

will preserve that program and make it viable not only for this generation of Americans but for generations of Americans to come.

PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is long time past that the Congress needs to act and act quickly on managed care. Individuals and families are increasingly apprehensive about how they will be treated when they are sick.

A survey last year found that an astonishing 80 percent of Americans believe that their quality of care is often compromised by their insurance plan to save money, and too often their beliefs are well founded.

The Patient Bill of Rights introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and Senator KENNEDY last Congress would have ended these particular problems, but we had some difficulties and were not able to pass a particular piece of legislation.

The managed care plan needs to be passed and we need to look at it this year and not allow it to continue. Managed care reform is needed by all Americans, especially those in minority communities.

Let me just highlight one area of concern, access to specialists. The need for specialists is critical for individuals who suffer chronic illnesses. Diabetes, for example, is a disease rampant among a lot of individuals but specifically disproportionately hits Hispanic populations. Many do not know that it is a truly treatable disease and that one needs to have access to specialists in order to be able to treat some of those items.

I do not know if everyone recognizes it, but diabetes is a treatable disease. It is something that can be prevented. With some recent studies, we can identify some of the problems early in life, but we let it go. One of the greatest causes of this particular disease is blindness and loss of limbs.

According to the Center for Disease Control and prevention, every year approximately 16 million people suffer from diabetes alone. Of these, 1.2 million alone are Mexican Americans.

We see the same problem with cervical cancer. Hispanic women especially are disproportionately affected by the disease that is completely preventable also, yet there is limited access to the proper specialists in this area.

We all recognize the growing population of elderly in this country and the need to look at coming up with some appropriate managed care systems.

Without adequate care and medical supervision, diabetes and those with

cervical cancer suffer grave consequences. It is a shame because these illnesses can be treated and prevented.

Too often today, managed care is mismanaged care. Decisions on health care should be made by doctors and their patients, and not the insurance company or their accountants or those individuals that are looking at the profit margins.

We appeal to the Republicans, and we appealed last year and this year we again appeal to the Republicans, to allow us to go back to the constituency and allow us to do the changes that need to take place.

The Republicans will say that the Congress passed managed care reform last year. I would ask, what have we had? No real reform, but it is a simple truth. The fact is that we need reform and it needs to happen now.

What we passed here on the House floor was only the fleeting shadow of real reform. Real reform would have included guaranteed access to needed health care specialists and, as I mentioned before, access to emergency room services, continuity of care protection and access to a meaningful and timely appeals process, both internally and externally.

We should take a page out of the book of the Texas State legislature. At the State legislature in Texas we passed managed care reform legislation that addressed the real needs of Texans. There was a scare that this reform would drive up insurance rates. In fact, insurance rates were raised a modest \$2.00.

Contrary to popular belief, the HMO liability law has not flooded the courthouse with new lawsuits. It has actually diverted lawsuits and saved money by using an independent review process and solving problems before they go to the Court. About half of the cases in Texas that are reviewed have led to partial or complete overturns of the HMO decisions.

Now it is time for us to pass real managed care reform. It is up to us to come to the plate. It is up to us to make sure that those individuals have access to health care the way they should. It is up to us to make sure that they can see the doctor that they choose to see and not who they want to send them to. It is up to us to make sure that we have a system that is responsive and addresses the needs of those individuals that are hard-hit.

For too long we have waited and we have recognized the problem of the HMOs and the fact that they have not been responsive at all. So it is time for us to come to that point.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

TECH TRENDS 2000, AN HISTORIC EVENT TO TAKE PLACE ON APRIL 6 AND 7 IN PHILADELPHIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Research and Development and a senior member of the Committee on Science, I am extremely concerned about our Nation's investment of public money into research and development and new technologies.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the R&D accounts for defense are expected to decline by about 14 percent. Part of my goal in this session of Congress is to make the need for research and technology real for all of our colleagues, for our staff, as well as for the American people. To that end, an historic event will take place on April 6 and 7 of this year in Philadelphia at the brand new convention center.

Working with Mayor Ed Rendell and the entire delegations of the four States of New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland, all 41 House Members and 8 Senators, we have assembled what in fact will be the largest technology conference of its type in the history of America.

For the 2 days of April 6 and 7, every Federal agency that spends research money in America will be in attendance. They will exhibit the kinds of technologies that they are buying today and will give us a look at the kinds of technologies and research that they expect to be funding over the next 10 years. This will truly be an opportunity for all of America to see where we are investing tax dollars in new technologies.

It will be an opportunity for scientists and academics and young people to look at the emerging technologies that we should be funding in the future that they perhaps can compete for. For the 2 days in Philadelphia, we will have Dr. Neil Lane, the White House's top point person on science and technology; from the Department of Defense, Dr. John Hamre, Deputy Secretary; we will have Jack Gansler, in charge of acquisition and research; Frank Fernandez, who heads DARPA; Admiral Lyles, who heads missile defense; Admiral Gaffney, who heads naval research. We will have Dan Golden, the head of NASA, who will talk about NASA's investment. We will have Dr. Varmus, the head of NIH; Jim Baker, the head of NOAA. We will have the head of the National Institutes for Science and Technology and the deputy

director of the National Science Foundation.

