

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER STROUP FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher Stroup, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 247, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the twelve years Christopher has been involved with scouting, he has earned 33 merit badges and has held numerous leadership positions, serving as patrol leader and den chief. Christopher is also a member in the Order of the Arrow and the Tribe of Mic-O-Say.

For his Eagle Scout project, Christopher planned the design, obtained the needed materials, and constructed storage cabinets for the science department of Oak Park High School in the North Kansas City School District.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher Stroup for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG, IMPROVEMENT, AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this legislation. This is a very difficult vote for me, as I have worked for years to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. I have had little more than 24 hours to examine this 676-page conference report, but what I know about H.R. 1 is this: seniors will pay dearly for a weak benefit that undermines their traditional Medicare benefits.

The benefit provided to seniors under H.R. 1 is very weak and does not even take effect until 2006. What insurance plan on earth, except one designed by Congress, would create a "donut hole" that is designed specifically to stop coverage for seniors when they need it? I believe that American seniors will rebel when they find out what Congress is offering them, especially if they compare it to the benefit that Members of Congress themselves receive. This conference report asks seniors to pay a monthly premium of \$35, which is in addition to their existing Medicare premium (\$66.60 per

month in 2004). Additionally, seniors will pay the first \$250 of their drug costs each year, after which Medicare would then start paying 75% of drug costs. But as seniors' drug costs increase, the benefit disappears. When total annual drug costs reach \$2,250, government support would stop. Seniors would be responsible for the next \$2,850 in drug costs. Only when their drug bill for the year reached \$5,100 would Medicare begin paying 95% of all further costs.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the infamous "donut hole" into which thousands of unexpected seniors will fall each year. In their effort to create legislation that seems to cover every senior, but actually does not, this legislation eliminates coverage when seniors need help paying for drugs. Even worse, this gap increases to over \$5,000 by the year 2013.

Seniors will be angry—justifiably—when they begin to understand this donut hole and the deceptive nature of the drug benefit. They might ask why it is there. Some will answer that it was necessary in order to fit the benefit inside the \$400 billion budget. This is true, but only because this legislation does not take any action to address the high cost of prescription drugs.

A more generous benefit could have been created for seniors had the Republican leadership chosen to take some action to increase the affordability of prescription drugs. Under the conference report, the Secretary of Health and Human Services is prohibited by law from leveraging the buying power of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries to get drugs at lower prices for Medicare, just as the Veterans Administration does for 25.8 million American veterans, including 252,791 veterans in Kansas. Secretary of HHS Tommy Thompson told me two days before the vote that he would gladly exercise authority to negotiate lower prices if he had it. But the bill specifically denied him that authority. Many people covered by insurance are able to get a better price due to the fact that they can band together and demand discounts from manufacturers.

Additionally, this conference report fails to allow seniors to reimport medicine from industrialized countries where drugs are significantly cheaper. This despite the fact that a majority of the House approved this concept in passing H.R. 2427, the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act, by a bipartisan vote of 243–186, on July 25, 2003. H.R. 1 contains a provision allowing Canada-only reimportation, but added a "poison pill" requiring the Secretary of HHS to certify reimportation—something that Secretary Thompson has repeatedly said he will not do. Americans should not have to travel to Canada to obtain reasonably priced drugs that in many cases were developed in part with U.S. tax dollars by U.S. companies and manufactured in U.S.-certified facilities. This policy would save American seniors significantly over the next ten years, and remove the unfair situation in which American seniors often pay double or even more for the same drugs than seniors in other industrialized nations.

The legislation includes several other objectionable provisions. The provisions allowing for

premium support will undermine the Medicare program. Although promoted as a "demonstration," up to 7 million beneficiaries could be forced to participate starting in 2010. Under premium support, private plans will be allowed to offer health and drug benefits to attract low-cost young and healthy seniors from Medicare, leaving older and sicker seniors behind. The seniors left in Medicare will see their costs rise, forcing more seniors out of the program. This is called by some the "Medicare death spiral," and it is proof that the conference report puts the profits of pharmaceutical and insurance companies ahead of the needs of our seniors and the disabled.

