contem-
porary cosmology is not just a search challenged church dogma were brand-
ished secularists have stumbled on signs that the cosmos is custom-made for life and consciousness. It is no coincidence that the Book of Genesis describes God creating existence out of the “waters,” because big-bang science asserts the early universe was mostly hydrogen, the chief component of H. O. Maybe that tells us some-
"Man’s Longing for Immortality Shall Achieve Its Realization."