

I cannot support this inappropriate use of increased Medicare dollars. I support meaningful assistance to health care providers and targeted managed care payment increases to low-reimbursement counties, like many in Wisconsin, in exchange for their commitment to remain in the communities they serve for at least three years and not abandon seniors like so many have.

This Congress has failed to pass any meaningful health reform, such as the Patients' Bill of Rights or a Medicare prescription drug benefit, and instead has chosen to provide tax breaks for special interests and millions of dollars in Medicare spending to HMOs. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 2614, CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2614. While I believe that there are many good provisions in this bill, I must object to it because it does not restore Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) benefits to legal immigrant women and children. In 1995, Congress imposed a 5-year ban on providing Medicaid and CHIP coverage to recently qualified immigrants. In 1996, Congress passed an immigration bill that split families; threw out due process; and took away discretion. But, worst of all, Congress took away compassion.

So, I'm not here just as a Member of Congress or as the Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Health Task Force. I'm here as an American upset with the laws that discriminate against my fellow human beings. Today we stand before you to defend the women and children who fled tyranny and poverty only to be denied the health care afforded other Americans. We are talking about people that came here legally, play by the rules, and pay taxes. I firmly believe that we should include a provision that give states the option to provide SCHIP and Medicaid benefits to lawfully present immigrant low-income pregnant women and children. Children and pregnant women who are denied coverage through the SCHIP and Medicaid 5-year ban usually can't get other vital health care coverage. As a matter of decency, as a matter of economics, as a matter of public health, legal immigrant children and pregnant women deserve the same access to essential health care coverage offered to citizens. For pregnant women and their children, regular prenatal care and early intervention saves lives and dollars.

Children who have routine office visits and immunizations grow to be healthy adults with less medical complications. Children monitored by pediatricians are less likely to be victimized by chronic and communicable diseases. Preventive care minimizes emergency

room visits, a costly and inefficient way of providing health care. Remember, diseases do not ask to see a passport. The 5-year ban on providing Medicaid and CHIP coverage has been the greatest barrier to health care for legal immigrants. It's time to make the system fair for everyone.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ONGOING
U.S. CONGRESSIONAL FORUM ON
LAOS WITH THE APPROACHING
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
COMMUNIST REGIME

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the deteriorating political, economic and security situation in Laos which remains under the brutal control of one of the world's last remaining Stalinist regimes. More is needed to promote democracy, basic human liberties and human rights—and to stop the serious, ongoing intervention by Vietnam's military and security forces in the internal affairs of Laos. This is needed to serve the interests of the American people and the freedom-loving people of Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Center for Public Policy Analysis and its Executive Director, Mr. Philip Smith, as well as Colonel Wangyee Vang of the Lao Veterans of America for their leadership in helping to convene the U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos. Many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle have participated in this important forum series on Capitol Hill over the course of the 106th Congress. It has helped to develop enhanced awareness and understanding of the serious developments in Laos by policymakers. I am proud to have participated in a number of these events, along with my staff assistant, Paul Berkowitz. In December of 1999, at one of the Congressional Forum sessions, I was pleased to participate along with Major General Vang Pao and other distinguished guests, and presented a joint report about our Congressional Staff Delegation research mission to Southeast Asia in the summer of 1999. In our report, issued jointly by the International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we discussed the serious ongoing plight of the Hmong and Lao people still suffering in Laos. Other speakers and participants at the forum series on Laos included distinguished Members and staff from many offices including: Representatives DANA ROHRBACHER, GEORGE RADANOVICH and WILLIAM DELAHUNT, of the House International Relations Committee, on which I serve as Chairman, as well as Chairman JESSE HELMS, Senators BOB SMITH, RUSSELL FEINGOLD, PAUL WELLSTONE, Representatives MARK GREEN, PATRICK KENNEDY, CALVIN DOOLEY and the late Bruce Vento, who passed away earlier this month. Congressman Vento's leadership on human rights and with the forum series on Laos will, indeed, be sadly missed by so many in this Chamber and in the Laotian community.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Congressional Forum series on Laos is making a significant impact in helping to provide vital information and to formulating policy toward Laos. It has helped generate numerous breaking stories in news services around the world, including the Washington Post, Washington Times, Agence France, Associated Press, the South China Morning Post and others. Radio Free Asia, Lao Service, as well as the Voice of America have also provided coverage. Historic legislation on Laos has also been enacted with the important information that has come from these Forums in Congress including H. Con. Res. 169, condemning, for the first time, the Communist regime in Laos for its human rights violations and other matters. I was proud to have worked with Representatives GEORGE RADANOVICH, MARK GREEN and former Congressman Bruce Vento to help pass this important legislation in the International Relations Committee.

