

a higher standard of ethics and social responsibility than other corporations?

From the earliest written history the role of the "healer"—or medical doctor in our modern terms had a special role. The Code of Hammurabi, which was practiced in Sumeria and Babylonia, clearly stipulated the physical penalties to be inflicted on the "healer" in cases of failed surgery. For example the Code states, "If a doctor operates on the eye of a gentleman, who loses his eye as a consequence, the hands [of the doctor] shall be cut off." This is a clear statement of medical responsibility and its consequences.

This is indicative of the value of human life and special responsibility of physicians. The Hippocratic Oath, taken by medical doctors at the end of their medical studies, states existence of a special relationship between the patient and the physician. In previous times, the physician was held in great respect, not because of the economic status, but because of the respect for the learned arts that the physician was trained in. This is the basis of the unique relationship between the patient and the "healer."

I am greatly concerned that in recent times this special relationship between the patient and the physician has radically changed. For example, I cite the concept of a distributive ethic which is widely promoted and used by health maintenance organizations. The distributive ethic may be stated as the principle to provide the greatest good for the greatest number of patients within the allotted budget. The problem is that it is not possible to simultaneously provide optimal care for an individual patient and for the entire group of patients at the same time. This is an example of the change in the relationship between the patient and the physician that has occurred with the development of our new business models to deliver health care; i.e. HMO's.

An example of the business practices of HMO's that are in conflict with the former respectful, sacred relationship between the patient and the healer is the use of a fixed sum of money for the annual care of a group of patients. If the physician can reduce the referrals to specialists, which would rapidly deplete the fund allocated by the HMO for the patient pool, then the physicians can take the remaining funds for themselves. How can anyone consider that this current business practice is in the interest of the patient?

Another area of current medical business practice is the financial involvement of the physician in the pharmaceutical industry. How can a clinical study be considered unbiased when the principle investigator is a share holder in the corporation that is financing the clinical study?

Can a corporation that owns a series of clinics and hospitals in a neighborhood decide to close one or more of them on the grounds that this will decrease competition? Is a hospital to be viewed in the same ethical way as any other corporation? As an extension of the patient-physician relationship and its special and sacred relationship that has existed from ancient time, it follows that the corporation that owns a hospital has a moral obligation to promote the general welfare.

In summary, current business models and practices are not consistent with the ideal "to

promote the general Welfare." Hospitals and HMO's have a unique role in our society, and with that unique role come unique responsibility. I believe that the only conclusion that reasonable people can hold is that hospitals and medical corporations must be held to a higher standard of ethics and social responsibility than other corporations.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS OF TOMORROW CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2000

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Agricultural Communicator of Tomorrow for celebrating 30 years. This organization, comprised of college students from across the nation, plays an important role in developing skills students need to excel in the communications field. ACT provides students with the opportunity to network with ag communications professionals and attend seminars and meetings to learn more about possible career choices. Individuals with an agricultural communications degree have the task of educating and informing the public about agriculture. As Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, I know firsthand the value of having such advocates and voices promoting American agriculture, and ACT gives students a chance to expand upon these abilities.

Twenty-three students from seven universities formed ACT in July 1970 at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Currently, ACT has grown to include 21 chapters with over 351 members nationwide, including a chapter in Puerto Rico.

Many professional communication organizations support ACT. These "parent organizations" provide guidance, act as mentors, and serve as a resource for students to utilize when looking for employment. The National ACT organization holds a national convention each year in conjunction with one of its parent organizations and is participating in the U.S. Agricultural Communicators Congress occurring in Washington, DC July 23–26. At the convention, students are given the opportunity to compete in contest categories such as black and white photography, feature story writing, page layout and design, video editing, and present a public relations campaign. These contests allow students the opportunity not only to compete, but to showcase their work to future employers.

ACT has been instrumental in preparing our students for the future. As the population continues to grow and fewer people are involved with production agriculture, it is imperative that organizations like ACT play a prominent role in educating consumers. ACT members have the ability to inform the public about the value, diversity, and importance of American agricultural products in today's society.

I want to recognize the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow on their 30th birthday, applaud them for their outstanding achievements, and wish them continued success in all of their activities.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4857

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2000

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to join with Congressman SHAW to introduce bipartisan legislation to help restrict the use of individuals' Social Security Numbers by both the public sector and the private sector. Our legislation builds upon a number of bills introduced by House Democrats earlier this session. I'd like to thank Congressmen ED MARKEY, GERRY KLECZKA, and BOB WISE for their contributions on the privacy protection issue and for introducing exemplary legislation on the topic this Congress.

The Social Security number is almost as old as the program itself. Created in 1936 to keep track of workers' earning records, the uses of the Social Security number have since extended far beyond its original intent, to the point where it is now commonly used as a personal identifier.

Indeed, the Social Security number is increasingly used as the key to unlocking some of people's most vital—and most private—financial information. Its prevalence in today's society helps facilitate the host of private and public transactions in which people engage every day. That same prevalence, however, leaves people exceptionally vulnerable when their SSN's fall into the hands of those who wish to exploit that information for their own gain.

While we should be aware of the contributions that the use of the SSN makes to program administration and to business efficiency, we must be careful that we do not allow some of our most fundamental rights—the right to privacy and the right to control our personal information—to be abridged in the name of expediency. Our legislation strikes the correct balance.

Our bill would prohibit Federal, State, or local government entities from selling lists of people's SSN's and would prohibit government entities from displaying SSN's to the general public—for example, on drivers' licenses or on government checks.

Just as importantly, our bill would restrict private businesses' use of the SSN. Just as the Clinton Administration proposed earlier this year, our bill would authorize the Federal Trade Commission to ban the inappropriate sale or purchase of Social Security numbers.

Our bill also prohibits businesses from requiring that you disclose your Social Security number in order to do business with them.

Just as our bill enhances privacy protections, it also provides new protections for Social Security beneficiaries who rely on representative payees to manage their finances.

Social Security beneficiaries who rely on representative payees to receive their benefits and to complete financial transactions on their behalf represent some of the most vulnerable members of our society. They are the very young, the very sick, and the very old. They are individuals who live in nursing homes and in State mental hospitals.

Thus, when representative payees misuse the funds that have been entrusted to their