

I'll have the opportunity to enjoy bagpipe music and share the holiday spirit with good friends and good neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, this Christmas season in particular, when so many of us are facing tough questions about the world we live in, I think it's important to look back and remember where we come from. I believe looking toward our roots and better learning about our past is the best way to face the future.

Mr. Speaker, the fine men and women of the Clan Currie Society, through their hard work and dedication, make it easier for us all to learn about ourselves. For that, I thank them and wish them continued success, a Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION COMPLIANCE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2001

Mr. UDALL. Mr. Speaker, today the House will be voting on H.R. 3323, the Administrative Simplification Compliance Act, under suspension of the Rules. This legislation allows health plans and providers to delay compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) until October 2003.

HIPAA was designed to improve administrative efficiency in the health care industry by facilitating electronic transactions between health plans and health care providers. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates these administrative simplifications will result in net savings (i.e., savings after accounting for implementation costs) of \$29.9 billion over ten years. The first phase of these simplifications is scheduled to go into effect in October 2002.

Some sectors of the health industry and state government's argue, however, that they need extra time to make the technical and procedural changes necessary to achieve compliance.

H.R. 3323 allows these health plans and providers that will be unable to comply by the original deadline, to delay HIPAA compliance until October 2003, provided that they submit a compliance plan to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. This document must summarize the entity's budget, schedule, work plan, and implementation strategy for becoming compliant by October 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I support the effort to allow delay for those plans and providers that will not be compliant by October 2002, provided that they do, in fact, have a plan to be compliant by October of the following year. Because H.R. 3323 requires plans and providers who wish to delay to submit a plan for compliance to the Secretary, I support this legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to voice my concerns over the fact that some plans, providers, and other types of companies affected by the HIPAA rules have gone to great lengths to be compliant by the original deadline, and now stand to face financial losses as a result of the delay.

One example of this is a company run by a Dr. Jacob Kuriyan, a constituent who resides in the district I represent. Dr. Kuriyan's company has developed software that helps facilitate the submission and receipt of HIPAA required electronic transactions for health plans and providers. Some health plans and providers have already purchased and installed this software in anticipation of the rapidly approaching HIPAA deadline.

Should H.R. 3323 pass, and allow some organizations to delay compliance, Dr. Kuriyan's company will have to foot the bill for removing this software from those providers who have installed it so that organizations can still accept paper transactions from the organizations who are not ready for HIPAA compliance.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, while I do support the effort to allow responsible delay for compliance, I believe that Congress should do our best to reward, not penalize the organizations and companies, like Dr. Kuriyan's, that have invested the resources and made an effort to be HIPAA compliant by the original deadline of October 2002.

FISHERIES CONSERVATION ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation which includes reauthorization of the Striped Bass Conservation Act.

When my predecessor, Gerry Studds, first introduced the Striped Bass Conservation Act in 1984, the species had been battered by pollution and over-fishing. Harvests had plummeted so far, so fast—by over 10 million pounds over the preceding 10 years—that there was legitimate fear for the literal future of the species.

If the problem was clear, the solution was not. Striped bass are highly migratory, and move primarily along the three-mile coastal zone which is under the combined jurisdictions of 12 states and the District of Columbia. Balancing the needs of the fish, the fishermen, and the regulators, Congressman Studds and his colleagues crafted a unique and, as it turned out, highly effective scheme to bolster state management efforts to restore the stocks.

By all measures, the results of this cooperation among the states, and between the state and federal governments, have been astonishingly successful. Today, the fish are found in impressive numbers, up and down the coast. The federal-state partnership embodied in the Striped Bass Act has restored the species to its former, considerable glory as one of the most important sport and commercial fisheries on the east coast.

These strides for conservation also have direct economic consequences. In my area, healthy striped bass stocks mean business for campgrounds in Truro or tackle shops in Edgartown—and striped bass fishing has even returned to Boston Harbor. It's a classic case of doing well by doing good.

GLOBAL ACCESS TO HIV/AIDS PREVENTION, AWARENESS, EDUCATION, AND TREATMENT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2069, a bill that I co-sponsored in order to help raise awareness of the need to promote prevention of HIV/AIDS. There can be no more pressing issue than tackling this pandemic that is so ruthlessly killing millions of people across the globe.

It has already reduced the population of the African continent by almost 20 million lives alone. It has created a generation of orphans that will never know the warmth and meaning of family. It is a relentless plague that destroys our universal productivity, labor and health. It affects each and every one of us.

Mr. Speaker, we must do all that is in our power to resolve this multi-dimensional global crisis. In particular, I would like to highlight a portion of this bill's important provision that employs language from a free standing bill that I introduced which addresses the prevention of the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child. This transmission is the largest source of HIV infection in children under age 15 and the only source for transmission to infants.

According to recent findings, the total number of births to HIV-infected pregnant women each year in developing countries is approximately 700,000. Funding under this bill will greatly contribute to decreasing this number by providing counseling and voluntary testing to infected women. With this information, mothers-to-be, who are aware of their status, can make informed decisions about treatment, replacement feeding to reduce risks to their unborn babies and future child-bearing.

This act of prevention is only one first step, Mr. Speaker, but an essential one in our battle being waged against this devastating enemy. I therefore join my colleagues in supporting urgent passage of H.R. 2069.

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF LEON COUNTY, FL

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the people of Leon County, Florida. In a sincere motion of recognition, the citizens of Leon made a declaration of gratitude to all of those soldiers who are fighting overseas due to the horrible events of September 11th. I believe this decree shows that not only were all parts of this great country affected by the terrorist acts, but that the American people's support for the campaign to eliminate terrorism has not wavered.

Leon County's Declaration is as follows: