Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am amazed to have had to have come to the floor more than once on this issue. The Treasury, Postal rule went down again. There may be more than one reason why. But underlying that rule is a bill that allows basic minimal health protection for women.

Since when does contraception for female government employees deserve to be in a bill whose rule is voted down? The women of America would say, no, never. And the bipartisan Women's Caucus of this Congress has said no in no uncertain terms.

This is a bill that deserves the word ''noncontroversial.'' It passed unanimously in the Senate. In the House it has passed twice. What we are talking about is a provision that simply says that if a health plan pays for prescriptions, it must also pay for contraception prescriptions.

Plans are often willing to pay for abortion. Plans are willing to pay for surgical procedures involved in reproduction. They certainly ought to be willing to pay for what prevents abortion. They pay for sterilization often, but not for simple contraception measures.

Now, the provision contains a religious exemption. Among the religious plans would be Catholic plans. Catholic plans would not have to pay for contraception.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) has inserted himself into this matter. He wants a morality exemption. That, of course, could never be granted by the Congress. One of the problems, I suppose, in a country like ours is we cannot figure out where everyone is on basic moral questions, but we do know where people are on religious questions.

I do not know what the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) or anybody else is doing in this matter. We are talking about a non-conferenceable item. There was no disagreement between the House and the Senate. Why is this matter up for grabs? Unless we now are in a Soviet-style body where both sides can pass a bill but somebody else can zap in and overturn it.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) has a provision that is a true insult to the women of America. He says, yes, they can cover contraception but only for the diaphragm. Surely only police states would tell women what kind of contraception to use. But let me be clear. Women need options in contraception precisely because some do not work, some make people sick, some are unsafe to some people, some have long-term effects and consequences. It is not for this body to decide.

The health plan, if it is providing prescriptions anyway, should not be able to exclude this basic minimal kind of prescription that most women of childbearing age in fact need in one form or the other, and it is not for the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) or any Member of this body to tell women which kind of contraception is the one that should be covered.

Women indeed should not have to explain themselves to this body on this question. I am embarrassed to have to stand before this body to talk about contraception for women, especially for women who work for the Federal service.

There are five major forms of contraception used, and none of them involve or come close to abortion. The pill, the diaphragm, the IUD, Norplant, and Depo-Provera. Ten percent of Federal plans offer no contraceptive coverage at all. This is a real family bill, when we consider that the woman of the family in this country pays 68 percent more for health coverage than the man in the family. We have got to get this thing down to size.

This provision is central to women's health. Above all, we should not bring abortion-style politics into contraception. That is where we have a broad umbrella of agreement.

Thus, this provision presents two fundamental issues for this House. One is simple democracy, when an item is non-conferenceable because both sides have agreed to it. Democracy works. We must leave it alone. We must not set the precedent that someone else can turn it around.

And the second principle, of course, is that contraception is central to women's health. Leave it be. Pass this provision in the Treasury, Postal appropriations bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BIG WEEK IN NATION'S CAPITAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, this week is a big week here in our Nation's capital. Yesterday was October 1 and yesterday was the first day of the new fiscal year, and we are celebrating something that has not occurred for 29 years.

This week we are celebrating the first not only balanced budget in 29 years, but the first budget surplus in 29 years, where we actually have more tax revenue coming into our Treasury than we are spending. It is now projected that over the next 10 years that this budget surplus will contain $1.6 trillion, that is $1 trillion, $600 billion, in tax revenue more than we are spending.

We have to make some choices now, of course, on what we are going to do with that extra money, money that the hard-working folks back home send to Washington. Just a week ago, 10 days ago, we made a choice, and with a bipartisan vote this House adopted what is called the 90–10 plan, a plan which sets aside 90 percent of surplus tax revenues to save Social Security.

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Ninety percent, of course, equals $1.4 trillion, $1,400,000,000,000, is surplus tax revenues being allocated under the 90/10 plan to save Social Security. I might note when the President first discussed the idea of using surplus tax revenues to save Social Security in January, the projected surplus at that time was $600 billion, and, since then, because of the economy and because of fiscal responsibility here in this House, we now have a $1.6 trillion surplus tax revenues. Under the 90/10 plan, we set aside more than twice what the President asked for. $600 billion by the President; we set aside $1.4 trillion.

That is a big victory, because the remaining 10 percent we give back to the American people. Ninety percent goes to Social Security; the remaining 10 percent goes back to the American people.

Representing the south side of Chicago and the south suburbs, I think it is important to point out that the 90/10 plan not only saves Social Security, the 90/10 plan helps eliminate the marriage tax penalty, helps Illinois farmers, helps Illinois small business people, helps Illinois schools and helps parents in Illinois who wish to send their kids on to college.

I might also note that while we propose to give extra tax dollars back to the taxpayers as well as saving Social Security, the President says he wants to save Social Security and spend the rest. I might note in the 90/10 plan we provide about $7 billion in tax relief in 1999, this coming year, whereas the President wants to spend $14 billion of the surplus. It is kind of interesting he would spend twice as much as we want to give back of the surplus to the American people.

Not only does our plan save Social Security, but, as I pointed out, it eliminates the marriage tax penalty for the majority of those who suffer the marriage tax penalty. I have often stood in this well and raised the question, is it right, is it fair, that 28 million married working couples with two incomes pay higher taxes under our Tax Code just because they are married? In fact, under our Tax Code, married working couples with two incomes pay more in taxes than identical couples with identical incomes living together outside of marriage. That is just wrong.

Our plan here, the 90/10 plan, eliminates the marriage tax penalty, and it not only eliminates it for the majority of those who suffer it, but for 28 million married working couples, they will see an extra $240 in extra take-home pay next year under our proposal. That is a car payment. That is a month or two of day care in Joliet, Illinois. That is real money for real people. Also six million married taxpayers will no

longer need to itemize under our marriage tax relief plan. We are bringing fairness, we are bringing simplicity, to the Tax Code.

