

Because AmeriCare builds on the highly efficient Medicare program, the Commonwealth Fund concluded that it would result in the greatest overall savings to the health system of all health reform plans they modeled. Medicare's per capita costs have grown at a slower rate than private health insurance or the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. Using Medicare as a model will reduce costs for households, employers, state and local governments.

Our Nation is at a crossroads. Our legacy should be a future where our children are not saddled with debt, where they do not fear financial ruin due to an illness. Whether we build a healthy future for our children or not depends upon the decisions we make today. True compassion means offering real solutions, not empty promises.

Working together, applying common sense approaches that build on what works, we can ensure that no-one risks the loss of insurance coverage. All we need is the will to do it.

As we edge closer to our next discussion on health reform, we need to ask, is medical care a civic and social right like police and fire services, education, and environmental protection?

Or is health care "you're on your own?"

I hope I can count on my colleagues and our endorsing organizations to advance a shared vision of higher quality, lower costs, and universal coverage through the adoption of AmeriCare.

Attached is a short summary of AmeriCare. More can be found on my website at <http://www.house.gov/stark>.

AMERICARE HEALTH CARE ACT OF 2007

Overview: The AmeriCare Health Care Act ("AmeriCare") is a practical proposal to ensure that everyone has health coverage in our country. It builds on what works in today's health care system to provide simple, affordable, reliable health insurance. People would be covered under the new AmeriCare system, modeled on Medicare, or they would continue to obtain health coverage through their employer.

Using the administrative efficiencies within Medicare and building on the existing coverage people receive through their jobs today, we can create an affordable, efficient, and stable universal health care system in America—and guarantee access to medical innovation and the world's most advanced providers and facilities.

Structure and Administration: Creates a new title in the Social Security Act, "AmeriCare." Provides universal health care for all U.S. residents, with special eligibility for children (under 24), pregnant women, and individuals with limited incomes (<300% FPL). Sets out standards for supplemental plans with a focus on consumer protection. Requires the Secretary to negotiate discounts for prescription drugs.

Benefits: Adults receive Medicare Part A and B benefits; preventive services, substance abuse treatment, mental health parity; and prescription drug coverage equivalent to the BC/BS Standard Option in 2005. Children receive comprehensive benefits and Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) coverage with no cost-sharing.

Cost Sharing: There is a \$350 deductible for individuals, \$500 for families, and 20% coinsurance. Total spending (premiums, deductibles, and co-insurance) is capped at out-of-pocket maximum of \$2,500 individual/\$4,000 family, or 5 percent of income for beneficiaries with income between 200 percent–300 percent FPL and 7.5 percent of income for

beneficiaries with income between 300 percent–500 percent FPL. There is no cost sharing for children, pregnant women, low-income (below 200 percent FPL). Sliding scale subsidies are in place for cost-sharing for individuals between 200 percent and 300 percent FPL.

Financing: At April 15 tax filing each year, individuals either demonstrate equivalent coverage through their employer or pay the AmeriCare premium based on cost of coverage and class of enrollment (individual, couple, unmarried individual with children, or married couple with children). Employers may either pay 80 percent of the AmeriCare premium or provide equivalent benefits through a group health plan (the contribution for part-time workers is pro-rated). AmeriCare does not affect contracts or collective bargaining agreements in effect as of the date of enactment, and employers may choose to provide additional benefits. Employers with fewer than 100 employees have until January 1, 2012 to comply (employees of small businesses would still only pay 20 percent of the premium).

SALUTE TO HAROLD GAULDEN

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute my constituent, Harold Gaulden, a former military police officer of the Tuskegee Airmen's fire and rescue squad. Mr. Gaulden has come to Washington, DC today as one of six Tuskegee Airmen receiving the Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of the corps' surviving pilots and support personnel. The reward recognizes their heroism during World War II in facing the twin battles of the onslaught of the enemy abroad and the blight of racism at home.

The Tuskegee Airmen were created by the Army in 1941 as part of an Army Air Corps program to train Black Americans as military pilots, and comprised nearly 1,000 pilots and 10,000 support staff. These men were the first Black pilots in the American military, and Harold Gaulden, originally from Louisiana but now a Hoosier in my district, spent a year at the Tuskegee airbase in Alabama valiantly and diligently helping defend our Nation. Mr. Gaulden remembers such indignities as being able to buy a Coke at the base's PX but being forced to drink it outside. Mr. Gaulden saw segregated mess hall lines at the base—one for White soldiers and German prisoners of war, and another for the Black soldiers. Harold has been an energetic airmen activist for 20 years, speaking to colleges, elementary schools, and community groups about what he and his airmen brethren endured for our country.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award that Congress can bestow upon its recipients, and I was proud to co-sponsor the legislation in the 109th Congress that authorizes this award. I am pleased to see Harold being honored today for his service to our country. Although Harold has said he would gladly fight for his country, medal or not, bravery such as this should not go unrecognized—it is what has made, and continues to make, the United States of America the best nation on earth.

RURAL WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud join with my colleague, Representative TOM COLE, to introduce the "Rural Wind Energy Development Act," which would provide an investment tax credit to individuals—homeowners, farmers, and small businesses—to offset the up-front costs of owning a small wind turbine.

Small wind systems are electric generators that produce 100 kilowatts or less of clean and renewable energy to power homes, farms, and small businesses. With these small turbines, individuals can generate their own power, independent from the electric grid. These wind turbines will allow consumers to cut their energy bills and, at times, put power back into the grid. According to the American Wind Energy Association, a single wind turbine can provide \$2,000–\$4,000/year per megawatt or more in additional farm income.

This legislation is necessary because there is no Federal support for small wind systems. The Federal Production Tax Credit (PTC) applies mainly to large utility-scale wind projects, not to individuals who want to install their own wind systems for on-site power. An investment tax credit for small wind systems will help provide stability and certainty for the industry to make the necessary investments to grow. It will also help consumers afford this pollution-free energy. In the 2005 Energy Policy Act, residential solar systems received a similar investment tax credit and saw an increase of more than 20 percent in installations over the last year.

Specifically, this bill would provide a tax credit of \$1500 per ½ kilowatt of capacity for small wind systems, which could be carried over for a customer unable to take advantage of the entire credit within a 1 year period. The bill also calls for a 3-year accelerated depreciation for wind property.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in supporting this important policy to promote wind power, which produces no harmful greenhouse gas emissions, involves no environmentally damaging natural resource extraction such as mining or drilling, and does not need fuel imported from foreign governments to run.

WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION INTEGRITY ACT

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. McKEON. Madam Speaker, the purpose of this legislation is simple: only those legally permitted to work in the United States should be able to make a determination on union representation in their workplace.

It defies logic that anyone who lives in this nation illegally—and works here illegally—is able to decide whether legal workers must join a union. But under current law, unions can obtain signatures during card check campaigns