Mr. Speaker, thus far, distinguished panelists and participants in the Congressional Forum on Laos have also included important Laotian and Hmong leaders as well as Lao experts from around the world, including: T. Kumar, Asia Director for Amnesty International; Markram Ouass, The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Senior Program Officer for Asia; Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt, Noble Prize nominee and distinguished Lao and Hmong scholar; Dr. Chou Norinh, of the United League for Democracy in Laos, and distinguished professor at Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand; Dr. Bounchaloune Phouthakany, of the University of Quebec, and Secretary General, United Lao Association of Canada; Dr. Khamphay Abbai of Australia; Dr. Bounthone Chanthavixay, with the World Wide Coordinating Committee on Laos, Hagen, Germany, and former Lao student protest leader in Eastern Europe; His Royal Highness Prince Sayavong, of the Lao Royal Family, in France; Major General Vang Pao, Hmong leader; Colonel Wangyee Vang, President of the Lao Veterans of America; Thongsavanh Phongsavanh, of the Lao Representatives Abroad Council; General Thonglit Chokhbenbun of France; Thongkhoun Phathana, President, The Laos Institute For Democracy; Ms. Sothida Bounthapanya Lao Progressive Party; The Lan Xang Foundation, of Atlanta, Georgia; Col. Ngeunsamith Sasorith, France, President, of the Paris-based,

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to thank all of the Members of Congress, staff and participants from around the United States and the world who have made the U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos such an important success in the 106th Congress. The winds of intense turmoil and change are now blowing in Laos. The United States, with the help of the U.S. Congress, needs to do more to support democracy and free and fair elections in Laos during the upcoming vote in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, toward this end, on December 1st, while the Communist Regime in Laos celebrates its dark anniversary of totalitarian dictatorship, it is important to note that a major installment of the Congressional Forum on Laos will be held in the U.S. House of Representatives with witnesses and participants from around the world, including the slated

testimony of a group of student demonstrators who escaped from Vientiane, Laos recently and were just granted political asylum several days ago in America. A special ceremony will follow in Congress, during the evening, to mark the grim oppression of the Laotian people after 25 years of Communism. Laotian victims of communist oppression will share their testimony. I encourage my colleagues to continue to aggressively support these important activities and the efforts of Laotian people in their struggle to bring freedom, democracy and human rights to Laos.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, ethnic and religious minorities around the world suffer because many governments fail to protect fundamental human freedoms such as freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. Or, a government fails to concede to the will of the people and imposes its will upon the people. When a government fails to uphold international human rights standards, to respect the wishes of the people expressed through voting or other legitimate mechanisms, or to protect people's basic freedoms from violations, individuals and groups often are harassed, imprisoned, tortured, and even killed. Serious violence and human rights abuses have occurred in Burma through the actions of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). On September 26, 2000, I chaired the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing on Human Rights Concerns in Burma. I would like to submit for the RECORD the testimony of Mr. David Eubank, Saw Htoo Htoo Lay, Pastor Edmund Htokut, Saw Ka Law Lah, Mr. Stephen Dun, and Major Larry J. Redmon.

TESTIMONY OF DAVID EUBANK BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS, SEPTEMBER 26, 2000

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you about the situation in Burma, and for the opportunity to ask for action to restore democracy in Burma, protect minority rights, and provide immediate humanitarian assistance for the Internally Displaced People (IDP).

CURRENT SITUATION IN BURMA

The dictators of Burma, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), continue to oppress the people of Burma, reject the 1990 democratic elections, hold over 1,300 political prisoners (55 of whom are members-elect of parliament), and brutally violate the human rights of ethnic minority peoples as well as ethnic Burmans. This has resulted in over 1 million refugees that have fled Burma since 1990, and 2 million Internally Displaced People (1 million ethnic Burmans are displaced for government projects, 1 million are ethnic minority peoples displaced by the attacks of the Burma Army and SPDC forced relocation programs.) The ethnic minority IDPs in particular are in immediate need of help. They face starvation, disease and the constant threat of attack by the Burma Army. Those who have been able to escape

the SPDC forced relocation sites, are scattered in jungle hiding places, living in fear. If discovered they are brutally attacked by the Burma Army. Their home villages have been plundered and burned and the Burma Army has scattered land mines in and around their villages to strike terror and discourage their return. (In last year alone there were over 1,500 new landmine victims.) The IDPs live in fear with very little hope. HIV infection is on the rise with over 440,000 infected and little State response.

