

It is time for the Congress to take the lead again. This bill does just that. I am proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

**SUMMARY H.R. 2499, THE SILENT SKIES ACT**

This bill expedites the implementation of Stage 4-compliant aircraft. In 1990, Congress passed the Aviation Noise and Capacity Act, a measure that led to the development and implementation of Stage 3 aircraft, and reduced aircraft noise by 50%. By the end of this year, Stage 3 will be fully implemented and most of the U.S. commercial fleet will be in compliance with these new lower noise levels. Stage 4 represents the next level of noise reduction, and would reduce airplane noise by an estimated 40%.

This bill directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations establishing minimum standards for Stage 4 noise levels no later than December 31, 2001;

Directs the phase in of these new standards over a ten year period, beginning in 2002;

Directs the Secretary of Transportation to submit a report to Congress on the progress being made toward compliance with Stage 4 implementation; and

Removes the noise level exemption for supersonic civil transport aircraft.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH RESEARCH AND QUALITY ACT OF 1999**

**HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 14, 1999*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing, along with my colleagues, Representatives SHERROD BROWN and JIM GREENWOOD, the Health Research and Quality Act of 1999. We are introducing this bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and and redefine the mission of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research. Our bill renames it as the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ-pronounced "arc").

The purpose of this new name, and the reauthorization, is to foster comprehensive improvements in our health care system. Our bill refocuses the efforts of this critical agency to support private sector initiatives. Building on its current activities, the new agency will become a key partner to the private sector in improving the quality of health care in America.

Specifically, our bill directs the new agency to take action to improve health care quality by: Conducting and supporting research to reduce errors in medicine; supporting the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and expanding its sample size to provide information on the quality of patient care; supporting research to evaluate and initiatives to advance the use of information systems for the study of health care quality and other information initiatives; maintaining the Center for Primary Care Research and continuing primary care research; and establishing grants for regional centers to improve and increase access to preventive health care services.

We realize the importance of supporting public-private solutions to improve health care quality in our nation, and we hope that Congress will support the reauthorization of this

important agency. A brief summary of the legislation follows:

**SUMMARY OF THE HEALTH RESEARCH AND QUALITY ACT OF 1999—(LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE THE AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE POLICY AND RESEARCH)**

**PART A: ESTABLISHMENT AND GENERAL DUTIES**

Redesignates the agency as the "Agency for Health Research and Quality" (AHRQ, pronounced "arc"), and changes the agency head's title from administrator to "director." Revises the agency's mission to emphasize its role as a partner to the private sector, with responsibility for promoting health care quality through research, synthesizing and disseminating scientific evidence, and advancing private and public efforts to improve health care quality.

Prohibits the agency from mandating "national standards of clinical practice or quality health care standards."

Emphasizes the agency's non-regulatory role in building the science of quality, while private and public sector purchasers and accreditation agencies set quality "standards."

**PART B: HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT RESEARCH**

Directs the agency to take specific action to improve the quality of health care by:

1. Identifying and disseminating methods for rating the scientific strength of research studies;

2. Conducting and supporting research, and building partnerships to support research, in order to reduce errors in medicine;

3. Supporting the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and expanding its sample size to provide information on the quality of patient care;

4. Supporting research to evaluate and initiatives to advance the use of information systems for the study of health care quality and other information initiatives; and

5. Maintaining the Center for Primary Care Research and continuing primary care research.

Authorizes the Secretary of HHS, acting through the Director, to coordinate all research, evaluations, and demonstrations related to health services research and quality measurement and improvement supported by the federal government.

Requires the Secretary to contract with the Institute of Medicine to develop two reports on the organization and coordination of the quality improvement, research, and oversight activities of the federal government.

**PART C: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Reauthorizes the agency's existing national advisory council and standardizes membership among the groups represented.

Directs the council to more broadly focus on overall priorities for health care research (quality, outcomes, cost, use, and access to care), the field of health services research, and identification of opportunities for public-private sector partnerships.

Increases the limit on small grants from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to reflect inflation.

Revises the authorization of appropriations to reflect congressional intent to increase research funding related to health care quality and improvement (authorizes \$250 million in funding for FY 2000 and "such sums as necessary" for Fiscal Years 2001-2006).

Amends Title III of the Public Health Service Act to establish grants for regional centers to improve and increase access to preventive health care services.

THE NAVY NEEDS THE TOMAHAWK MISSILE

**HON. JAMES V. HANSEN**

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 14, 1999*

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, some of you may have been surprised to learn that the Tomahawk missile is obsolete. According to a recent AP story the premier strike weapon in the Navy and the hero of Desert Storm is obsolete.

This unbelievable story not only surprised me but it surprised the Navy and the Joint Chiefs.

As late as April 20 of this year the Navy and Joint Chiefs of Staff certified a combat requirement of 4,000 Tomahawk missiles. Today, the navy has half this number.

This administration has fired over 700 Tomahawks in just the last twelve months. We have replaced zero and shut down the production line last year.

Luckily, our fine Chairman of the procurement subcommittee took this shortage head on. We added almost 900 million dollars to the supplemental and the defense authorization bills—to replace these missiles and put the Navy on track to fulfill its national security requirement.

The Navy does need Tomahawk, if you don't believe me just call them your self.

Tomahawk is the Presidential weapon of choice except when it come to the budget. Support our Chairman, support the Navy, support the Tomahawk missile and ignore the nay sayers.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 14, 1999*

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 12, 1999, I was detained at Los Angeles International Airport, due to aircraft equipment failure, while returning from my district and missed rollcall votes 277, 278, and 279. Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on votes 277 and 279. I would have voted "present" on vote 278.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000**

SPEECH OF

**HON. DIANA DeGETTE**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 13, 1999*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2466) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.