

compliance with the Convention to build confidence with our friends and foes and also to ensure that chemical weapons are never used again.

On June 25, 1999, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13128 to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998, which Congress passed on October 21, 1998.

However, the administration still has not issued regulations for industry to comply with the declaration and inspection requirements under the treaty.

The American chemical industry is poised to comply with our treaty obligations. I hope the administration quickly issues these regulations so the United States is in compliance with our treaty obligations.

TRIBUTE TO NELSON RHONE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Nelson Rhone who will be retiring from the Senate on July 7, 1999. Nelson began his Senate career December 21, 1964, as a laborer with Sergeant at Arms' custodial service operation. During his tenure with the Sergeant at Arms office, Nelson also worked in the Legislative Garage as a garage attendant and driver. In 1988, Nelson was promoted to Labor Foreman in the Sergeant at Arms' Environmental Service operation.

That account of his career here does not adequately convey the affection and respect he has earned at all levels of this institution. He is one of those rare individuals who, by virtue of both his tenure and his character, come to represent all that is best in the Senate of the United States.

In describing him, the word that immediately comes to mind is "gentleman." These days, that can seem like a quaint or old-fashioned term, but it is the most accurate compliment for someone like Nelson, who, by personal example, has set a standard for others to follow. It is an understatement to say that we will miss him. He is a gem.

Now, after nearly 35 years of devoted service to the Senate, he is retiring to spend more time with his wife, Mary Jane, and his family. Nelson is an avid bowler and enjoys traveling. He and Mary Jane look forward to having the time to travel and spend more time with their friends and family.

Nelson has been a dedicated and valuable member of the Senate community, and I know all members join with me in wishing him many years of health and happiness.

MARCIA KOZIE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today Marcia Kozie, who heads up my State office in Fairbanks, will retire from Federal service. She has served in this capacity since 1981.

When I think of my Fairbanks office, I think of an advisor and friend, Marcia

Kozie. She knows everyone in town and stays current on all the issues involving Federal, State and local governments. If I want to know the whole story, I call Marcia. I know the old adage goes, "no one is irreplaceable," but Marcia's boots will be difficult to fill. She has trailblazed for me these many years and her calm demeanor and soothing voice can smooth out the many wrinkles we often encounter.

When you cross the threshold of the Fairbanks office, you are always welcomed by a cheerful smile, a kind word and a sympathetic ear. Marcia Kozie has always had these winning ways, even during the most difficult of times. We all sometimes shoot the messenger by mistake, but Marcia's demeanor has always worked like a charm. Her ability to see the glass half full instead of empty, her cool head in times of crises and her genuine concern for my constituency have been worth more to me and Nancy and my office than a ton of Alaska gold. You just can't buy this kind of service.

Even though Marcia made her way to Alaska via Vermont, New Hampshire, Colorado, and Texas, she lived in the Fairbanks community for over 19 years before she came to work for me. In typical Marcia fashion, she immersed herself in the community getting involved with her three children and their activities, her husband Walt's business and many philanthropic groups who provided a special insight into Fairbanks community affairs.

She told me in her first interview that even though she had not worked for many years, she was adaptable and proficient in whatever the task. She continued by saying this was a God-given talent and that she didn't think He had taken it away from her, yet. And I have never regretted that decision to hire Marcia. While her Federal service will end, I know she will be devoting her time to spreading those God-given talents around the community.

She will be missed by all the staff members in both the Washington, DC, and State offices. It is with deep appreciation and gratitude that I thank her for 18 years of a job well done. As a matter of fact, the mayor of Fairbanks has proclaimed today, June 30, 1999, as Marcia Kozie Day in Fairbanks.

Toodle-loo, my loyal friend. Thank you for your service to this country, the State of Alaska and the people of Fairbanks.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH EQUITY ACT OF 1999

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, on June 10th we held a hearing on home health care in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations Subcommittee where we examined how the so called "reforms" of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 were holding up. I continue to be-

lieve that the answer to that question is, "not well." That is why I am joining with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, the Chairman of the PSI Subcommittee, in introducing an important bill, the Medicare Home Health Equity Act of 1999.

Home health care agencies provide a vital service to many elderly Americans. In my own state of Michigan there are over 1.3 million Medicare beneficiaries. Over 100,000 of these beneficiaries use the services of Michigan's 223 home health agencies. People prefer to recuperate in their own homes, and it is also less costly for the government since the alternative is nursing home care which is extraordinarily expensive for the Medicare program.

I am concerned about potential access problems. Although HCFA and the GAO have reported that they have not seen a decline in access for beneficiaries, the home health care witnesses that spoke before the PSI Subcommittee all stated that they believed there was an access problem. In fact, Barbara Markham Smith, from the George Washington University Medical Center, testified that "many seriously ill patients, especially diabetics, appear to have been displaced from Medicare home care." Sometimes it takes a while for the people in the field to actually get the numbers back to the people in Washington, and I think this is one of those instances.

