

considered in reallocation calculations under VERA. The programs removed would include: Readjustment counseling and treatment, counseling and psychiatric care for the mentally ill, drug and alcohol related programs, programs for the homeless, PTSD programs, spinal cord injury programs, AIDS programs and geriatric and extended care programs.

In a memorandum prepared for me by the Congressional Research Service on this legislation, it estimates that this bill would result in an additional 5–6% of veterans in the north-east becoming eligible for free health care. That translates to approximately 75,000 additional veterans for New York alone. CRS also estimates that if 20% of these veterans seek to use VA services, a conservative assumption, it would result in an increased caseload for both VISN #2 and #3 of 15–20%. This would force a recomputation of VERA distributions, and result in more VA health care funds remaining in northern urban areas.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which will help ensure that all veterans receive equal opportunity to the health care which they have earned, regardless of where they have chosen to live.

H.R. 24

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CRITERIA FOR REQUIRED COPAYMENT FOR MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) EXCEPTION BASED ON PRIOR CATASTROPHIC HEALTH CARE EXPENSES.—Subsection (a) of section 1722 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “or” at the end of paragraph (2);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting “; or”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) the veteran’s expenses for medical care (as defined in section 213 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) for the previous year are in excess of 7½ percent of the veteran’s adjusted gross income for the previous year (as determined for purposes of the personal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).”

(b) ADJUSTMENT IN INCOME THRESHOLDS FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN SMSAS.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) The amounts in effect for purposes of this subsection for any calendar year shall be increased by 20 percent for any veteran who resides in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), as defined by the Bureau of the Census.”

(c) AMENDMENTS WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out the amendments made by this section for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 within the amount of funds otherwise available (or programmed to be available) for medical care for the Department of Veterans Affairs for those fiscal years.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2000.

SEC. 2. SERVICES FOR MENTALLY ILL VETERANS.

(a) MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE ON CARE OF SEVERELY CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL VETERANS.—Section 7321 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and members of the general public with expertise

in the care of the chronically mentally ill” in the second sentence after “chronically mentally ill”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) The Secretary shall determine the terms of service and (for members appointed from the general public) the pay and allowances of the members of the committee, except that a term of service may not exceed five years. The Secretary may reappoint any member for additional terms of service.”

(b) CENTERS FOR MENTAL ILLNESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND CLINICAL ACTIVITIES.—Paragraph (3) of section 7320(b) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The Secretary shall designate at least one center under this section in each service network region of the Veterans Health Association.”

SEC. 3. ALLOCATION OF MEDICAL CARE RESOURCES FOR THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 8116 the following new section:

“§ 8117. Allocation of medical care resources

“In applying the plan for the allocation of health care resources (including personnel and funds) known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system, developed by the Secretary pursuant to the requirements of section 429 of Public Law 104-204 (110 Stat. 2929) and submitted to Congress in March 1997, the Secretary shall exclude from consideration in the determination of the allocation of such resources the following (resources for which shall be allocated in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate):

“(1) Programs to provide readjustment counseling and treatment.

“(2) Programs to provide counseling and treatment (including psychiatric care) for the mentally ill.

“(3) Programs relating to drug and alcohol abuse and dependence.

“(4) Programs for the homeless.

“(5) Programs relating to post-traumatic stress disorder.

“(6) Programs relating to spinal cord dysfunction.

“(7) Programs relating to AIDS.

“(8) Programs relating to geriatric and extended care.”

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8116 the following new item:

“8117. Allocation of medical care resources.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 8117 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to the allocation of resources for each fiscal year after fiscal year 1999.

COMMENDING THE CITY OF ARROYO, PUERTO RICO ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the special relationship between the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, and the United States. December 25, 1998, will mark the cen-

tenial Christmas celebrated with the United States.

In the summer of 1898, American troops landed in the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, to help free the Puerto Ricans from Spanish colonialism. General John Rutter Brooke and his troops spent Christmas in Arroyo that year, and that event marked the beginning of a close and lasting relationship between the people of the city of Arroyo and the United States. To memorialize General Brooke, there is a city street named in his honor.

The city of Arroyo resembles many typical U.S. small towns, with its “Main Street USA”. This central street, running north-south through the town, is named Calle Morse, after Samuel Morse, the inventor of the Morse code. He came to Arroyo to visit his daughter, who resided at the Enriqueta estate, and was present when the first telegraph line was installed in Puerto Rico in 1858. The city of Arroyo has the esteem of being the first location in Puerto Rico to send a telegraph, welcoming Puerto Rico to the age of telecommunications.

The historical homes which line Main Street in Arroyo are fashioned after southern American styles of architecture, and the citizens of Arroyo are very proud of this feature of Main Street. The old U.S. customhouse in town has been well-preserved and today is an important center of the city’s culture, serving as a museum which traces the historical connections with the United States.

The town of Arroyo has taken an active role in defending the United States. From the First World War, to the Second World War, to the war in Korea, and to Vietnam, to Desert Storm, young men from Arroyo have answered the call to duty, and brave soldiers such as Virgilio Sanchez in Korea and Raul Serrano in Vietnam, have heroically given their lives in these wars.

This year marks the 100th Christmas anniversary since that first Christmas that the U.S. officially spent in Arroyo. The town did their best to make General Brooke and his troops feel welcome, having to spend Christmas away from their immediate families. To commemorate this special Christmas celebration, students of welding at a local vocational technical school have crafted iron ornaments that will be placed throughout Main Street in recognition of the city’s unique relationship with the United States. These beautiful handmade ornaments will be lighted on Christmas Eve, 1998, in remembrance of this joyous occasion.

I commend the people of the city of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, for their special relationship with the United States and congratulate them on their 100th Christmas anniversary.

UNDERLYING THE IMPEACHMENT CRISIS—HISTORY: THE WAY WE SEE IT

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Republicans say the underlying issue is not about sex, it’s about perjury and obstruction of justice. Democrats say the underlying issue is