

the Clinical Social Work Federation and is included in a larger omnibus Medicare mental health modernization bill (H.R. 1522) endorsed by over 30 mental health and senior citizen organizations.

Again, our legislation would exclude clinical social workers from the prospective payment system. This small fix corrects what we believe to be a serious error created by BBA'97. It is time to act quickly and decisively to preserve access to needed mental health services for residents in thousands of our nation's skilled nursing facilities.

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INTRODUCTION OF FOODS ARE  
NOT DRUGS ACT

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 21, 2001*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Foods are not Drugs Act, a constitutional and common sense piece of legislation. This bill stops the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from interfering with consumers' access to truthful information about foods and dietary supplements in order to make informed choices about their health.

The Foods are not Drugs Act accomplishes its goal by simply adding the six words "other than foods, including dietary supplements" to the statutory definition of "drug." This allows food and dietary supplement producers to provide consumers with more information regarding the health benefits of their products, without having to go through the time-consuming and costly process of getting FDA approval. This bill does not affect the FDA's jurisdiction over those who make false claims about their products.

Scientific research in nutrition over the past few years has demonstrated how various foods and other dietary supplements are safe and effective in preventing or mitigating many diseases. Currently, however, disclosure of these well-documented statements triggers more extensive drug-like FDA regulation. The result is consumers cannot learn about simple and inexpensive ways to improve their health. For example, in 1998, the FDA dragged manufacturers of Cholestin, a dietary supplement containing lovastatin, which is helpful in lowering cholesterol, into court. The FDA did not dispute the benefits of Cholestin, rather the FDA attempted to deny consumers access to this helpful product simply because the manufacturers did not submit Cholestin to the FDA's drug approval process!

The FDA's treatment of the manufacturers of Cholestin is not an isolated example of how current FDA policy harms consumers. Even though coronary heart disease is the nation's number-one killer, the FDA waited nine years until it allowed consumers to learn about how consumption of foods and dietary supplements containing soluble fiber from the husk of psyllium seeds can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease! The Foods are not Drugs Act ends this breakfast table censorship.

The FDA is so fanatical about censoring truthful information regarding dietary supplements it even defies federal courts! For exam-

ple, in the case of *Pearson v. Shalala*, 154 F.3d 650 (DC Cir. 1999), reh'g denied en banc, 172 F.3d 72 (DC Cir. 1999), the United States Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit Court ruled that the FDA violated consumers' first amendment rights by denying certain health claims. However, the FDA has dragged its feet for over two years in complying with the *Pearson* decision while wasting taxpayer money on frivolous appeals. It is clear that even after *Pearson* the FDA will continue to deny legitimate health claims and force dietary supplement manufacturers to waste money on litigation unless Congress acts to rein in this rogue agency.

Allowing American consumers access to information about the benefits of foods and dietary supplements will help America's consumers improve their health. However, this bill is about more than physical health, it is about freedom. The first amendment forbids Congress from abridging freedom of all speech, including commercial speech.

In a free society, the federal government must not be allowed to prevent people from receiving information enabling them to make informed decisions about whether or not to use dietary supplements or eat certain foods. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to take a step toward restoring freedom by cosponsoring the Foods are not Drugs Act.

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RECOGNIZING THE SPEAKER OF  
THE PUNJAB STATE ASSEMBLY  
HONORABLE SARDAR CHARANJIT  
SINGH ATWAL

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 21, 2001*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Honorable Sardar Charanjit Singh Atwal, Speaker of the Punjab State Assembly. Mr. Atwal has been a respected member in the Parliament of India for over 20 years.

Mr. Atwal visited the California Central Valley last year to attend the Commonwealth Speakers Convention, which includes Speakers from all over the world. In the fall of last year, Mr. Atwal also visited the Central Valley to meet with the local Sikh community. Mr. Atwal has been in the field of politics since 1957 and was first elected to the Punjab State Assembly in 1977. Sardar Atwal is a Dalit (Mazhabi Sikh) and a refugee from Pakistan who has risen from the grassroot worker's level to the top hierarchy of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal).

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Honorable Sardar Charanjit Singh Atwal and his achievements for the Sikh community. I urge my colleagues to join me in praising Mr. Atwal's more than 40 years of service to the people of India.

DISTURBING TRENDS REGARDING  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN  
KAZAKHSTAN

**HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 21, 2001*

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the recent pattern of human rights violations in Kazakhstan. Since last autumn, but particularly since January 2001, the Kazakh government has shown a troubling trend in its treatment of American citizens living in Kazakhstan and Kazakh citizens who hold religious beliefs. I have received numerous reports in my office detailing the intense harassment of a number of different American families and their friends in Kazakhstan.

In one instance, officials called three families into the police station and told them they had to leave the country. The families made the arrangements to leave, then, after all of the adults, children and their luggage had been processed through the airport and the family was ready to board the airplane, security officials pulled everyone out of the airport and would not allow them to depart. In another situation, a member of the local secret police came to the family's home and threateningly said that he was staying in their apartment that night and escorting them to the airport to leave the next morning—basically putting the family, including a one-year-old little girl, under house arrest.

Security and court officials also harassed the families of those working at an education center, punished them because of their refusal to pay bribes to local officials, and forced them to pay a \$240 per person fine for trumped-up charges—all apparently because of the peaceful practice of their religious beliefs.

Unfortunately, I have numerous other examples of the negative treatment of religious believing Americans by Kazakh officials. However, not all Americans are treated this way, only the ones who hold religious beliefs. The Americans who were harassed all attended church services, just as they would do anywhere they lived and worked, and made friends with people in that religious community. Sadly, government officials somehow saw something sinister in their peaceful religious practices. Even further, of great concern is the fact that each person or family with whom these Americans were friends has since been harassed by police and state security officials.

Disturbingly, these situations are not mere misunderstandings or random actions by local officials. The pattern of harassment is occurring throughout the country, not just in isolated incidents. Furthermore, Kazakh Evangelical Baptists have reported that security officials have interrupted church services, confiscated literature in the church, recorded all attendees at the service, even arresting participants, and severely beat the pastor in the head, neck and stomach. Then, at the police station, officials threatened the Christians saying things like, "During the Soviet times, believers like you were shot. Now you are feeling at peace, but we will show you."

Correcting the injustices against Americans and Kazakhs is an important step in reflecting