Each of these individuals, the top leaders from our government who focus on research and technology, will be available to answer questions and to present a broad overview of the kinds of technology that America needs to focus on in the 21st Century.

During the 2 days we will also have breakout sessions, approximately 20 of them, that will be centered around specific technology areas: information technology, environmental technology, materials technology, technology relative to oceans and outer space, so that young scientists, entrepreneurs and academics can get a feel of where we are spending America's tax money and how we can better spend that money and leverage it to create new opportunities for us to improve our quality of life.

My purpose today is to invite all of our colleagues to come to Philadelphia for April 6 and 7, to invite all the staff members from the House, as well as the other body, and to invite people and companies from all over America to come and look at what we are calling Tech Trends 2000, the kind of technology that we expect to be focusing on in the next millennium.

It is our opportunity to show America where their \$80 billion a year of R&D investment is going and how they can take advantage of that. So I encourage our colleagues to invite their university research leaders, to invite their companies, to invite students. Students, graduate and undergraduate, can come to this entire conference for free. There is a small charge for the private companies that would come. It is a golden opportunity to see where America is going in terms of technology in the 21st Century.

It is a bipartisan opportunity. It is an opportunity where the Congress is working hand-in-hand with the White House and all the various Federal agencies, so I encourage my colleagues to attend. It is called Tech Trends 2000. Contact a Member of Congress any place in America, who can get information about this conference and how one can take advantage of this golden opportunity.

SUPPORT A COMPLETE AND THOROUGH COUNT OF EVERY CITIZEN IN THIS COUNTRY FOR THE NEXT CENSUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I take pride in joining my Democratic colleagues in supporting a complete and thorough count of every citizen in this country for the next census.

The year 2000 will usher in a new year, a new decade, a new century and

a new millennium. It is more important now than in any other time in our history to ensure that every citizen will be counted and that that count will be as accurate as possible.

The 1990 undercount of 4 million people had a disproportionate effect on minorities, women and children, particularly women on ranches and farms. Many individuals were denied an equal voice in their government.

□ 2045

Millions were double-counted, and millions more were not counted at all.

Census data directly affects decisions made on all matters of national and local importance, including education, employment, public health care, housing, and transportation, among other things.

Federal, State, and county government use Census information to guide the annual distribution of hundreds of billions of dollars in critical services. The data is also used to monitor and to enforce compliance with civil rights statutes, employment, housing, lending, education, and antidiscrimination laws.

Finally, the accuracy of the Census directly affects our Nation's ability to ensure equal representation and equal access to important governmental resources for all Americans.

Ensuring a fair and accurate Census must be regarded as one of the most significant civil rights issues facing the country today. If we accept the current Census count of nearly 2 million farms in the United States, only 6 percent will be represented as being operated by women. This small percentage reflects that women on ranches and farms have been severely undercounted. This inaccurate count is also due to the type of information collected by the Census Bureau and the Department of Agriculture in their yearly count.

Mr. Speaker, everyone counts. Minorities count. Women and children count. Young men and elderly men count. Farmers and small business owners count. Rural Americans count. Urban Americans count. Suburban and inner city dwellers count. In America, Mr. Speaker, we all count. Let us have a Census that does just that, count all of us fairly and accurately. Let us count the Census correctly.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about education savings accounts, also known as education IRAs. These ESAs are the wave of the future, as they will give families the tools to help their children receive a quality education.

I am very proud to be a lead cosponsor of H.R. 7, the Education Savings and School Excellence Act of 1999. Current law allows only parents to put away \$500 a year in an ESA. It does not permit funds in that account to be used for K through 12 education. H.R. 7 allows families to put up to \$2,000 a year into an education savings account to be used for tuition or school expenses for K through 12 and higher education.

As a parent, I know how hard it is to save money to send children to private school or to pay for books and supplies. As a congressman, I hear daily how hard it is for my constituents to keep up with the rising cost of educating their children.

This legislation would give parents the tools to help their children succeed in school by allowing them to put away money in a tax-free account to help defray expensive education costs.

Mr. Speaker, I am a big proponent of choice. This bill gives parents the choice to send their children to the best school possible, public or private. It also offers them the choice of buying computer equipment or getting access to the Internet.

I know that opponents of this measure say that we are leaving poor students behind in bad schools. This is completely and absolutely wrong. I and other cosponsors of this bill support public school education, and do not want to take money away from them. This bill encourages families to use education savings accounts to supplement a student's public education by paying for a high-cost item such as computer equipment.

In fact, studies have shown that 75 percent of all families using these accounts will use them to support children in public schools. That is why parents of all backgrounds support education savings accounts, because it will give students the tools they need to excel in the 21st century.

In my hometown of Chicago, the Catholic Archdiocese has an unparalleled record of educating students of all racial and economic backgrounds. However, the Archdiocese faces serious economic challenges, and Cardinal George of Chicago supports this measure because it will allow the Archdiocese to continue to play its part in teaching the youth of Chicago.

He has worked closely with Mayor Daley, because both of them know that Chicago's public schools cannot educate the children of Chicago by themselves, and it must be a collective group effort. Mayor Daley in turn also supports education savings accounts, because he knows it will help students get a good education.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to cosponsor H.R. 7 so we can give current and future generations of schoolchildren the tools to be the brightest in the 21st century.