Narcotics production and export has increased with profits from the heroin and amphetamine traffic being shared with the SPDC. In 1999, over 500 million amphetamine tablets were smuggled into Thailand. Most of these were produced in the 55 amphetamine laboratories across the border in eastern Burma. 1,750 tons of opium was also produced making Burma the worlds number two producer of opium and heroin. The SPDC has been closely involved with groups that produce and traffic narcotics, helping in 2000 alone, to move over 100,000 from one group to a area adjacent to the Thai border, thus creating a major increase of narcotic traffic into Thailand.

The U.S. Department of State 1999 Country Report on Human Rights, the 2000 Annual Report on Religious Freedom, as well as current Amnesty International and International Labor Organization reports all condemn the human rights record of Burma and appeal for change.

RATIONALE FOR ACTION

- (1) The people of Burma are oppressed, tortured, and murdered by the dictator's army, and this is wrong.
- (2) There was a free and fair election in 1990 and the results should be recognized and democracy restored.
- (3) The dictatorship allows narcotics production and prospers from its sale.
- (4) Burma is a client state of China and in return for weapons and other military hardware, allows China to establish SIGINT facilities and naval installations in Burma. This is not good for the people of Burma or for regional security.
- (5) The people of Burma, in particular the Kachin, Karien, Shan and Karenni, helped the allies drive the Japanese Army out of Burma during WWII. They deserve our friendship and help.

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

- (1) Immediate humanitarian assistance to the 1 million ethnic minority Internally Displaced Persons of Burma (IDP), Assistance includes medicine, food, clothing, shelter, and education supplies.
- (2) Immediate security for these IDPs. This requires support of the pro-democracy resistance force who make aid delivery and security possible, or international intervention to protect the IDPs or both, international military intervention to protect the IDPs, or both.
- (3) Call for tripartite dialogue between the SPDC, the Ethnic Groups and the Burma Democracy groups.
- (4) Implement increased political, economic, and if necessary, military (indirect by support of resistance forces, or direct by international intervention) pressure until the dictators restore democracy, human rights, and minority political rights.
- (5) Bring those guilty of war crimes in Burma to justice.

TESTIMONY OF SAW HTOO HTOO LAY

Mr. Chairman, I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to present the current

human rights situation in Burma to the congressional human rights caucus.

I. THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

Most of the recent attention on Burma's human rights situation has only looked at the SPDC military junta's persecution of the National League for Democracy. While this is bad, the human rights situation of ordinary villagers is much worse. In our Karen areas and also in Karenni and Shan areas of eastern Burma, the SPDC is doing everything it can to gain complete control by subjugating the entire civilian population. They use what they call the Four Cuts policy—to cut off supplies of food, funds, recruits and intelligence to resistance forces by destroying villages, farms and food supplies until the civilians are so destitute and starving that they could not possibly support any opposition group. As far as the junta is concerned, the suffering and death which this inflicts on millions of villagers is not a problem, because they would really like to see the end of the Karen, Karenni and Shan peoples.

Since 1996, the junta has systematically destroyed at least 1,500 villages in Shan State, displacing over 300,000 people; 200 villages in Karenni (Kayah) State, displacing at least 50,000 people; and at least 300 or 400 villages in our Karen areas stretching from Pegu Division and Karen State in the north to Tenasserim Division in the far south of Burma. Hundreds of thousands of our Karen people have been displaced by these operations since 1997, and they remain displaced today.

II. THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The political situation between the SPDC and the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Rangoon remains at a stalemate, with the junta refusing to reform or to participate in any meaningful dialogue with any democracy advocates and vowing to crush all opposition. The KNU and most other groups in the country are calling for tripartite dialogue involving the SPDC, the NLD, and the non-Burman ethnic leadership which represents the non-Burman half of the country's population. However, the SPDC has shown no willingness to engage in any such dialogue.

The junta claims falsely that it has already brought peace and unity to the country by signing military ceasefires with many of the ethnic-based armed opposition groups. Firstly, it is important to point out that none of the 'ceasefire deals' are peace treaties. They are simply temporary deals whereby the two military forces agree not to shoot at each other. No political issues have been addressed in any of these ceasefire deals, and most of the opposition groups who have signed them are not happy with the results. In most of the ceasefire areas, SPDC human rights abuses have continued.

The SPDC now claims that the Karen are the only group left fighting the junta, but this is also not true; in addition to the KNU, the Karenni National Progressive Party, the Shan State Army, the Chin National Front, and several other groups continue to fight actively against the military regime. At present, the junta is refusing to negotiate at all unless opposition groups agree to surrender unconditionally beforehand.

The KNU recognizes the suffering brought on the villagers by the current state of civil war and is determined to resolve this conflict by means of negotiation. However, we are not prepared to surrender unconditionally as demanded by the SPDC, because the result would only be endless suffering for the Karen people