

adopts language proposed by the National Academy of Social Insurance in their January, 1998 report, entitled "From a Generation Behind to a Generation Ahead: Transforming Traditional Medicare."

Second, sustainable growth rate (SGR). Gives the Secretary authority to adjust payment updates based on target growth rates and to apply such adjustments by geographic areas. This antigaming initiative would enable Medicare to control unjustified program inflation by region and by service (MedPAC recommendation).

Third, outpatient payment reform. Allows the Secretary to pay the lower of hospital outpatient or ambulatory surgical center rates to ensure services in most appropriate setting.

Fourth, most favored rate. Inherent reasonableness authority granted in the BBA is expanded to allow any amount of adjustment that the Secretary finds, after appropriate research, is appropriate to eliminate overpayments. The Secretary shall have the authority to request the "most favored rate" in cases where Medicare is the volume buyer in the market and other efforts at achieving a market price are not available.

Fifth, use of appropriate settings. Allows the Secretary waive requirements which discourage or prevent treatment in a nonhospital or noninstitutional setting if she determines that an alternative setting can provide quality care and outcomes. For example, today Medicare does not cover care in a skilled nursing facility unless the patient has first had a 3-day hospital stay. Under this provision, if the Secretary finds that treatment of a particular disease or condition can be handled, with quality, in a SNF, she can waive the 3-day hospitalization requirement, thus ensuring treatment in a setting 1/2 to 1/3 less expensive.

Medicare has been extremely effective in providing health insurance for the elderly and disabled, a population the private sector has refused to cover. In fact, over 30 years, its cost inflation has been less than that in the private sector and its benefit package has been improved. This social insurance mission must be preserved—and in the face of a doubling of the population it serves, we must do more to keep Medicare efficient and effective. By implementing the modernizations included in this bill, Medicare will be able to adapt and grow in the changing health care marketplace.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HERBERT H. BATEMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I was regrettably absent on Monday, June 7, 1999, and consequently missed three recorded votes. The latter two were conducted under suspension of the rules. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Journal Vote, vote No. 167, "yea"; H.R. 435, vote No. 168, "yea"; H.R. 1915, vote No. 169, "yea."

WINNERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention the following students from the First Congressional District of New Mexico who are graduating from high school and have been awarded the Congressional Certificate of Merit. These students have excelled in not only their academic endeavors, but also in community service, school and civic activities. They represent the leaders of tomorrow and it is my pleasure to recognize these select students for their outstanding achievements. I, along with their parents, teachers, classmates, and the people of New Mexico, salute them.

Certificates of Merit Award Winners 1999—Adam Chamberlin, Menaul School; Jacob Dopson, Valley High School; Jessica Einfield, Hope Christian High School; Jodie Ellis, Del Norte High School; GERALYN ESPINOZA, Cibola High School; Jose Fernandez, Rio Grande High School; Kozina Gallegos, Evening High School; Lisette Graham, Manzano High School; Lindsey Kasprzyk, St. Pius High School; Suzanne Martinez, Bernalillo High School; Laura Matzen, Sandia Preparatory High School; Karissa McCall, Albuquerque High School; Christina Muscarella, La Cueva High School; Catrina Padilla, Mountainair High School; Amanda Pepping, Eldorado High School; Kate Sandoval, Academy High School; Jolianna Schultz, New Futures High School; Eric Stanton, Sandia High School; Olivia Tenorio, Estancia High School; Erin Ullrich, Moriarty High School.

ANNIVERSARY OF TEA 21

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the anniversary of the signing of TEA 21, the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century. Our commemoration of this event is a fitting recognition of the importance of this legislation to the American people and to the nation's economy.

This afternoon, I was joined in our main committee room by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leadership, Chairman SHUSTER, Chairman PETRI, Congressman RAHALL, Senators CHAFEE and VOINOVICH, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, and Federal Highway Administrator Ken Wykle in recounting some of the important achievements of that landmark bill. I would like to take this opportunity to share some of my thoughts with my colleagues.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, TEA 21 is important because it secured the future health of our transportation infrastructure system with guaranteed federal funding. The budget rules in the Act ensure that all federal gas taxes will be spent on needed surface transportation improvements. And we now have an opportunity to apply the same principles to our nation's irreplaceable economic jewel: our nation's aviation system.

TEA 21 reversed a dangerous 30-year trend in which transportation spending as a percentage of public spending dropped by one-half. It authorized \$218 billion for six years—the highest funding levels ever for surface transportation—including \$177 billion for highway and highway safety programs and \$41 billion for transit programs, 43 percent more than its predecessor legislation, ISTEA, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. Of the amounts provided, at least \$198 billion is guaranteed for obligation under the new budget rules in the Act.

TEA 21 is important because transportation capital investments have profound effects on national economic growth and productivity. Investment in the transportation system reduces the cost of producing goods, resulting in lower prices and increased sales, in virtually all sectors of American industry. These productivity effects allow businesses to change the way they organize their production and distribution systems for the benefit of all Americans.

The Act has significant employment impacts in the transportation construction sector. According to the Federal Highway Administration, each billion dollars of construction investment supports a total of 44,709 full-time jobs at the national economy level. These include 8,390 "direct" on-site construction jobs, 20,924 "indirect" jobs in industries providing construction materials and equipment for transportation projects, and 15,395 jobs produced in other sectors of the economy as a result of these "direct" and "indirect" employment effects. And we're talking about good jobs in the construction sector that compensate the average construction worker \$17 per hour or higher.

TEA 21 and ISTEA made important policy shifts and took new directions to solving our transportation problems. TEA 21 continues the legacy of ISTEA by enhancing the intermodal balance of our transportation network. TEA 21 provides more than \$3.6 billion for enhancement projects, compared to just \$41 million spent on bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the 18 years before ISTEA. In addition, TEA 21 designates a full 20 percent of the legislation's total funding for rebuilding and expanding existing transit systems and constructing new ones. It also supports maglev and high speed rail development and provides loans and loan guarantees for freight railroad rehabilitation and improvement.

Second, TEA 21 further integrates transportation, stewardship of our natural resources, and protection of the environment. It maintains and expands the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program providing \$8 billion to help communities address environmental concerns related to transportation and enable them to develop innovative transportation solutions, such as rail transit, to address problems traditionally tackled by pouring more concrete. TEA 21 also created a new \$120 million pilot program to coordinate land use and transportation planning. TEA 21 shows that increased transportation spending need not be harmful to the environment.

Third, TEA 21 includes strong provisions to reduce transportation risks and promote safe driving. TEA 21 establishes a new \$500 million incentive program for states that enact and enforce a .08 blood alcohol standard for drunk driving and that severely punishes repeat drunk drivers and prohibits open alcohol containers in motor vehicles. TEA 21 also increases funding for highway safety data collection for the National Driver Register to track