The H.R. 1 conference report contains drastic cuts to our nation's cancer care system. This legislation will deprive America's cancer care system of \$1 billion a year. A cut like this will be devastating to cancer care. If this happens, many cancer centers will close, others will have to admit fewer patients, and still others will lay off oncology nurses and other critical support staff. Legislation intended to increase access to prescription drug coverage will do the opposite for cancer patients, reducing their ability to get needed cancer care.

Mr. Speaker, today I am forced to vote against this flawed bill, despite the fact that this legislation includes important payment increases for Medicare providers. I regret that these needed payments were included in this legislation in order to build support for this inadequate benefit. I have long supported adequate funding for Medicare providers in Kansas, and I have supported legislation in this Congress and previous Congresses that would erase the cuts approved in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. Additionally, I signed as a cosponsor of H.R. 3549, introduced by Rep. Baron Hill, legislation that would provide payment increases for doctors, hospitals, home health providers and others who need and deserve adequate Medicare payments. These provisions were included in the larger H.R. 1 and should be enacted now, separately.

If this legislation, despite its great flaws and incomplete benefit, is signed into law, I will continue to fight for needed changes. And I will do all that I can to ensure that the Medicare prescription drug benefit represents what seniors need and expect.

INTRODUCTION OF H. CON. RES. 330

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday my good friend from Connecticut, Rep. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, and I introduced H. Con. Res. 330, The International Human Rights Equality Act. I would like to specially thank my good friend from Massachusetts, Rep. BARNEY FRANK, and my good friend from Ohio, Rep. DENNIS KUCINICH, for their support at our press conference yesterday on the occasion of the introduction.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Our landmark legislation shines a bright light on one of the most underreported and unrecognized areas of egregious human rights violations, the international persecution of individuals based on their real or perceived sexual or gender identity.

Supported by 44 of our colleagues, we believe very strongly that we must send a clear message that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people must be treated with the same dignity and respect as every human being, and not with hatred and violence that they face in all too many places in the world.

Ongoing persecutions against the LGBT community include arbitrary arrests, rape, torture, imprisonment, extortion, and even extra judicial executions.

The scope of these human rights violations is staggering, and for the victims, there are few avenues for relief. Some countries create an atmosphere of impunity for rapists and murderers of gays and lesbians by failing to prosecute or even to investigate violence targeted at these individuals because of their sexual orientation. Not only do some countries refuse to sanction these abuses, but often, agents of the State perpetrate them. And believe it or not, at the outset of the 21st Century there are still countries that advocate the death penalty for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

We simply cannot ignore the number and frequency of such grievous crimes any longer. As our legislation makes clear, the international community has long established a legal framework for the protection of international human rights, based on the individual human being. The world community voluntarily agreed upon these legal instruments, and we have to demand vigorously that the parties to those treaties fulfill their obligations. We must demand that all countries obey international norms, particularly those countries that have become a party to international human rights treaties. None of these instruments, which are the foundation for a peaceful and civilized world community, exempt anybody from the protection of their human rights because of gender, race, origin or age, and most certainly there are no exceptions from full protection on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our legislation urges the Administration to develop a new strategy in our foreign policy to directly combat these outrageous violations, and tear away the veil of silence or ignorance on those tragic developments all over the world, which have a devastating impact on the lives of each individual affected.

Our Resolution details just a few examples of violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals in countries as wide ranging as Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Nepal, among others.

My colleagues and I are committed to protecting human rights wherever they come under attack. I will work hard to create a broad bipartisan coalition to support this legislation in this Congress and beyond.

Our legislation has the wide support of the human rights community, and I would particularly like to thank Amnesty International, the Human Rights Campaign, Human Rights Watch and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, as well as National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization (LLEGO), for their input and support.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR JAMES
RAINWATER

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the life of James Rainwater, mayor of Valdosta, GA, who passed away recently at the age of 62. James is survived by his two daughters, a son-in-law and two grandchildren: Jamie Rainwater, Michael and Robin Woodruff, Blake and Jarred Woodruff.