Also, because we want to encourage individuals to save more for their retirement and future, save for education, the 90/10 plan not only eliminates the marriage tax penalty and saves Social Security, but it also rewards savings by allowing a single person to have their first $100 in savings interest tax exempt, and for a married couple the first $200. For a married couple they could have $10,000 in a savings account and essentially that interest they earn will be tax-free. That also simplifies our Tax Code, because 10 million couples will no longer need to itemize.

Mr. Speaker, the 90/10 plan saves Social Security. The 90/10 plan eliminates the marriage tax penalty for the majority of those suffer it, it helps Illinois farmers, it helps Illinois small business, it helps Illinois schools, it helps Illinois parents.

My hope is in the next week the Senate will take up this legislation, give it the same kind of bipartisan support it received here in the House, and I also hope the President will join with us to save Social Security and eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

THREE REASONS TO BE PROUD OF THE 20TH DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be from Illinois and the 20th district. Today I want to mention three reasons why.

The first integrated school in the Nation is about to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. The addition of Hamilton School in Otterville, Illinois, was recently announced by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Behind the history of the school is a heartwarming story of unselfish brotherly love between a young black slave and his master.

Silas Hamilton, a white doctor, founded the Hamilton School. Not having any children of his own, he freed a six-year-old black slave, George Washington, and raised him as his own child. Two years later, in 1836, when he was old enough, Washington began attending classes at the formerly all-white school in Otterville and grew up to be a successful farmer in Jersey County. When Washington died, he left a fund to have a monument erected in Hamilton's memory on the lawn of the school.

Today, Washington and Hamilton are buried together; not as master and slave, but as friend and friend. The large stone crypt is visible from the window of the Hamilton School, and serves as a symbol of the friendship between a white and a black man, and the beginnings of American racial harmony.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, while most rural post offices are seeing a decline in customers due to the resent technological advancements of e-mail, Internet and fax machines, the Texico Post Office's business just seems to keep growing.

The Texico Post Office will be celebrating its 100th year of service on Monday, the 5th of October. The celebration will include an open house, refreshments and a special commemorative postmark celebrating the 100th anniversary, which will be available for 30 days.

Fred Young has been the postmaster of the office for over 30 years and has seen a lot of changes during his tenure. ''There is a lot more paperwork involved, and there have been several rate changes. Also since I've been here our rural route delivery has doubled,'' said Mr. Young.

The Texico office is undoubtedly quieter than some of the bigger offices. The rural route only covers 75 miles. However, they are able to serve their patrons with just one rural carrier, Sondra Coldwell, her substitute, Marla Saupe, and the office's clerk, Terri Pemberton.

Even though the office is a bit smaller and quieter, it not something that Postmaster Young minds. Maintaining the tradition of good quality service for the patrons is Young's priority.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to sharing with the Members the information about Otterville and Texico, I want to take this time to make special mention of a loss to central Illinois of a woman that the State Journal-Register called a ''trailblazer'' who opened the doors for women.

Josephine Oblinger died last Sunday day at St. John's hospital in Springfield, Illinois. At 85, she left behind a legacy of good works that will likely never be duplicated. Her son Carl said, ''She just did the good things that needed to be done,'' and described her as his ''confidant for life.''

Josephine was a native of Chicago. She attended the University of Detroit Law School, graduating in 1943 Magna Cum Laude. The significance of that accomplishment is lost on many of us today, who forget that there was a time when women were neither expected or even allowed in some cases to pursue a career in the law. In fact, her son Carl remind us that even though she was the class valedictorian, she was not allowed to speak at the graduating ceremony solely because she was a woman.

In addition to the law, she was a teacher. She also was elected as Sangamon County Clerk, as an outstanding state representative, and President of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. In her later years, she never shied away from continuing to help those in need.

Yet, despite all that she has accomplished and all that she did for so many of us in central Illinois, her proudest accomplishment was her beloved son Carl. Since it is true that our greatest legacy is our children and the kind of people they turn out to be, I can tell you that her son Carl has honored his mother and his father in immeasurable terms.

My prayers go out to Carl and Marge along with thought, Josephine Oblinger made a difference in our lives, and so do the two of you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AN APPEAL FOR FAIRNESS IN AIRLINE COMPETITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, rarely, probably only one or two other times in my 24 year service in this House, have I taken the time of this body to address the House during special orders, but I do so today to express my utter astonishment over a multimillion dollar advertising campaign by the major airlines, designed to discredit a proposal by the Department of Transportation to stop unfair competitive practices against new low-fare airlines.

The ads seek to arouse public opinion by totally mischaracterizing the Department's proposal. Unfortunately, consumer organizations and new entrant carriers do not have the resources to respond by purchasing a comparable amount of advertising.

Typical of the airline campaign is the Brian Olson ad which shows a picture of a disappointed young man under the headline ''Vacation Canceled—Due to Government Regulation.''

The text of the ad says:

> Brian Olson was looking forward to the family vacation. With so many cheap air fares available, his family was planning the trip of a lifetime, but proposed Department of Transportation regulations could keep Brian home. That's bad news for Mrs. Olson.
>
> The DOT has proposed new regulations that will eliminate many discounted air fares and raise air fares for leisure travel in a misguided effort to re-regulate the airline industry.

The DOT proposal described in the ad bears flow resemblance to DOT's actual proposal. Quite frankly, if the issues were not so important, the ad is so ridiculous as to be laughable. The actual DOT proposal does not contemplate any general limitations on discounted air fares. The proposal is not designed to raise air fares, it is designed to produce lower air fares by protecting the new low-fare service against unfair competition, the purposes of which are