We all know that during the early 90's home health care expenditures grew at a rapid pace. According to the GAO, Medicare spent \$3.7 billion to pay for home health visits in 1990 compared to \$17.8 billion in 1997. This growth led to changes, like the interim payment system, (IPS) that were implemented under the Balanced Budget Act. While some of the changes under the Balanced Budget Act were good, some of the changes are now negatively impacting Medicare beneficiaries.

I have heard from many constituents regarding home health care changes under the Balanced Budget Act and the various regulations that HCFA has imposed. In fact, last year, I received some 1500 letters from both home health care providers and beneficiaries. I echo their concerns when I say that the interim payment system penalizes cost efficient home health providers, like those in Michigan, while rewarding higher cost agencies.

Not only does the IPS penalize agencies that attempted to keep their costs down in 1994, but the new regulations which HCFA has imposed on the agencies are quite burdensome. There is no more poignant story to demonstrate the undue burdens being placed on home health care providers than that of Linda Stock, a Michigan home health care provider. This month Ms. Stock testified before the PSI Subcommittee about the problems that

home care providers were having, particularly cost efficient home care providers like her own. Last week Ms. Stock called to let me know that she has resigned from her job because she did not feel that she could ask her staff to implement regulations such as OASIS (Outcome and Assessment Information Set) and the 15 minute incremental home health reporting requirement. It is tragic that a committed health care provider such as Linda Stock would feel the need to resign from her job rather than implement regulations which she believed were unfair to both beneficiaries and providers.

So what can be done in the face of these problems? I believe that the bill we are introducing today, if enacted, could go a long way towards helping Ms. Stock and others like her.

Last year I worked on a bill with Senator COLLINS to revise the payment formula used to calculate the per beneficiary limit. That bill would have created new winners and losers under the IPS. This year's bill does not attempt to revise the formula, and therefore avoids the formula fight which made action on this issue so difficult last year. Our new bill makes needed adjustments to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and related federal regulations.

Though technical in nature, I would like to read the major provisions found in the bill:

(1) The bill will eliminate the automatic 15 per cent reduction in Medicare home health payments now scheduled for October 1, 2000.

(2) The bill will provide supplemental payments to home health agencies on a patient by patient basis if the cost of care for an individual is considered by the Secretary to be significantly higher than average due to the patient's particular health and functional condition.

(3) The bill will increase the per beneficiary cost limit for agencies with limits below the national average to the national average cost per patient over a three year period or until the Medicare home health prospective payment system is implemented.

(4) The bill will revise the surety bond requirement for home health agencies to more appropriately target fraud

(5) The bill will extend the IPS overpayment recoupment period to three years without interest

(6) The bill will eliminate the 15 minute incremental reporting period

(7) The bill temporarily maintains the Periodic Interim Payment (PIP) program, a program that permits HCFA to make payments to agencies based on historical payment levels—prior to the final settlement of claims and cost reports.

I believe that this bill provides an opportunity for us to move forward in solving some of the problems caused by

the Balanced Budget Act. We should pass this common sense bill that will ensure that home care is accessible to those seniors who so desperately need it.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 30, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,638,780,248,334.54 (Five trillion, six hundred thirty-eight billion, seven hundred eighty million, two hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred thirty-four dollars and fifty-four cents).

One year ago, June 30, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,547,935,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-seven billion, nine hundred thirty-five million).

Five years ago, June 30, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,645,802,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred forty-five billion, eight hundred two million).

Ten years ago, June 30, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,799,923,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred ninety-nine billion, nine hundred twenty-three million).

Twenty-five years ago, June 30, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$476,006,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-six billion, six million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,162,774,248,334.54 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-two billion, seven hundred seventy-four million, two hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred thirty-four dollars and fifty-four cents) during the past 25 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in the executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 66. An act to preserve the cultural resources of the Route 66 corridor and to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance.

H.R. 592. An act to designate a portion of Gateway National Recreation Area as "World War Veterans park at Miller Field."

H.R. 791. An act to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the route of the War of 1812 British invasion of Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia, and the route of the American defense, for study for potential addition to the national trails systems.

H.R. 1218. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 775) to establish certain procedures for civil actions brought for damages relating to the failure for civil actions brought for damages relating to the failure of any device or system to process or otherwise deal with the transition from the year 1999 to the year 2000, and for other purposes.

At 6:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House insists upon its amendment to the bill (S. 1059) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, disagreed to by the Senate, and agrees to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following Members as the managers of the conference on the part of the Houses:

From the Committee on Armed Services; for consideration of the Senate bill and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. SPENCE, Mr. STUMP, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. HANSEN, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. BUYER, Mrs. FOWLER, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. TALENT, Mr. EVERETT, Mr. BARLETT of Maryland, Mr. McKEON, Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. HOSTETTLER, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. HILLEARY, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PICKETT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. REYES, Mr. TURNER, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. LARSON.

From the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, for consideration of matters within the jurisdiction of that committee under clause 11 of rule X: Mr. GOSS, Mr. LEWIS of California, and Mr. DIXON.

From the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of section 1059 of the Senate bill, and section 1409 of the House bill, and modifications committed to conference: Mr.