

unnecessary cash-flow costs for U.S. wholesalers of distilled spirits, most of which are family or closely held businesses. In addition, the Federal tax collection process would be simplified by providing that only one Federal agency collect the tax, not two as is currently the case.

Today, wholesalers purchase foreign bottled distilled spirits "in-bond" (tax free), paying the Federal excise tax directly after sale to a retailer. In contrast, when the wholesaler buys domestically bottled spirits (nearly 86 percent of total inventory) the price includes the Federal excise tax, prepaid by the distiller. Carrying costs are increased by 40 percent for U.S. goods. Freeing up working capital for re-investment will generate more jobs and more tax revenues.

PROCLAMATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 11, 1999

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following proclamation.

Whereas, the emergence of African-American youth, especially in Houston, Texas, who choose the aerospace industries as careers continues to be of high priority; and

Whereas, in an effort to inspire, enhance and embrace information concerning African-Americans in space—NASA, Marshall, Johnson & Torrey/Television, the Boeing Company and PBS/KUHT-TV Houston Public Television have contributed to a television broadcast to educate Houston youth; and

Whereas, the focus of "Journey: The Black Astronaut" is to document and celebrate extraordinary African-American astronauts, both men and women, and their tremendous achievements in the United States Space Program; and,

Whereas, it is appropriate to recognize that Maj. Robert Lawrence, Jr., from Chicago, who was killed in the crash of a F-105 fighter during a training exercise on December 8, 1967, six months after he was named to the Air Force's manned orbiting laboratory program, is duly recognized as the first African-American astronaut and is etched into history on the Space Mirror at the Kennedy Space Center.

Now, therefore, I, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee, hereby honor the African-American men and women of the United States Space Program and proclaim that Wednesday, February 17, 1999 as Black Astronaut Day, in Houston, Texas and call upon all residents of this great city to join me in supporting the aerospace aims, goals, and dreams of African-American youth all over the United States.

IMF FUNDING

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 11, 1999

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I recently received the following statement by the Korea-U.S. Business Councils from U.S. Council members Dave Roderick and Tom Usher. It's

encouraging and shows the difference IMF funds can make in the international economic community. I'm pleased to include the statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

KOREA-U.S./U.S.-KOREA BUSINESS COUNCILS JOINT STATEMENT, JANUARY 19, 1999

The Korea-U.S. Business Council and the U.S.-Korea Business Council, representing business leaders from their respective countries, had their Twelfth Annual Joint Steering Committee Meeting in Hawaii, January 17-19, 1999.

The U.S. Council Members have a general feeling that the Korean government, under the strong leadership of President Kim Dae-Jung, has adopted a rational and constructive policy to overcome the financial crisis.

Only a year after South Korea had to ask for assistance from the International Monetary Fund:

Interest rates have fallen to single digits after reaching almost 30% during the height of the crisis because of improved liquidity.

Korea's stock market index continues to dramatically rise as a result of active purchasers from domestic and foreign investors; and,

Stabilization to the exchange rate has been achieved.

As a result of the combined vigorous efforts by the Korean government, with the continuing support of the U.S. and the IMF, and the private sector in pursuing financial reform, corporate restructuring and improved corporate governance, the South Korean economy is now beginning to show some signs of recovery.

Korea's foreign exchange reserves have surpassed the \$48 billion mark for the first time in the nation's history.

Korea's five largest "chaebols" have agreed to drastically reduce the number of subsidiaries and their debt-to-equity ratios and also complete "Big Deals" that will greatly help to enhance the competitiveness of Korean industries.

Recently, the sovereign rating of won-denominated Korean government bonds has been upgraded and further upgrades are expected in the future.

The Korean government has begun to pay back loans to the IMF instead of exercising the option to roll-over the loans.

Despite the good news, both Councils are greatly concerned about the dramatic increase in unemployment figures in Korea and how this could negatively affect social stability. Existing "safety net" programs should be expanded to ensure continued support for more painful reforms.

Another area of concern for both Councils is the highly unpredictable relationship with North Korea. After being fully updated on the current situation, both sides agreed that stability between the North and the South must be ensured and that a strong united front must be maintained to serve as a deterrent against North Korea.

The Korean Council would like to acknowledge the important role played by the U.S. government and American companies in helping South Korea during the financial crisis. Based on the U.S.'s experience in dealing with their own economic difficulties during the late 1980s, the Korean Council asks the U.S. to offer continued advice and assistance.

This will be a difficult year because many agreements will have to be reached concerning trade issues affecting the U.S. and South Korea. Both Councils would like to offer their support and contributions to ensure that the completion of this process is beneficial and amicable to both nations.

Both Councils noted the progress being made by the two governments toward concluding a Bi-lateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and give their strong endorsement for its rapid implementation. A U.S.-ROK "BIT" can make a significant contribution to the business relationship and help in restoring Korea's economy.

The U.S. side urges that efforts continue to liberalize the economy, further encourage foreign direct investment, increase transparency in financial statements, improve corporate governance, and maintain commitments to open, fair and non-discriminatory trade rules.

Although many positive things have been accomplished in a very short period of time, both Councils are cognizant of the fact that there is still much work left to be done. Accordingly, both councils would like to offer their full support for these efforts and urge all parties to remain diligent to provide the setting for eventual recovery and continued prosperity.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE HOME HEALTH CASE MANAGER ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 11, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare Home Health Case Manager Act of 1999. The Medicare home health benefit has received much attention in recent years. The reason for that attention has been the dramatic growth of home health services over the past decade.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA) made a number of changes to the home health benefit to help stem that growth. However, much more needs to be done.

The Medicare Home Health Case Manager Act is a double winner. It would simultaneously reduce Medicare spending on home health while improving the quality of the benefit. It does this by introducing a new component to the benefit: an independent case manager.

Today, home health care is prescribed by a patient's physician, but then the actual plan of care is executed by the home health agency treating the patient. This creates incentives that have nothing to do with quality or appropriateness of care. Under the cost-based reimbursement system that existed before passage of BBA, the incentive to home health agencies was to over-utilize services for patients because that is how the agency made more money. In the BBA's prospective payment system (PPS) of the future, the incentive will be the opposite and there are real concerns about potential under-utilization of services.

The Medicare Home Health Case Manager Act would ensure that home health care decisions for long-stay patients were being made by an independent case manager who in no way financially benefited by the length or type of home care provided to a patient. They would be paid by a Medicare fee-schedule that would in no way be influenced by the amount or type of care they recommend. The legislation would also provide the Health Care