

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE BRUCE VENTO, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

SPEECH OF

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 10, 2000*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my colleague, Congressman Bruce F. Vento, who passed away on Tuesday, October 10, 2000, at the age of 60, after 23 years of dedicated service as the Representative from Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District.

Congressman Vento was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1977. Over the course of his 12 remarkable terms in office, Congressman Vento has taken a leadership role on environmental, housing and banking reform issues. As chairman of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands for over 10 years the Congressman was enormously successful in protecting hundreds of thousands of acreage from Minnesota to Alaska and American Samoa. Through his role as ranking member on the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, he has worked tirelessly to modernize our financial services industry while continuing to safeguard consumer privacy. Finally, as an active, vocal member of the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee, Congressman Vento will always be remembered for his admirable fight to end homelessness in America. The most fitting tribute that we, his colleagues, can pay Congressman Vento is to follow in his footsteps and continue his commendable work on behalf of the environment, the homeless, and banking reform.

Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in remembering one of our own, the Honorable Bruce F. Vento. He will be sorely missed by myself and all members of this House. I also wish to take this opportunity to extend my deepest sympathy to his family and friends during this difficult time.

RYAN WHITE CARE ACT  
AMENDMENTS OF 2000

SPEECH OF

**HON. KAREN McCARTHY**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 10, 2000*

Ms. McCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support and as a co-sponsor of the Ryan White CARE Act, which is a life-saving piece of legislation. Persons with HIV/AIDS deserve the medical support services provided through the grants and programs included in this measure. Although the rate of HIV infection per year is decreasing in America, there are still over 40,000 new infections per year. We must continue our national efforts to prevent future transmissions and improve the quality of life for those living with AIDS.

To date, the Ryan White Care Act has helped provide the latest drug therapy to more

than 100,000 poor people, reduced AIDS mortality by seventy percent, and decreased mother-to-child transmission of HIV by seventy percent. It is clear that this legislation is successful, and I believe the measure before us strengthens our national assault on this disease.

My home state of Missouri received over \$15 million dollars for FY 1998 under the Ryan White CARE Act. These funds have helped those living with HIV or AIDS, through investments in medication and vital support services. The legislation before us today contains a provision on partner notification, which I believe is essential to decreasing the spread of HIV and reducing the transmission of all sexually transmitted diseases. I am concerned with the racial disparities in the incidence of HIV infection in Missouri, and specifically in Kansas City. This measure will hopefully make strides in reducing the incidence of HIV in both minority communities as well as among women and youth, who are especially vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in full support of passage of the Ryan White CARE Act. Our support sends a message that HIV/AIDS is a fully recognized public health problem, and has our commitment to protect all vulnerable persons from this devastating disease.

PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT  
ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

**HON. KEN BENTSEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 10, 2000*

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2438, the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act. Almost all Members agree that S. 2438 significantly increases government safety regulation in the safest sector of America's transportation industry. I commend the Senate for swiftly and overwhelmingly passing this legislation, making pipeline safety legislation up to the House.

I would like to begin with the safety record in the pipeline industry. According to Office of Pipeline Safety statistics, 76 unforgettable, tragic fatalities were reported for liquid and gas pipeline accidents from 1986 to 1999. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics, 10,772 equally tragic fatalities resulted from accidents involving large trucks in 1997 and 1998 alone. One could easily say that the current pipeline transportation system, which transports explosive, hazardous materials, is hundreds of times safer than the transportation system that carries the large majority of America's economic output. However, everyone knows a "good" safety record is not enough. We must always keep working to improve the status quo.

Some of my colleagues will argue that this is an "industry bill" and is actually a fake. I respect their desire to appear independent, but I strongly disagree. Clearly the U.S. Senate, including many particularly independent Senators, feels that this bill significantly increases public safety. The bill strengthens reporting by a factor of 420. Spills over 2,100 gallons are reported now, spills over 5 gallons would be reported under S. 2438. The bill increases

daily fines by a factor of 20 (\$25K to \$500K). The pipeline industry is part of the fundamental energy base of our economy and has a strong safety record overall. It would be unwise and unjust to disproportionately attack an industry that is vital to the economy and significantly safer than the predominate mode of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, for those concerned with pipeline inspection, I would like to remind them that S. 2438 will provide much needed momentum for the issuance of DOT mandatory testing requirements, and sets a deadline of December 31, 2001. The bill authorizes funds to develop and implement these regulations. If S. 2438 is passed and signed, every interstate pipeline operator will be required to submit a detailed, integrated safety program to the DOT. The bill also provides for research and development into new inspection techniques.

In summary, this bill provides higher standards, stiffer enforcement, and authorizes over \$170 million to make it possible. The bill is supported by the Secretary of Transportation, the U.S. Senate, and a large bipartisan group of my colleagues.

I sympathize with the opposition to this bill. However, in this diverse body, we must sometimes accept imperfect legislation without as much opportunity for input as we would like. I believe that this bill is a large step in the right direction on pipeline safety. I also believe that this bill does not place the blame for accidents on individual employees. Section 14, "Operator Assistance in Investigations", allows the DOT to direct the suspension of an employee that directly and substantially contributed to an accident. The employee may return to work if they are later cleared of blame or are retrained. The legislation does not state that an employee on the scene is culpable or an automatic suspect.

This is our last chance to improve public pipeline safety this year. Do not wait for further accidents to move on this issue. I urge all my colleagues to support the improvement of pipeline safety.

FAIR TAX TREATMENT FOR INSURANCE AGENTS' TERMINATION PAYMENTS ACT OF 2000

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 11, 2000*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a small business tax relief measure that will assist thousands of insurance agents throughout this country as they prepare for retirement.

Many exclusive insurance agents who leave or retire from their jobs receive what is known as a "termination payment" under a contractual agreement with their respective insurance companies. These payments are paid for intangible assets, including the agent's "book of business" and goodwill, and are usually spread out over a series of years.

Currently, there is confusion about the tax treatment of these termination payments, which has caused some IRS field agents to question the capital gains treatment of these payments. My bill, the "Fair Tax Treatment for Insurance Agents' Termination Payments Act