

BLASTING STERLING PRIVATE  
FEE-FOR-SERVICE M+C PLAN  
FOR RISK AVOIDANCE

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 18, 2000*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am outraged that the Sterling Life Insurance Company, which operates the only approved private fee-for-service Medicare+Choice (M+C) plan, has established a benefit package for 2001 that is designed to enroll healthier patients and avoid sicker patients. For 2001, Sterling will require 50 percent copayments for home health services and durable medical equipment.

What Sterling is doing is an unconscionable rip-off of sicker beneficiaries and the Medicare program itself. Home health and DME are services that are associated with sicker patients, who are also more costly, so Sterling is deliberately avoiding sicker, more costly patients.

Under the Medicare law, M+C plans must provide all standard Medicare benefits, but are permitted to modify the cost sharing amounts for those services as long as the total actuarial value of the cost sharing does not exceed the total actuarial amount of the cost sharing in the traditional Medicare program. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) must approve the actuarial value of the cost sharing, but has no authority under the statute to prevent M+C plans from tailoring their cost sharing amounts as they choose.

I will introduce legislation to require HCFA to approve all cost sharing amounts of M+C plans and prohibit M+C plans from manipulating cost sharing amounts to avoid sicker patients. Sterling is saying that they are trying to avoid fraud, but clearly, they are deliberately seeking to enroll only healthier, more profitable patients, while avoiding sicker, more costly patients. Since the Republicans have slowed the implementation of risk-adjustment of payments to M+C plans, Sterling will be overpaid for the patients that it enrolls. This practice is an obscene rip off of Medicare and the taxpayers, and I will try to stop it. When the new Congress convenes in January, I will introduce legislation to give HCFA authority to approve all cost sharing amounts to prevent such blatant risk avoidance.

REGARDING H.R. 4838

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 18, 2000*

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the House of Representatives for the successful passage of H.R. 4838, which waives the oath of allegiance requirement for people with disabilities that seek citizenship in our great nation.

The need for such a bill is best exemplified in the case of Vijai Rajan of Anaheim, California. Twenty-five-year-old Vijai was born in India and has been residing in the U.S. since she was four months old. Ms. Rajan has sev-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

*October 19, 2000*

eral disabilities including cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and Crohn's disease which prevents her from raising her hand or memorizing and understanding the oath. Doctors say her comprehension is that of a baby or toddler.

This piece of legislation is significant in expressing our nation's view of acceptance and welcoming of new citizens. These people cannot be denied citizenship when they have played by all the rules and have waited for so long.

Her parents' four year battle with the INS is nearly over and Vijai as well as the other 1,100 disabilities waiver applicants are closer to becoming citizens of the United States. I am certain that these family members enjoy peace of mind and inner satisfaction knowing that their loved ones are part of America.

AUTHORIZING FUNDS FOR ILLINOIS/MICHIGAN CANAL COMMISSION

SPEECH OF

**HON. JERRY WELLER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 17, 2000*

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 3926, bipartisan legislation I introduced with Representatives LIPINSKI, BIGGERT, and GUTIERREZ. H.R. 3926 will increase the authorization cap of the Illinois and Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000.

The Illinois and Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor was the first park of its kind, established by Congress in 1984. Created for the historical and cultural importance of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, it was a "partnership park" which involved local decision making and input combined with federal designation and support. The corridor is special for many reasons; it includes valuable natural resources, state and local parks, transportation networks, cities and towns, rural and industrial uses, wildlife preserves and nature activities such as hiking, fishing, canoeing and camping. The heritage corridor has been critical to preserving historic sites that played a critical role in the history of Illinois and the nation.

The I&M Canal was the first of the man-made waterways that established the corridor as a nationally significant transportation network. Much of the canal still exists along with the towns and cities and farms surrounding it. In fact, the canal encompasses five counties stretching from Chicago to LaSalle-Peru.

Among the first visionaries of the Canal was Louis Joliet who conceptualized a system for bringing together the Great Lakes and the Mississippi as early as 1673. Plans and funding were developed in 1827 and the route of the canal was settled upon. Twenty-one years later, the canal was opened for traffic for the first time—but this was only a beginning. The canal would grow substantially over the coming decades as it was influenced by enormous economic growth. In turn, the canal spurred its own economic growth and became the economic center of the region. The 97-mile canal was dug by hand, largely from immigrant Irish

labor out of rock and was a minimum of 6 feet deep and 60 feet wide.

The Canal helped to build Chicago and was the center of not only industrial growth but also agricultural growth. Mining industries grew along the canal and plants to process farm products were built. The canal also fostered the growth of the wallpaper and watch industry. Towns developed around the rapidly growing canal area and tolls on products shipped on the canal generated \$1 million for the state.

Shipping on the Canal peaked in 1882 then began a gradual decline due to rail and other forms of traffic. The I&M Canal closed in 1933 after the development of the Illinois Waterway, but in that same year the Civilian Conservation Corps began work that created many of the parks and trails that line the canal today. In 1974, the 60 mile section from Joliet to LaSalle was designated the Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail under the stewardship of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

Now as the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the canal continues to provide unparalleled cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. A partnership exists between The Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Canal Corridor Association, the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources which ensures the continuing development of the canal and its resources.

The I&M Canal needs to be able to access additional funds for many worthwhile projects including heritage tourism projects, heritage education, and preservation and conservation. An increase in the authorization cap will allow the possibility of increased funding, providing the development and improvement of parks and museums across the canal. Teachers will be able to be trained and student resources will be developed and enhanced. Vital historic resources such as the I&M Canal, architecture, landscapes and Native American archaeological sites will be preserved and revitalized.

Mr. Speaker, 16 heritage corridors have been created since the Illinois and Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor, and all but three have received \$1,000,000 authorization caps. It is time to bring the Illinois and Michigan Canal in line with these other heritage areas and provide it the opportunity for additional funding. I thank Chairmen YOUNG and HANSEN for allowing this bill to come to the floor today and I thank all cosponsors of this legislation and urge its passage.

LAKE BARCROFT: PAYING TRIBUTE TO A COMMUNITY CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

**HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 18, 2000*

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay honor to the community of Lake Barcroft, in Falls Church, Virginia, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this coming Wednesday, October 18, 2000. Driving or walking through the community, the natural