purpose for the visit of Mr. Nazarbayev to United States.

The issue at stake was Kazakhstan's MiG sales to North Korea and the failure of democracy. When Mr. Nazarbayev promised Mr. Gore the next election ''would be better,'' the OSCE report on the 1999 elections in Kazakhstan were still pending. Mr. Fuerth said at the meeting, ''We will adopt its [OSCE's] finding as leverage on Nazarbayev.'' Mr. Fuerth continued, ''Our government has been saying repeatedly, and the vice president personally, pay attention to what the monitors are saying about your, i.e., Nazarbayev's, elections.'' Mr. Fuerth said Mr. Nazarbayev is ''not your poster boy'' for democracy and freedom. Mr. Fuerth said, ''Gore sees his personal relationship as essential to prodding Nazarbayev toward democracy.''

America's goals include, says Mr. Fuerth, ''carrying Kazakhstan to a modern self-sustaining state at every level of societal concern. . . . We are into their affairs at an fantastic level of detail, and that is only possible with the political support of Nazarbayev and this [Gore-Nazarbayev] commission and the commitment of the United States to a face-to-face meeting with the vice president.''

Mr. Fuerth continued to say the United States must persuade them to ''more and more perfect democracy,'' and he is ''perfectly aware of the imperfections.'' According to Mr. Fuerth, Mr. Gore's message is ''Democracy is on the agenda. Democracy is not our idiosyncrasy.'' He describes Mr. Gore's agenda as follows: ''Democracy and elections are essential parts of the relationship Nazarbayev wants with the U.S. Gore will explain why a valid election is indispensable if he [Mr. Nazarbayev] wants the relationship he seeks.''

After meeting with the president, Mr. Nazarbayev went back home and continued in his oil-mired practices, human-rights violations and the creation of his position as president for life.

Since Mr. Gore was given the portfolio on Russia and the independent states of the former Soviet Union, the essential difference between what the Cox Report finds in the case of Russia and the administration policy toward Kazakhstan is that in the case of Russia it was mired with good intentions for reform that turned sour because of support for Boris Yeltsin's corrupt, undemocratic government. You cannot tell Russia, a major power, what to do, while the situation in Kazakhstan was totally different.

Not only was the United States in the position to help implement the recommendations for democracy and freedom in Kazakhstan, it coddled the dictator and made no impact whatsoever or follow up on the promises made my Mr. Nazarbayev to Mr. Gore to advance the democracy in Kazakhstan.

In the case of Kazakhstan, the United States was in a stronger position than in Russia, with the support of OSCE, multiple human rights organizations and NGOs, to impose upon the dictatorship to implement their promises made on human rights and free elections as a price for legitimacy in American eyes.

They did not do it. The administration tacitly accepted Mr. Nazarbayev's defense that there is an emergent democracy in Kazakhstan and it is a question of ''time.''

It seems the Clinton-Gore administration did not try very hard to institutionalize and implement their commitments to democracy, free elections, and an open press in the case of Kazakhstan.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS DISCLOSURE ACT

HON. RICHARD K. ARMEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce the Employee Health Benefits Disclosure Act of 2000, a small but important stepping-stone to the consumer-driven health-care marketplace of tomorrow.

This bill addresses an important problem. Today, most workers don't know how much money their workplace health coverage costs. They have no idea. Their employers usually only inform them about the ''employee share'' of the cost. The employer's share is left invisible.

Also left invisible is the generous taxpayer subsidy given to workplace health benefits under section 106 of the tax code.

Under that section, workers pay no income, payroll, or unemployment taxes on those benefits. Yet employees are almost always unaware of the fact. This is wrong. People have a right to know about the tax benefits they're receiving. They have a right to know how much their labor is really worth.

This bill gives workers that important information. It helps them become more informed employees and better health-care consumers.

How does it do this? It requires employers, who have more than 100 employees, and who provide health benefits, to communicate to their employees at least once a year the amount of the employer's share of the contribution.

This notice must be accompanied with the following sentence: ''This contribution is part of your total compensation and reduces your cash wages and other compensation by a like amount.'' The requirement takes effect January 1, 2005.

I've tried to make the requirement as convenient as possible for employers. They may compute an average, rather than a specific amount per employee. And they may use the most convenient method of communication. They may use a letter, the weekly pay stub, the summary plan description, a slip inserted with the W–2 tax form, or any other reasonable means.

The important thing is not how the information is provided—but that it be provided, and in a clear and understandable form. I confess I'm not happy about imposing a new government mandate on employers. That goes against my grain. It rubs me the wrong way. But in this limited and unique case, I think the benefits far outweigh the costs.

It is good public policy for workers to know how much their labor is worth, and how their compensation is structured. Workers have a right to know this currently invisible information which bears so directly on their well-being and happiness. Employers have a duty to provide it.

Legislation is needed to make sure employers provide it in a clear, consistent, and understandable manner. Hence this bill.

I look forward to a day when health care in America is a true marketplace in which consumers are king, where prices are constantly going down and quality is constantly going up, and where everyone gets the health care he needs when he needs it.

Only consumers can bring such a market into being—only consumers armed with full information.

PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB FRANKS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, having experienced, first hand, a needless pipeline tragedy in Edison, NJ, pipeline safety is of particular concern to me and the other members of our delegation. While I applaud the Senate's efforts to pass comprehensive pipeline safety legislation this year, I remain concerned that their final product would have limited local participation in critical pipeline safety decisions. I have also been contacted by many local officials, representatives from citizens safety groups and environmental advocates who feel that S. 2438 does not adequately address their concerns. Although the legislative process rarely allows for a ''perfect'' piece of legislation which addresses every concern, the process by which this bill was brought to the House Floor did not allow for any improvement upon the base text. Therefore, I would have voted against this bill and remain hopeful that we will be able to reach some bi-partisan compromise before Congress adjourns.

TRIBUTE TO EUGENE STANDIFER, JR.

HON. KAREN McCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Ms. McCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual from the State of Missouri. This year Eugene Standifer, Jr. will be joined by his friends and family to celebrate his 75th birthday.

In 1944, Gene Standifer began his career in public service as a member of the United States Army during World War II. He was honorably discharged in 1951. After returning home, he took a job with the U.S. Postal Service as a railway mail clerk sorting mail on a railway mail car traveling between Kansas City, Missouri and Denver, Colorado. While employed as a postal worker, Gene Standifer attended Rockhurst College where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Accounting and Economics in 1957. Gene Standifer advanced his career in 1965 with the General Services Administration as a Supervisory Accountant. In 1970 he joined the Department of Housing and Urban Development as an Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance Specialist who investigated and enforced fair housing laws and regulations. From 1972 until 1978, Gene Standifer worked for the Environmental Protection Agency as a Regional Equal Opportunity Officer that supervised the Kansas City regional offices. And until his retirement in 1986, Gene Standifer worked for the U.S. Department of