Jimmy Rainwater began his political career as a councilman in 1986 before he took the Mayor's seat two years later. With nearly 16 years in office, Jimmy Rainwater served as Valdosta's Mayor longer than anyone in the city's past. When he entered the office of Mayor, he addressed and solved many problems that were plaguing the city, from poor quality drinking water to slow growth of industry to the low morale of the city employees and departments. From 1988 to 2003, Mayor Rainwater saw Valdosta grow to become home of Valdosta State University and achieve metropolitan status. He helped save Moody Air Force Base from closing and saw the accreditation of the police and fire departments.

Jimmy Rainwater wasn't just a mayor in the traditional sense of an official who presides over City Council and attends to the business of the city. He was devoted to these tasks. He rarely missed a council meeting. He often worked the phones and personally visited people to get things done. But there was more to his tenure as mayor than just attending to the business of the city.

Jimmy Rainwater seemed to attend almost everything. Wearing a pair of his many cowboy boots, he was a familiar figure at business grand openings and ground breakings, in the newspaper and on local television, in neighborhoods and community events, at banquets, dinners and suppers, charity balls and organizational fundraisers. He presented awards and proclamations, attended funerals and retirements, church services and military changes of command.

Mr. Speaker, Jimmy Rainwater was a fine American leader who will be sorely missed. It is my honor to rise and pay tribute to Jimmy Rainwater.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF JACK AND
ELEANOR BUELL

HON. C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the contributions of Jack and Eleanor Buell of St. Maries, Idaho, to the 2003 Capitol Holiday Tree. For the first time in history, Idaho has the distinct honor of supplying the nation's Christmas tree. The magnificent Engelmann spruce was harvested from the Boise National Forest, visited 53 Idaho communities, and now is on its way to the Capitol. This historic journey was made possible by the tremendous generosity of Jack and Elea-

nor Buell. Owners of Buell Trucking, they donated the truck, custom-made trailer and driver for the Capitol Holiday Tree and the 70 companion trees that will be displayed throughout Washington, DC. This has been a wonderful gesture of volunteerism by Jack and Eleanor, and it is indicative of the way they live. Jack is a long-time Commissioner in Benewah County, where he and Eleanor have given to their community and the State of Idaho time and again. The citizens of St. Maries, Benewah County, and the State of Idaho have for years owed a debt of gratitude to Jack and Eleanor Buell. Mr. Speaker, for their efforts to make the Capitol Holiday Tree possible, the nation owes them our thanks as well.

INCREASING THE WAIVER RE-
QUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN
LOCAL MATCHING REQUIRE-
MENTS TO AMERICAN SAMOA,
GUAM, THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, OR
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

SPEECH OF

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for this legislation. As has been stated, this legislation would provide needed relief to Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by increasing the matching waiver requirement for federal grants. The House's passage of this bill today would be timely given the fact that our territorial governments continue to face declining revenues.

The difficult economic conditions in the territories make it particularly challenging for us to access federal grants, given the matching requirements and the current inflexibility in waiving these requirements.

I am pleased this legislation not only increases the waiver requirement from the current threshold of two hundred thousand dollars to five hundred thousand dollars, but it also clarifies that this waiver requirement applies across the board—to all federal agencies and departments—and not just for grants administered by the Department of the Interior.

While this legislation seeks to correct this inconsistency in the application of law, I remain concerned about another inconsistency. I am aware of conflicting and varying application of the waiver requirement among federal agencies and departments with respect to the grant recipient. The non-profit organizations in the territories fulfill a significant role in our communities. Nonprofits help meet the needs of the homeless, the disadvantaged, and those whose lives are buffeted by tough economic times. Their work is often supported by federal grants. Without such federal assistance, the non-profit organizations in the territories would struggle to meet their missions and most would not be able to maintain the current level of assistance to our communities.

On Guam alone, we have a sizable non-profit community. Organizations like Guma Mami, Erica's House, Catholic Social Services, and Sanctuary all work for example to help the